

*Questions  
& Answers*  
ON THE BIBLE

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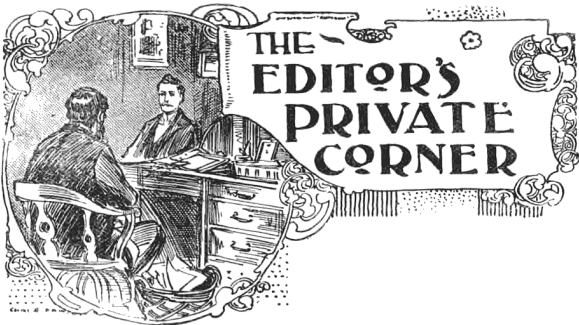
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# Foreword

IN THE September 6, 1900 edition of *The Present Truth* periodical, E. J. Waggoner introduced a new column, titled “The Editor’s Private Corner.” This was to continue for just over three years, until October 8, 1903, when Waggoner left his post as editor of the *Present Truth* in England, and returned to America.

Later in 1904, a few single articles that he had submitted to *Present Truth*, were published, and in the following years, some more articles and series’ were published in *The Medical Missionary* from 1904-1909. Other than those, the articles in this series can be considered among some of the last writings that proceeded from Waggoner’s pen. They contain the wisdom gained from years of studying, teaching, and living the Advent faith.

Probably more than any other book or series that he wrote, these writings reveal the reasonableness, beauty, and consistency of the Bible teachings. Although most of the questions asked were published for the first time in this series, a few of them were drawn from periodicals of the past years, where the article had been written in question/answer format, and therefore it was suitable to republish them in this series.

The following text captures the essence of this collection:

## **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>23</sup> But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

<sup>24</sup> And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

<sup>25</sup> In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

<sup>26</sup> And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

*Frank Zimmerman*  
*practicaprophetica.com*

## Introduction

UNDER this heading (*The Editor's Private Corner*) the editor will answer such questions by readers of the paper, as in his judgment will be of interest to all.

No names will be given, so that while all may read, the editor and his distant friend may talk together with all the freedom of a quiet chat or a confidential correspondence.

We shall be pleased to receive any questions that are asked because the questioner feels the need of personal help, and is seeking for light.

The needs of all are very much the same, and therefore this correspondence, in which only one person knows who is directly addressed, may be of benefit to thousands.

May the Lord make it so.

*Editor [E. J. Waggoner], Present Truth*  
*September 6, 1900*

# 1. Forgiveness and Healing

Present Truth, September 6, 1900

I want to ask one question. In his letter, \_\_\_ said that the healing power always comes with the forgiveness of sins. Now don't you think that any person who is not healed of disease has his sins forgiven?

**W**E TAKE it for granted that you do not specially care to know what somebody thinks about the matter, but wish to know the truth. Let us therefore turn to the Word of truth, and read a few texts as a basis for our study. In the following texts it will be seen that forgiveness and healing are inseparably connected:

## **Psalm 103**

<sup>2</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

<sup>3</sup> Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;

<sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

<sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

## **Isaiah 33**

<sup>24</sup> And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

## **Isaiah 38**

<sup>17</sup> You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for You have cast all my sins behind your back.

## **James 5**

<sup>14</sup> Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

<sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

<sup>16</sup> Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed.

### **Exodus 23**

<sup>25</sup> And you shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless your bread, and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you.

## **Forgiveness Means a New Life Given**

The chief cause of the difficulty over this subject is the failure to grasp the meaning of forgiveness of sins. The idea is quite firmly rooted in the minds of most people, that it is a mere matter of words. They regard it rather as a change on the part of God toward us, than as a change in our relation to Him.

Now God forgives our sins by putting His righteousness into and upon us.

### **Romans 3**

<sup>22</sup> Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

<sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

<sup>25</sup> Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

We are...

### **Romans 5**

<sup>10</sup> ...saved by His life.

The righteousness of God is revealed only in the life of Jesus Christ, and our sins are forgiven—remitted, sent away—when we consciously and gladly receive that life, so that it is henceforth not we who live, but Christ who lives in us. Thus you see that forgiveness of sins makes a radical change in the individual.

You say that there are many persons who have confessed their sins, and who have believed that God forgave them, but whose

lives have not been transformed; they struggle to do right, but fail fully as often as they succeed. Very well; we need not doubt the genuineness of their conversion. The trouble is that they have not fully realized that the just shall live by faith, and have not allowed faith to add to them all the Christian graces. Read the list:

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

<sup>5</sup> And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

<sup>6</sup> And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

<sup>7</sup> And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

<sup>8</sup> For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>9</sup> But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

This shows incidentally, also, that forgiveness of sins means purging from the sin. If people grasped the fact that forgiveness of sins is effected by the power of a new and endless life, there would be fewer failures in the Christian life.

Do you now see what an “unspeakable gift”<sup>1</sup> the forgiveness of sins is? Here is a little statement of the case that will help to fix it in your mind:

When a person has sinned against you, you naturally feel offended; there is more or less bitterness in your heart. The person asks forgiveness, and his penitence moves you to pity, and you grant the request. Your feelings change. But your forgiveness makes no change in the person who has done the wrong. Having confessed his sin, he is free, even though you refuse to forgive

---

<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:15.

him; but your forgiveness means a change in your attitude toward him.

But it is not so with God's forgiveness. He has no bitterness, no feeling of offended dignity, in His heart. He loves us in our sins. We are moved by His love to ask forgiveness for our sins, and He grants it, but that does not involve any change in Him; the change is wholly in us who are forgiven.

It is a real thing, for He imparts to us His own real life. He gives to us that which enables us to resist sin in our flesh, to which we have always before been subject.

Do you not see that the forgiveness of our sins by the Lord means the reception of something real, and that it is designed to effect a change that is manifest in our own bodies?

### **The Assurance of the Resurrection**

Well now, let us for a moment leave the present, and look forward to the future, to the coming of the Lord Jesus the second time. We know what will take place then: The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living will be changed to immortality.<sup>2</sup> He will...

#### **Philippians 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

That is to say, The power by which the Lord at His coming changes this body from corruptible to incorruptible, is the same by which He casts down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.<sup>3</sup> It is by...

#### **Philippians 3**

<sup>9</sup> ...the righteousness which comes through the faith of Christ,

<sup>11</sup> ...[that we] attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

---

<sup>2</sup> *1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.*

<sup>3</sup> *2 Corinthians 10:4-5.*

We know therefore, and everybody knows, that the forgiveness of sins does indeed involve the healing of all disease at some time, and the abolishing of death. You see this clearly, do you not? Very well, let us go a step farther, or rather, let us come a step nearer.

## **A Passing from Death unto Life**

Conversion is a passing from death unto life.

### **John 5**

<sup>24</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes Him that sent me, has eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life.

Even now the hour is come...

<sup>25</sup> ...when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

This is not to be marveled at, since...

<sup>28</sup> ...the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

<sup>29</sup> And shall come forth.

At the sounding of the last trumpet, and the call of the Lord the dead will come forth from their graves by the very same power by which men now live righteous lives. Yes; even now Christ...

### **2 Timothy 1**

<sup>10</sup> ...has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

The mystery of the resurrection is made manifest in every soul that gains the victory over sin. Righteousness is gained only by...

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>10</sup> ...the power of His resurrection,

—and in the resurrection of Christ is contained the resurrection of all who are His. He is the resurrection and the life, and when we are in Him we have Him as the resurrection and the life to us day by day.

## **The Power that Works in Us**

You will readily admit that it is no more difficult for the Lord to make a person “every whit whole” now than at the resurrection. Indeed, He has often done this very thing.

But that which we have already seen is that the very same power that will work at the resurrection of all the dead is now at work in all who believe in Christ, and that it is by that power that we receive forgiveness. The power by which we receive righteousness is the power by which we live and breathe. God is able to do...

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> ...exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

The mystery of the Gospel is the mystery of life; and the mystery of the new birth is simply that of the first birth. In this period of probation God is giving us a sample of eternal life, that we may decide whether or not we care enough for it to keep it.

Everybody who has known what it is to gain the victory over any sin, has realized a definite power working in his own body. He knows that there is in him something that controls his flesh as he himself never could do before. In fact, the only way that we can know the reality of forgiveness is by experiencing this change in us.

Now that power is the life of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Christ is not divided; He has only the one life, himself, for He is life itself. Why then should we not take that life for physical healing so well as for spiritual life, since that is the one and only agent by which everything in the purpose of God is accomplished?

## **The Sum of the Matter**

But I have not directly answered your question yet. I reply that there cannot possibly be any doubt that there are and always have been thousands of persons whose sins were forgiven, who suffered from disease. Beloved saints of God are going into their



graves every day; but it is a costly thing for the Lord, and causes Him pain.

### **Psalms 116**

<sup>15</sup> Precious [costly] in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

We cannot presume to unravel all the causes of everything that takes place; but we may be certain of this, that thousands of good people die, who do not need to, and who would not die if they grasped all the possibilities in the forgiveness of their sins. God says,

### **Hosea 4**

<sup>6</sup> My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

The life of the Lord is altogether too unreal to most people. If all received Him as a present Saviour, and got fully acquainted with Him, they would learn that:

### **Ephesians 5**

<sup>23</sup> He is the Saviour of the body.

Why should it be that there are so many who cannot read *Psalms* 103:1-5? That scripture is in an unknown language to those who do not have the experience.

## **Get Acquainted with the Life**

What then should we do? We should study the life of Christ in all its manifestations. We should learn to recognize Him in His sanctuary, that is, our own bodies, which are the temples of the Holy Ghost.

We should study to know how our bodies as well as our souls are to be sanctified and kept blameless till the coming of the Lord. We should seek to know the way of life, that we may be led in the way everlasting. We should give diligence to know how to fight the good fight, of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life.

We should learn to recognize the life of Christ in all the agencies, as food, drink, air, etc., by which it is conveyed to us, as well

as to know the Holy Spirit. This study involves details too many to be taken up here; all that we can do now is to open up the glorious possibilities before every believer in Christ.

## **Food and Healing**

One thing more: please read again two texts at the beginning of this article:

### **Psalm 103**

<sup>2</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

<sup>3</sup> Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;

<sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

<sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

### **Exodus 23**

<sup>25</sup> And you shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless your bread, and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you.

Do you not see that this indicates a, close connection between our food and our health? Healing does not come arbitrarily, but as the result of coming into complete harmony with...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>2</sup> ...the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Why should we expect it to be otherwise? Our life depends largely upon what we eat; why then, if we eat only that which is good, receiving it direct from the hand of the Lord, should not our life be redeemed from destruction, and our youth renewed?

Every Christian ought to be a thorough student of physiology, which means a student of the law of Christ's life as manifested in us and in everything that pertains to us. This is not so difficult as might be supposed. When one recognizes and receives the life of the Lord by faith, he has...

### **Luke 11**

<sup>52</sup> ...the key of knowledge,

—and has free access to...

## **Colossians 2**

<sup>3</sup> ...all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

## **1 John 1**

<sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

<sup>2</sup> (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us);

<sup>3</sup> That, which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

When the most insignificant man tells us we are in error, we should listen, and examine ourselves, and see if it is so. To believe it possible that we may be in error, is the first step toward getting out of it.

## 2. Who Has Seen and Known God?

Present Truth, September 13, 1900

In *1 John* 3:6, we read: “Whosoever abides in Him sins not; whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him.” How can that be? Are we to conclude that everybody who commits a sin has never known anything about the Lord? Peter had certainly seen the Lord many times, and knew Him, yet he sinned in denying Him.

**T**HERE you go, after the usual manner of men, reading a verse of Scripture, and straightway beginning to argue against it, trying to prove that it is not true, and then wondering why you cannot understand it. Why not rather accept it as true, and then begin to study it? It is by faith, not by doubt, that we understand. You think that you believe it, I know, but faith does not interpose doubt.

The statement is plain and unqualified:

### **1 John 3**

<sup>6</sup> Whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him.

Yet we must of course consider the connection. Read the verse before:

<sup>5</sup> You know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.

Now the question is:

“Is He able to do that for which He was manifested? or did He die in vain?”

Which do you say? Does He bear the sin of the world? Is He able to cleanse from all unrighteousness? You dare not say, “No;” very well, say “Yes,” and don’t follow it with a “but.” Stop with the plain “yes,” and then we shall make progress.

The Scriptures assure us that:

## **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>3</sup> No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Now we know very well that in the day of Pentecost Peter received the Holy Spirit in a way that he had never dreamed of when Jesus was yet with the disciples, not even when he had said:

### **Matthew 16**

<sup>16</sup> You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

We must remember that the Scripture never calls a half the whole, and that an occasional glimpse of the truth is not the knowledge of the truth. The student does not know his subject, simply because it has now and then opened up before him with wonderful brilliancy while the professor was lecturing on it. When he knows it, he knows it all the time, and so well that he cannot forget it. Even so we do not know God until we can recognize Him everywhere He is revealed, and until we know Him every moment, without occasional lapses of memory.

This is in harmony with the teaching of the text, that:

### **1 John 3**

<sup>6</sup> Whosoever abides in Him sins not.

Is not that easy enough to believe? Can you conceive of such a thing as one sinning while dwelling in God? No. Very well, then if he abides in God, he will not sin at all, will he?

You see the apostle is speaking of things absolute,—of full and complete knowledge, and not half knowledge. He is speaking of an experience altogether beyond that of the majority of professed Christians; but we must not say that it is impossible, simply because we have not had it.

Now as to seeing God. Who see Him?

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

None others can see Him. But purity of the heart must be a constant thing. The pure heart is not the one that is occasionally

clean, but one that stays clean by the constant flowing through it of the cleansing stream, the pure river of water of life.

### **John 1**

<sup>18</sup> No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

The only begotten Son, then, is the only One who has seen God, and He sees Him, because He is in the bosom of the Father. But He gives to us the power to become sons of God, and then we too shall abide in Him, and see Him.

The great difficulty in understanding such texts as this, lies not in the texts themselves, but in our sin-loving hearts. We do not like to have the Scriptures mean that it is possible for us to live absolutely without sin in the world, for that would mean that we ought to live without sinning, and we do not wish to have it so. We do not wish to have the gate shut entirely. We wish a little gap left, so that we can hold to some few little, long cherished sins, without being made to feel uncomfortable. But that will not do.

### **1 John 2**

<sup>6</sup> He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

And...

### **1 John 3**

<sup>5</sup> ...in Him is no sin.

When we let go, and surrender everything, we shall find that there are possibilities in the Christian life, so vast that it will actually seem to us that we have never before known anything of the Lord. And we shall not be puffed up by the sight and the knowledge, and will not think of boasting about our own righteousness. Far from it. In fact, we shall then, more than ever before, know the sinfulness of human flesh.

Job was a man who feared God, and eschewed evil; He had served God conscientiously for many years; yet, when he had the full revelation of Divine power and goodness, he said:

### **Job 42**

<sup>5</sup> I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You; wherefore I abhor myself.

It is while we confess our sins, that He cleanses us from all unrighteousness; so a continual confession of weakness will be accompanied by constant cleansing.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> Sin shall not have dominion over you.

Instead of being discouraged at the thought of our own weakness and sinfulness, we shall rejoice, we cannot help rejoicing, at the knowledge of the fact that we are in touch with the mighty power that can work righteousness even in such sinful flesh as ours.

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## **Back Page**

Present Truth, September 13, 1900

**T**HE question asked and answered last week has special significance because the sender, to our personal knowledge, has been a sufferer for many years. Those in this week's "Private Corner" are from persons who sincerely desire help.

We never take any pleasure in answering questions of mere curiosity; but it is always a joy to us to sit down by the side of one who is in soul trouble, and help him to find the light of life. We hope to be permitted to have many such precious seasons in our quiet corner.

### 3. The Mission of the Jews

Present Truth, September 20, 1900

One thing in *Present Truth* this week I cannot quite grasp, is about the millennium. The writer says that the righteous will be caught up to meet the Lord, and that all the rest will perish, and that the earth will not be inhabited for a thousand years. If this be so, when will the mission of the Jews to the world begin? When will they believe, and become evangelists? Are they never to become so?

FOR a full and comprehensive treatment of this subject, I would recommend to my friend, and to all who have similar thoughts, the reading of the book recently published by the *International Tract Society*, entitled, *The Everlasting Covenant*. In our small space here I can give but the barest references.

#### God's Own Purpose

Let us take a hasty glance over the entire history of God's people, and His purpose for and with them. Once the earth was perfect, and man was upright and its rightful ruler. Then came the fall, and the loss of dominion. Since that time, God has had but one purpose, to which He has been constantly working, namely, the restoration of man and the earth to the original condition, to make an entirely new creation.

To this end the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, is preached. There is but one Gospel of good news "to all people,"<sup>4</sup> and this is today the same that it was from the beginning; for with God is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning. Paul declared that whoever should presume to preach any other Gospel than that which he preached, must be accursed,<sup>5</sup> and he affirmed that he had said...

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 2:10.

<sup>5</sup> Galatians 1:8-9.



## **Acts 26**

<sup>32</sup> ...none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.

The Gospel which the apostles preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, was the very same that was proclaimed by the prophets of old;<sup>6</sup> and there will never be another. In the preaching of this Gospel, as well as in the receiving of it, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all are one in Christ Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

### **God's Choice of the Jews**

From the beginning God has been searching throughout the world, to find people who would be His agents in proclaiming the Gospel to mankind; and in every age He has found a few.

In the course of time Abraham was found, and chosen. His mission was to leave his father's house and his native land, and travel to and fro, proclaiming the name of Jehovah. He was the first foreign missionary whose lifework is recorded.

Because of his wonderful faith he became the father of a great people, whose mission it was likewise to preach the Gospel to the world, for the promise was that they should be a kingdom of priests. Read the history of that people, and you will see that God was continually sending messages by them to the heathen round them.

Jeremiah was ordained before his birth, to be a prophet to the heathen,<sup>8</sup> even as Paul later on was ordained to be the special apostle to the Gentiles.

### **Their Unfaithfulness**

But the Jews were not faithful as was Abraham.

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<sup>6</sup> 1 Peter 1:10-12.

<sup>7</sup> See *Romans* 3:22-24; 4:8-13; 10:12, 33; *Galatians* 3:7-8, 27-28; *Colossians* 3:9-11.

<sup>8</sup> *Jeremiah* 1:5.

### Hebrews 3

<sup>19</sup> They could not enter in because of unbelief.

They refused the high office of kings and priests, as ambassadors of God to be the head of the earth, and they chose instead to be a nation of servants, having a king over them, like the other nations.

For many hundred years God labored with the Jewish people, sending messages to them by the prophets, not merely that they might be saved, and live for themselves apart from the rest of mankind, but that they might accept the position which naturally falls to all children of Abraham, that of being light-bearers to the world.

But they forgot that their only advantage over other people lay in the fact that to them were committed the oracles of God,<sup>9</sup> to give to the rest, and their light went out. Then God sent them into captivity, and thus made even their apostasy serve as a means of enlightening the heathen; for through Daniel and a few other faithful men the truth of God was accepted by great kings, and was proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

### A Fixed Time Allotted

Still God did not become impatient with the nation which had been the recipients of His most wonderful favors, and even in their captivity He continued His offer to let them have the leading people in announcing the Gospel of the kingdom.

A vision was given to Daniel, in which was made known a period of time reaching down to the very last work of the Gospel on earth, before the coming of the Lord.<sup>10</sup> That period of time was to date from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem;<sup>11</sup> and from the whole period of twenty-three hundred prophetic days, or literal years, seventy weeks, or four

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<sup>9</sup> *Romans* 3:1-2.

<sup>10</sup> See *Daniel* 8:13-14.

<sup>11</sup> *Daniel* 9:23-27.

hundred and ninety years, were cut off or appropriated to the Jewish people.

That length of time was to be terminated by the events in immediate connection with the baptism, crucifixion, and ascension of Jesus. So long a time was allotted to the Jewish people, to see if they would accept the high destiny offered them, that of being the chief bearers of the message of the mercy of God to the world.

### **The Honor Rejected**

We know the result. They would not take the place. Jesus came to His own, and they that were His own received Him not. Their King came, but because He was not like earthly kings, they crucified Him. Just before that climax, when the measure of their impiety was filled, Jesus wept over their city, saying:

#### **Matthew 23**

<sup>37</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and stones them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not!

<sup>38</sup> Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!

All this was because they knew not the time of their visitation. Since that time the Jews as a nation have ceased to have any prominence in the Gospel message. They have no mission whatever to the world, and the highest honor that can come to them is that some of them may accept the Gospel, on the same terms that the Gentiles do, and be saved, thus becoming a part of the true Israel of God.

### **God's Purpose Unchanged**

It must not be supposed that while waiting for the Jewish people to take the place offered to them, God left himself without witness among the heathen. In every age the Gospel was being preached by every one who would let the Lord use him, and by the inanimate creation as well.

Nor did God ever confine His attention to that one People. The Jewish nation was a people called out from among the Gentiles, for Abraham was originally an idolater; and the true people of God were in old time, even as now, those who worshiped God in the spirit, and rejoiced in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.<sup>12</sup> Israelites are those in whom is no guile.

God's purpose has not changed, although the Jewish nation has shown itself unwilling to be God's peculiar people; for God is able of the very stones to raise up children unto Abraham.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Jewish Mission Still Carried On**

And yet the mission of the Jews to the world has not ceased,

#### **John 4**

<sup>22</sup> ...for salvation is of the Jews.

Jesus Christ, the Son of David, was a Jew, and He is to rule over the house of Jacob for ever. Whoever preaches...

#### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>8</sup> ...the unsearchable riches of Christ...

—is performing the work that God gave to the Jews. “Whosoever will”<sup>14</sup> is commissioned to echo the Gospel invitation, until this Gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world, for a witness to all people,

#### **Matthew 24**

<sup>14</sup> ...and then shall the end come.

And when that end comes, and the Saviour appears, many, out of...

#### **Revelation 7**

<sup>9</sup> ...all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues.

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<sup>12</sup> *Philippians 3:3.*

<sup>13</sup> *Psalms 32:2; John 1:47.*

<sup>14</sup> *Revelation 22:17.*

## **Matthew 8**

<sup>11</sup> Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

## 4. Growing in Absolute Knowledge

Present Truth, September 27, 1900

Can there be an absolute, and yet a growing, knowledge of God?

THERE is always the danger of misunderstanding one another's use of words, and so we must see in what sense you use the word "absolute." If you mean by it, "exhaustive," then of course the answer must be, No.

But I take it that you do not have this thought in mind, for in that case there would be no chance for a question, since it is self-evident that if one knows all there is to be known about anything he cannot learn more. But taking the word in the ordinary sense, I must answer unhesitatingly, Yes; and will try to make it clear to you.

There is nothing that will more perfectly illustrate the case than the relation of father and son, since God is our Father. Now the child knows its father absolutely, without any shadow of doubt. Yet he does not know as much as the father does, nor can he understand all his ways.

You have doubtless heard the story of the little boy who, when a man asked him who his father was, replied in a tone of incredulity:

"You, big man as you are, don't know my father? Why, I know him just as easy as can be."

Here we have absolute knowledge, in the fullest sense of the word. It is not knowledge that comes by study, and that can be increased by more study, but knowledge that is above and beyond all reason or explanation.

The child cannot tell how he knows his father, or how he came to know him; he simply knows him; and all the arguments of all the learned men in the world could not for a moment shake his

belief (which we clearly see in this case is positive knowledge) that the man spoken of is his father, nor could any learned disquisition make his knowledge more perfect. Yet as years go by, if he continues a faithful son, he will appreciate his father more than he possibly can now. Even so it is with us and our Father in heaven.

Perfection does not preclude growth. At every stage of its existence a plant may be perfect. Indeed, without perfection there cannot be perfect growth. We are “complete in Him,”<sup>15</sup> yet we are to “grow in grace.”<sup>16</sup> We are to be...

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>9</sup> ...filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,

—and yet are to be:

<sup>10</sup> Fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve knew God as His Father. His knowledge was as absolutely sure as it ever was; yet:

### **Luke 2**

<sup>52</sup> [He] increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Real growth in the knowledge of God can take place only when there is absolute knowledge of Him; otherwise our growth would be crooked. So we, knowing whom we have believed, may...

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>18</sup> Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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<sup>15</sup> *Colossians* 2:10.

<sup>16</sup> *2 Peter* 3:18.

## 5. Looking Forward, Not Backward

Present Truth, September 27, 1900

Is it not wrong for a child of God to dwell on his sins?

**A** CHILD of God, who knows what his inheritance is, will have something else to do, instead of dwelling upon his sins.

### **1 John 3**

<sup>9</sup> Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

This text is considered in the answer to another question in this “corner,”<sup>17</sup> and so we will here only note that it teaches that a child of God cannot have sins to dwell on. He has a far better dwelling place. The psalmist prayed:

### **Psalms 119**

<sup>37</sup> Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity.

And that means our own vain thoughts and actions as well as those of others. We all know the power of evil associations. We know that it is dangerous and demoralizing for anybody continually to hear bad language, and to see wicked deeds. Long familiarity with sin tends insensibly to cause us to lose the sense of its wickedness.

Now just as a wise parent endeavors to shield his children from evil associations and influences and to keep them from bad companions, so God wishes us to part company with our sins, and with all thought of them.

### **Isaiah 55**

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

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<sup>17</sup> See the next article, “[Living Without Sin](#).”



We may be contaminated by dwelling upon evil deeds that we ourselves have committed, just as surely as by reading or listening to tales of bloody deeds. I suppose that what you specially refer to is the sins that have been committed in former days. Now the Bible does not tell us to look backward, but always forward.

### **Hebrews 12**

<sup>1</sup> Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

<sup>2</sup> Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.

We are to look at Jesus, not once at ourselves; and:

### **1 John 3**

<sup>5</sup> ...in Him is no sin.

He has taken all our sins upon himself, and has hidden them in the crimson stream of His life, so that they cannot be seen; therefore as long as we abide in Him our sins are not in sight for us to look at. Moreover, we are to forget them.

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>13</sup> This one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

<sup>14</sup> I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

When God himself casts our sins behind His back, and remembers them no more, we have no right to set them before our face, and think of them continually. We need something far better.

It is all right and necessary for us to remember that we are sinful creatures saved by grace, and that we stand only by faith; but what you mean in your question is the common practice of living in a state of self-condemnation, feeling that such unworthy people as we are, have no right to be glad. Now let us hear what the Bible has to say about this.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>33</sup> Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies.

<sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

This means that when we condemn one that God has justified, we condemn God. It is a fearful thing to lay anything to the charge of God's elect. We must not call a man guilty, when God declares him innocent. Who dare reverse the judgment of God?

But remember that this applies to ourselves as well as to other persons. I have no more right to condemn myself after God has justified me, than I have to condemn my neighbor. In either case, by condemning the justified sinner, I am declaring that the work of Christ is of no avail. I am denying the atonement. This is most surely inconsistent with a Christian life.

## **1 John 1**

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Therefore as soon as with contrite hearts we have confessed our sin to the Lord, we are to have done with it, leaving it all with Him. From thenceforth the righteousness of the Lord is to be our song and our rejoicing.

## 6. Living Without Sin

Present Truth, September 27, 1900

How can one live without sin?

**Y**OUR question reminds me, by contrast, with that of the Apostle Paul:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>2</sup> How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

In that question we have the answer to your question. It is possible to live free from sin, only by being dead...

### **Romans 6**

<sup>7</sup> ...for he that is dead is freed from sin.

Read the article in last week's *Present Truth*, entitled, "A Story of True Love,"<sup>18</sup> and there you will learn something about death to sin. But let us read further about living without sin:

### **1 John 3**

<sup>9</sup> Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Here we see that the remaining of the seed in the one born of God is that which makes it impossible for him to sin. What is that seed? We have the answer:

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>23</sup> Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides for ever.

The good seed is the Word of God, and it is incorruptible and everlasting. Whoever is born of that Word must be of the same nature as the Word, namely, incorruptible and eternal. So we read that by the promises of God we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and that:

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<sup>18</sup> See the first Article included in the Appendix: "[A Story of True Love](#)."

## **1 John 2**

<sup>17</sup> ...he that does the will of God abides forever.

The new birth is not a thing of a single moment. It is not, like the birth from the flesh, an event to be looked back on and commemorated at regularly recurring intervals; but it is a continuous thing. It is something always present. The seed by which we are generated abides in us, if we are indeed born of God, and the mystery of the incarnation is continually being enacted.

The life of Jesus, the inward man, is made manifest in our mortal flesh, and is renewed day by day.

## **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>11</sup> For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

<sup>16</sup> For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

If we grasp the fact that God does not beget us, and then give us an independent existence, as do earthly parents, but that He is our dwelling place, and that, like Christ, we are to abide...

## **John 1**

<sup>18</sup> ...in the bosom of the Father,

—we shall see the possibility of living without sin. No one who believes at all in the birth from above could for a moment harbor the thought that one could sin in the moment of birth. But when we see that the new birth is a continuous process, we can see how impossible it is for such a one to sin at all.

## **Ephesians 6**

<sup>16</sup> Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Here we have the same thing:

## **Romans 10**

<sup>17</sup> Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

The Word of God hidden in the heart and forming the life, is a shield which guards one against, not a few, but all of the assaults of the adversary. The whole armor of God makes one able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

### **John 5**

<sup>18</sup> We know that whosoever is born of God sins not; but he that is born of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.

The shield of faith keeps the child of God, so that the devil cannot touch him. Thus it was that Jesus overcame in the wilderness of temptation. Every temptation was met and destroyed by the Word of God. So of the people of God in their contest with the same enemy we read:

### **Revelation 3**

<sup>11</sup> And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

The whole matter is summed up in this:

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

But boasting is entirely excluded by this process.

### **Habakkuk 2**

<sup>4</sup> Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.

The man who lives a sinless life in Christ can no more boast of his sinlessness than he can sin; for boasting is sin.

### **John 1**

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

This naturally leads to the next verse:

## **John 1**

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Confessing our sins, we are freed from sin; and continual confession means continual freedom. It is not continual sinning and continual cleansing, but continual confession and continual cleansing. A knowledge of our sinful nature, of the sin that continually lurks in our mortal flesh, waiting to spring upon us, and devour us, leads to constant trust in God, whose righteousness is our salvation.

Then if one asks you:

“Is it possible for a man to live without sin?”

You may answer:

“It is quite impossible for a man, but an easy matter for God in man.”

If one says:

“Do you live without sin?”

The reply should be:

“Not I, but Christ.”

And Christ is my life. There is continual, glorious victory over sin and Satan, for every one who lives by faith in God. No matter in what form the temptation comes.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>37</sup> In all these things we are more than conquerors though Him that loved us.

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>57</sup> Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 7. How to Be a Witness

Present Truth, October 4, 1900

For a long while I have had a great desire to find out how to build up an address, and every attempt at the study of God's word forces me to see my ignorance of what I have become a little more acquainted with.

The week before last a friend of my who has been managing a Gospel Mission church wrote to me, asking if I would take the services on Sunday. I prayed to the Lord, promising to do my best with His help, and I am glad to say that a lady came to me after the evening service, and thanked me for the word,...but in myself I could not think that justice had been done according to the opportunity....

Now I do not expect to become a preacher, but I want to become a witness for Christ. The reason I have stated my experience is because I want you to advise me what books I should get to read, to help me in my desire to become an effective witness. I have Ellicott's *Commentary*, Gray's *Biblical Museum*, Young's and Cruden's *Concordances*, Barnes' *Notes on the Gospels*, Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, and Finney's *Lectures to Professing Christians*. I do not expect to find any royal road, but something to guide me, and enable me to think myself when I read the Word.

**Y**OUR desire is a most laudable one, for God desires nothing more than that all His people shall be faithful witnesses for Him; and therefore I shall gladly do whatever I can to help you.

I take the greater pleasure in this, because I am sure that there are many others who are in very much the same situation that you are,—longing to witness, but not knowing how. If our consideration of the question shall lead to further study of the grand theme, I shall be all the more glad.

### **The First and Greatest Requisite**

One of the first things that comes to my mind when you speak of witnessing, is the promise of the Lord:

## **Acts 1**

<sup>8</sup> You shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This really covers the whole ground, because the Holy Ghost is the great Teacher of the Truth,<sup>19</sup> and the One who teaches us how to tell it. Another text which came to my mind as I read your letter was this:

## **Psalms 51**

<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your presence; and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup> Restore unto me the joy of your salvation; and uphold me with your free Spirit.

<sup>13</sup> Then will I teach transgressors your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You.

This text amounts to the same thing as the other, because it shows our dependence on the Spirit of God, by whom comes conviction of sin and righteousness.

## **Revelation 22**

<sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come.

This is all; go and tell the things that you have seen and heard with God. That is all that a true witness can possibly do. True preaching of the Gospel is not a profession; it is simply one soul talking to another, and telling from personal experience the goodness and power of God; telling what one sees and knows.

## **Jesus Christ the Leading Witness**

### **Revelation 3**

<sup>14</sup> [Jesus Christ] is the faithful and true Witness.

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<sup>19</sup> *John* 14:26; 16:13.



We are to be joined with Him in witnessing for God, for we read these words:

**Isaiah 43**

<sup>10</sup> You are my witnesses says the Lord, and my Servant whom I have chosen.

The Servant whom God has chosen as His chief witness is the Lord Jesus.<sup>20</sup> If we learn how He testifies, we shall know what kind of testimony is expected of us. Hear what He says:

**John 8**

<sup>26</sup> He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him.

**John 14**

<sup>24</sup> The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

**John 12**

<sup>49</sup> For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

**Taught of God**

It is clear, therefore, that our witness is to consist only of the words which God teaches us. The Apostle Paul writes:

**1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>13</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

<sup>14</sup> Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches.

**John 6**

<sup>45</sup> As it is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.

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<sup>20</sup> See *Isaiah* 42:1-4.

## Ambassadors in Christ's Stead

Every soul that is reconciled to God has had put into him the word and ministry of reconciliation, so that we are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, to pray in His stead that men will be reconciled unto God, and to do this by the presence of God in us even as it was in Him.<sup>21</sup> Christ says:

### John 20

<sup>21</sup> As my Father has sent me, even so I send you.

Christ received His words direct from the Father, and we are to do the same. No one would dare accuse Him of ignorance, or of any lack of tact or courtesy, and He was a most perfect Teacher; yet He studied only one book, the Book of God. The theological schools of the Jews had nothing to do with training His mind or forming His style; yet all the people were charmed with His manner, and were astonished at His teaching. But He himself tells us that He spoke only the words that He had learned with the Father.

## The Eternal Word Put Into the Mouth

Jesus was the Prophet like unto Moses, speaking only the things which God gave Him. When Moses received the commission from God, he was afraid to go, because he did not think that he could speak. Then the Lord said to him,

### Exodus 4

<sup>11</sup> Who has made man's mouth? or who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?

<sup>12</sup> Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you shall say.

The very same word of encouragement God speaks to every timid, trembling soul. Reassuring us by reminding us of what He did in delivering Israel from Egypt, He says,

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<sup>21</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

### **Isaiah 51**

<sup>16</sup> I have put my words in your mouth, and I have covered you in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, You are my people.

He says to us, referring to himself as the deliverer from the Egypt of sin:

### **Psalms 81**

<sup>10</sup> Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Now read this most blessed assurance:

### **Isaiah 59**

<sup>20</sup> And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, says the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord: my Spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed, says the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

There need be no lack of testifying power with the one who learned from the great Teacher. There is nothing that God wishes to have done, that cannot be done by the one whose soul is cleansed from sin by the abiding presence of the Spirit.

### **It is the Spirit that Bears Witness**

Even if it has not struck you that we are here in Christ's place, to carry on the work which He begun, and that therefore we may confidently expect that the Father will give us the same equipment that He gave to Him, we must know that we are sent by God.

Surely it is a most presumptuous thing for any person to undertake to present the message of God without having been sent. But,

### **John 3**

<sup>34</sup> He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for God gives not the Spirit by measure.

### **Proverbs 1**

<sup>20</sup> Wisdom cries without; she utters her voice in the streets;

<sup>21</sup> She cries in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates; in the city she utters her words, saying,

<sup>23</sup> Turn at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

This is like *Psalms* 51:9-13. First hearken to the voice of the Spirit convicting of sin, not in a half-way manner, but submitting to every word of God, and then the Spirit will be poured out in a way to make you a witness. You will then be but the mouthpiece of the Spirit, for:

### **1 John 5**

<sup>6</sup> It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

## **The Experience of Isaiah**

This was the experience of the prophet Isaiah. When he saw God sitting on His high throne, he cried:

### **Isaiah 6**

<sup>5</sup> Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

<sup>6</sup> Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar;

<sup>7</sup> And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.

<sup>8</sup> Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

<sup>9</sup> Then said I, Here am I; send me, and He said, Go.

## **The Great Secret of Witnessing**

The great secret of witnessing is to become acquainted with the Lord, and to know His sin-cleansing and His keeping power. He who knows this for himself, because he has the Spirit's own testi-

mony, so that he has no need of any human assurance of the fact, can speak with an authority that is impossible to the greatest scholar in the world, who has not that witness. The whole secret of the power of the apostles was that...

#### **Acts 4**

<sup>13</sup> ...they had been with Jesus.

Not only will one who has been with Jesus, and who walks with Him, be able to witness for Him, but he will not be able to keep from testifying. The rulers threatened the apostles with the severest punishment if they persisted in witnessing for Christ, but they said,

<sup>20</sup> We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Jeremiah had a similar experience. He was derided and reproached and threatened, and he says:

#### **Jeremiah 20**

<sup>9</sup> Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

Remember that these men were ordinary men, such as we are. The apostles were fishermen whom the Lord called; and Jeremiah was a timid child until God put His words in his mouth:

#### **Jeremiah 1**

<sup>4</sup> Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

<sup>5</sup> Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet unto the nations.

<sup>6</sup> Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatsoever I command you, you shall speak.

<sup>8</sup> Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

## **Building Up an Address**

Now a word about “building up an address.” Let me beg of you as a friend never to attempt such a thing. Think what your message is, and the condition of those to whom you are sent. You are sent to save men who are on the brink of destruction. Would you “build up an address” to men who were drowning? It makes me wince when I hear people talk about “giving an address” at some Gospel meeting.

Preparation is needed, and abundance of it, but when the Word has been incorporated into the heart and life, then your work is simply to give it forth. The Word must be made flesh in you, and then you can speak as Christ did. You are not to take something in your hand or in your head, and pass it on to the people, but you are to give them yourself,—your transformed self,—your life.

I know the danger of looseness and of rambling talk; but the one who testifies...

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>12</sup> ...with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven...

—is saved from it. Stephen, Paul, and Peter, of whose sermons we have some outlines, did not “build up an address” when they moved the multitudes, but they were not illogical nor rambling in their talk. The reason is that they preached Christ, not about Christ, and He is the *Logos*, the beginning and the end of logic.

I know that this is contrary to all the canons of theological teaching; but one can learn more in five minutes from the Holy Spirit, about preaching, than in five years at any theological seminary without the Holy Spirit.

## **Avoid Religious Quackery**

Do you know that there is such a thing as religious quackery, just the same as there is medical quackery? A quack in medicine is one who has a few prescriptions, which may have proved useful in some cases, and who applies them to every case. He will tell you just what sort of remedy to give for every disease, regardless of the differences in different patients.

But the real physician is the one who studies the principles of health and of disease, and who endeavors to bring the healing life to each person just according to his need.

Even so with the religious teacher. You can find books that will tell you just how to deal with every sort of sinner, and just what texts are applicable to each state, and you may read them all through and be no better fitted to deal with souls than before.

Fill yourself with the Word of God, and then let the Holy Spirit bring to your remembrance on each occasion just the things that are needed by the person or persons before you.

## **The Books that are Needed**

Now what books are necessary? Here I can give you exact and definite information. You need a fairly large library, not less than sixty-six books; but they are not very expensive, and I doubt not that you have them already. They are the books of the Old and the New Testament. It is absolutely impossible for you to learn to witness for Christ from any other books than these.

I will not disparage commentaries, any more than the good men who have written them; but remember this one thing: You are called to be a witness, and a witness must tell what he knows, and must not repeat what somebody else has already said. You do not want to be a phonograph.

Some other man may have given a good testimony, but that testimony is his, not yours. If he has written it down, then everybody can read it for himself, and he can continue to witness after

he is dead. It is his own voice. But if you or I repeat that testimony, we are not witnessing, but are merely echoing.

God wants fresh testimony from every individual, and not the repetition of what somebody else has said better than we can. If he could speak better than me, then it is folly for us to ape him. God sends us to tell what we have seen, even though it be but little.

If we do not know much, then we cannot testify much; but the little that we know, if we do indeed know it, is just as effective as the same amount spoken by the most learned man in the world; and if we speak that which we do not absolutely know for ourselves as the direct revelation from God, then our talk is worse than useless. In such a case we cannot know but that we are leading the people astray.

## **A Royal Road**

You say that you do not expect to find any royal road, but I am happy to be able to point one out to you. Here it is, described by the king who trod it to a greater extent than any other person in the world except Christ:

### **Proverbs 2**

<sup>1</sup> My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you;

<sup>2</sup> So that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding;

<sup>3</sup> Yea, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;

<sup>4</sup> If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

<sup>5</sup> Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

<sup>7</sup> He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous; He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

<sup>8</sup> He keeps the paths of judgment, and preserves the way of His saints.



<sup>9</sup> Then shall you understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

When you have this preparation, you will not need to “build up an address” to sinners seeking the way of salvation, any more than you would to point out the road with which you are familiar, to a traveler who asks you the way.

If you are but the instrument of the Spirit, He will speak to each one through you, saying,

**Isaiah 30**

<sup>21</sup> This is the way; walk in it;

—and there will be no wavering in the testimony.

### **Some Personal Experience**

Will you let me give you a little personal experience in this matter of studying the Bible and using commentaries? It may help you.

When I was a good deal younger than I am now, and was desirous as you are of knowing God’s Word, so that I could carry the message of salvation to others, I set myself to study a certain book in the Bible, which attracted me wonderfully.

I determined to know it thoroughly, so I took my commentary and began to study systematically. I began to read the *Introduction*, in which the author tells all about the circumstances under which the book was written, the condition of the people to whom it was addressed, and other general matter, all drawn from the book itself. In this *Introduction* there were frequent references to the Scripture text, and as I wished to know everything for myself, I had to look up these references. But this was slow work, and interrupted the continuity of the thought.

I saw that if I wished to get the most profit from my commentator, and to follow him easily, I must have in my mind the whole of the text of the book on which he was commenting, so that whenever he made any reference to it I would know, without turning

to it, just what he said. In short, I saw that in order to be able to understand what the Scripture writer meant, I must know just what he said.

So I laid aside my commentary for a time, until I could get the words of the Scripture in my mind. I labored indeed as one who seeks a fortune, for I was in earnest. Verse by verse, sentence by sentence, I went through the whole of the book under consideration. By day and by night I meditated upon the relation of one particular sentence to that which preceded and followed it. Night after night as I lay in bed I repeated the words until I fell asleep.

I must remind you, by the way, that I, like you, did not expect to become a preacher; I simply wished to understand God's Word for myself. Nor was I merely a student, without any other occupation. All the time I was studying I was working with my hands and head during the day.

But as I walked to my work in the morning and at noon, and as I returned home, I had my little Bible in my pocket, and was studying my precious book, getting ready to study and understand the commentary upon it. At last frequent reference to the text, and a most diligent questioning of it, fixed it so firmly in my mind that if any sentence in it was quoted I could instantly tell all the context. If a verse were referred to by number, the words of it at once flashed through my mind.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of times I repeated the entire book slowly and thoughtfully, until I could take in the whole of it at a glance. Then I took up my long-neglected commentary, but lo, it had lost all its interest for me. It had nothing to tell me, that I did not already know; and I discovered that no man can possibly know anything more about the Bible than what he learns from the Bible itself.

If any man knows any truth of God's Word, he must have learned it from that Word, and the Word stands open for every other man to learn the same thing for himself. God is no respecter of persons, but gives wisdom to all who ask. Even people of little

learning may be wise in the things of God, for He has hid His deep things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes. Inspiration says:

## **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>7</sup> Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give you understanding in all things.

## **John 7**

<sup>17</sup> If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

I have written you much more than I thought to write, but the subject is inexhaustible, and one that lies very close to my heart. May the Lord bless you, and make you able to be a minister of life.

## 8. The First Sunday Law

Present Truth, October 11, 1900

Can you oblige me by giving me the exact date and wording of Constantine's Sunday edict? If you can give me also the years of Constantine's birth, accession to the throne, and death, I shall be glad.

CONSTANTINE, surnamed Magnus, "the Great," was born at Nissa, in Asia Minor, in February, 274 AD. After serving with distinction in the army, under Diocletian and Maximian, he was allowed to join his father in Britain, after the appointment of the latter to the dignity of Caesar.

Upon the death of his father (July 25, 306 AD) he assumed the purple as Augustus, and as soon as prudence and circumstances would permit he proceeded to Italy to make good his claim by force of arms. After a series of successes, his position was assured by the decisive victory over Maxentius at the Milvian bridge, near Rome, October 28, 312 AD.

The year following this he issued the famous Edict of Milan (March, 313 AD) restoring all forfeited civil and religious rights to the Christians, and recognizing Christianity as on a level with Paganism in the Empire. He died at Nicomedia, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 337 AD. His famous Sunday Edict was issued in 321 AD, and reads thus:

Let all the judges and townspeople, and all artisans, rest on the venerable day of the sun. But let those who are situated in the country freely and at full liberty attend to the cultivation of their fields; because it often happens that no other day so fit for sowing or planting vines; lest, by neglecting the proper occasion, they should lose the benefits granted by Divine bounty.

This covers the whole of your question, but it may be well in this connection to note a few points on which there is quite general misunderstanding.

For one thing it should be known that Constantine did not issue this edict as a Christian. Whether Constantine was ever in his life moved by the slightest Christian principle, or was ever guided by anything else than State policy and selfish ambition, is very doubtful; but it is quite certain that in 321 AD he made no pretense of being a Christian.

In the year following he issued another decree, regulating pagan soothsaying. It was not till just before his death that he went through the form of baptism, and up to that time he had played his part with such consummate skill that the adherents of the Church and the pagan priests both claimed him as one of them. Schaff, the learned Church historian, says that he...

...enjoined the observance of Sunday, though not as Dies Domini [the Lord's day], but as Dies Solis [the day of the sun], in conformity to his worship of Apollo.

*Chambers' Encyclopedia* (Article "Sunday") says:

Unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the Sabbatical observance of that day [Sunday] to known to have been ordained, to the edict of Constantine, 321 AD.

It must not be supposed that this was the origin of Sunday observance. Constantine, as the most skillful politician the world has ever seen, saw how things were drifting, and issued his edict accordingly. The Church was being paganized, and already the worship of Apollo, as the rising sun, had been adopted by professed Christians, who made it identical with "the Sun of righteousness."<sup>22</sup> Thus Constantine's edict pleased both pagans and professed Christians, and at the same time served to further the union between the two, which later on culminated in the Papacy.

It will be noted that Constantine's edict called only for judges and artisans to cease from labor on Sunday, but granted farmers fall liberty to continue their agricultural operations, which shows that up to that time, at least, nobody had considered Sunday as a

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<sup>22</sup> *Malachi* 4:2.

rest day; but it also shows that Constantine did not change the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first. That is something that cannot be charged to any person.

Of course when we speak of changing the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first, we mean only changing the practice, since the Sabbath itself can no more be changed than God's throne can.

Constantine was but one factor in a long chain of events, all manipulated by the establisher and head of the Papacy, namely, Satan. The substitution of Sunday observance for Sabbath observance, like the introduction of images of Christ, instead of Christ in the heart, was part of that great apostasy which resulted from substituting human philosophy and tradition for the simple Word of God.

The reformation, which will enshrine Christ in the heart, and restore the Sabbath to its original and rightful position, will be effected only by accepting the Word of God in its fullness, and living by every portion of it, without omission or substitution.

## 9. Why Does God Permit Temptation?

Present Truth, October 11, 1900

Why does God allow things to happen and people to act in such a way as to irritate me, and cause me to be impatient and ill-natured, when I should otherwise be quiet and peaceful?

**T**HAT is a question that troubles very many, and is simply another form of the old question:

“Why does God permit evil?”

It is a great problem, but a very few minutes' consideration may suffice to set our minds at rest concerning it.

In the first place we should bear in mind that temptation does not make sin. Tantalizing words or actions do not make us impatient, but simply reveal the impatience that is in us.

For example, here is a glass of water, which looks very clear; I take a glass rod, and stir it up, and behold, it is muddy; but nobody will suppose that the glass rod put the mud into the water. You would say at once that the impurity was there all the time, and that the agitation only served to make it apparent. Even so it is with temptation and sin.

Here are the words of the Scripture:

### **James 1**

<sup>13</sup> Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man:

<sup>14</sup> But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

And again:

<sup>2</sup> Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations;

<sup>3</sup> Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience.

<sup>4</sup> But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing.

From this we see that temptations never make a man worse than he was before. The opportunity to sin does not make the sin. There are thousands of seemingly virtuous people, very complacent in their self-righteousness, who might be libertines<sup>23</sup> if circumstances were different. It is not that circumstances determine one's character, but that they reveal it. Man looks only on the outward act, but God looks at the heart; and in His eyes the man whose heart is impure is equally guilty with the one who commits the open sin.

Moreover the temptation to sin, even though it result in a person's fall into it, may be a blessing, in that it shows him just what he is, and where he needs to be on his guard. Self-confidence must be broken, in order that we may trust in God.

Nobody can account for the origin of evil. It is a strange thing, a monstrosity, having no reason for its existence. It first appeared in the heart of Lucifer, while he was yet in heaven, in the immediate presence of God, and occupying the highest position of authority and trust possible to any created being. What temptation could there have been for him to sin? Every circumstance was as favorable to righteousness as it could possibly be, or as it ever will be for the redeemed saints. No; the temptation sprang up in his own heart. He was led away of his own lust, and enticed, and God had no responsibility in the matter.

You ask what assurance there is then that the redeemed saints in heaven may not at some time fall again, even as Satan did. We have this positive assurance, that they will have been so thoroughly tested on every point; and proved true, that nothing can shake them. The trial that is now taking place, and the Judgment day, which is to follow, will so set forth the absolute justice and the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable love of God, that there can never again be room for any doubt. But bear in mind that all the saved will be those who have overcome every temptation, and

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<sup>23</sup> *Libertines*: a person who leads an immoral life.



who have trusted God implicitly before they could see that which the Judgment will reveal.

Do not imagine that it is by taking His people beyond the reach of temptation, that God will keep them sinless throughout eternity. He has something far better for us than that. He arms us so thoroughly that He can trust us in the midst of temptation, and we shall be safe. God will never arbitrarily remove temptation from mankind. Christ said,

#### **John 14**

<sup>30</sup> The prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me.

That will be the reason why when the righteous have been taken to dwell with God there will never again throughout eternity be any sin: they will have been so completely cleansed that nothing can ever stir up evil in their hearts.

But, believe me, so long as there is anything in our hearts that can respond to temptation, and we can be led into sin by any person or thing, we should not be free from sin even if we were in heaven itself. If we are stirred up to evil deeds here, we should in time find that something even in heaven would irritate us.

Let us, then, when temptations reveal to us what is in our hearts, not lose courage, and settle down in despair, but rejoice in the thought that in being tempted we are being made partakers of Christ's suffering, and that the temptation itself brings the way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. God's grace is sufficient for us, for His strength is made perfect in weakness.<sup>24</sup> We are to be...

#### **Romans 8**

<sup>37</sup> ...more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

But we should not be conquerors at all, if we were saved from sin merely by the removal of temptation. God provides us with power to live even in sinful flesh as free from sin as He himself,

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<sup>24</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:9.

and then when He takes us to himself, giving us spiritual bodies, in keeping with our nature, our joy will be beyond all expression.

## 10. All Things to All Men

Present Truth, October 18, 1900

Will you please explain *1 Corinthians 9:20*, where Paul says that to the Jews he became as a Jew?

**T**HIS text affords a good illustration of the fact that no scripture can be perfectly understood if torn out of its setting. This one has been misunderstood, and perverted, and very seldom has anyone learned from it that which it was designed to teach.

While studying it together for a few minutes we may not only get the valuable instruction that it contains for us, but may learn something about how to study the Bible for ourselves so as to profit by it.

In the first place, we must banish from our minds, as wholly out of keeping with the character of the Apostle Paul, the idea that he meant that he was a turncoat, holding his principles and habits subject to the various people with whom he associated. The common saying,

“When we are in Rome, we must do as the Romans do,”

—which is often quoted to justify conformity to worldly customs when associating with worldly people, does not find any authority in the writings of Paul.

Here as everywhere else, we must go back the beginning if we would understand a difficult saying. We have not time or space now to go back to the beginning of the Epistle, but we can go back far enough to get hold of the subject. In chapter eight we are taught by the apostle’s own example to be careful of offending the consciences of the weak.

He is not talking about conforming to customs that others follow, but of abstaining from even lawful things that they may be troubled over. Those who are so fearful of offending people by their religion should make a note of this. It is by self-denial,

rather than indulgence, in the things that other people indulge in, that we win them.

Coming into the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, we find that although the minister of the Gospel has the right to receive money, and it is ordained that...

### **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>14</sup> ...they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,

–the Apostle Paul did not take anything from the Corinthians, but supported himself while preaching among them.<sup>25</sup> He says that...

<sup>13</sup> ...they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar.

<sup>15</sup> But I have used none of those things...for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

He preached the Gospel willingly, yet such necessity was laid on him that he would have been compelled to preach even if he had been unwilling. This is in harmony with his words:

### **Romans 1**

<sup>14</sup> I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

<sup>15</sup> So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Paul felt that what he had received from Christ made him a debtor to all men. So he continues:

### **1 Corinthians 9 [RV]**

<sup>19</sup> What, then, is my reward? That, when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the Gospel.

<sup>20</sup> For though I were free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more.

<sup>21</sup> And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, (not being myself under the law), that I might gain them that are under the law; to

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<sup>25</sup> See also *Acts* 18:1-4.

them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God but under [in] law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law.

<sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.

Read further, and you will see that Paul is here speaking of self-denial, and not of conforming to other people's evil habits. He says:

### **1 Corinthians 9 [RV]**

<sup>23</sup> I do all things for the Gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof.

<sup>24</sup> Know you not that they which run in a race run all, but one receives the prize? Even so run that you may attain.

<sup>25</sup> And every one that strives in the games is temperate in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

<sup>26</sup> I therefore run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air;

<sup>27</sup> But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage, that by any means after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

Read the entire connection carefully, and you cannot fail to see that here we have the illustration of the exhortation, given through the same apostle:

### **Galatians 6**

<sup>9</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Paul was free from all men, free with the liberty that Christ gives, yet he would not be a lord over God's heritage, but chose rather to be the servant of all. In this he was following Christ, who was...

### **Galatians 4**

<sup>4</sup> ...made of a woman, born under the law...

<sup>6</sup> That He might redeem them that were under the law.

Christ puts himself into every man's place, taking upon himself the burden of each one's sin, in order that they may be saved. Even so must His ambassadors do. Although delivered and kept from sin, they must, like their Master, be able to meet every sinner just where he stands, or rather, where he lies, and sympathize with him.

Having learned the plague of our own heart and been delivered from it, having learned the weakness of humanity, and the power of Divinity, we are to know that the sins of all men reside in our flesh, and then we may make them know the power that saves.

Thus we are indeed "all things to all men", not in such a way as to make them think that their ways are all right, but in such a way that some, at least, will be able to forsake their ways, and turn to the Lord.

# 11. How to Remember the Word

Present Truth, October 18, 1900

How can I remember all that I hear?

**I** TAKE it for granted that you have reference to Bible teaching and sermons, which go from your mind sometimes almost as soon as you have heard them. At any rate, after hearing hundreds of Bible readings and Gospel sermons, you find yourself unable to recall any of them in particular.

You will doubtless be surprised when I tell you that I do not think this is to be regretted. A great memory is not an unmixed blessing. If you could remember the whole of any sermon you hear, so as to be able to repeat it to your friends in just the order that it was given, and in almost the same words, it would be a thing to be deplored, rather than to be proud of.

I recall a man of my acquaintance who had a wonderful memory for Scripture texts, so that he could quote all that he had heard or read, and could give the reference accurately, yet his real knowledge of the Scriptures was very limited. The saving truth of the Word was not written in his heart. He had a wonderful memory for words, but not much hold of the Word. He could talk glibly to others, quoting texts and putting them together in very good order; but what he said did not take a deep hold of his hearers.

On the other hand I have known some persons with poor memory, as they would tell you, meager attainments in educational lines, and what some would call limited mental capacity, who had the Word so hidden in their hearts that it was a great blessing to them and to others.

Memory is only a part of the mind, not by any means the whole of it. To have a great memory does not necessarily indicate the possession of a great mind. In saying this I do not depreciate the value of a good memory, but only urge that it be used in the right

direction, and not allowed to degenerate into a mere recorder of words. A really good memory is something far different from the tape in a telegraph instrument or the cylinder in a phonograph.

Let me tell you that no true Bible teacher or Gospel minister desires to have his hearers store up his words so that they can give them back to him. No man wishes this, except the one who is giving his own words, fine phrases and sentences built up with great care, and these are usually not worth remembering.

But if the minister is a preacher of the Word, one sent from God and therefore speaking the words of God, he desires a far different evidence that his work has been successful, than the hearing of his words repeated in a testimony meeting. What is this evidence? It is simply the changed life.

The Word of God is good seed. Now no farmer ever wishes to get the same seed back that he sows in the earth. He knows that if it does not die,

### **John 12**

<sup>24</sup> ...it abides alone; but if it die it brings forth much fruit.

If the earth should hold the seed for months, and then return it to the farmer just as he sowed it, he would say that he had labored in vain.

In like manner we give food to the hungry, not expecting and not declaring ever to see it again. If the food we give to our children be retained by them for a time, and then should appear just as they received it we should be alarmed. We should know that there could be no growth under such conditions. The food that is eaten must never again appear in the same form, but must show itself in increased strength and activity. Then we know that it has been received to profit. Thus must it be with the Word of God upon which we feed.

The hearers of the Word are not to be mere echoes. The Gospel plan is that everybody should be original, an original, independent thinker, in the proper sense of the term. No person is to



build upon any other person, but upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ:

### **1 Corinthians 3**

<sup>11</sup> For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The promise is:

### **John 6**

<sup>45</sup> They shall be all taught of God.

True thinking, right thinking, is the product of the Spirit of God in the soul, the expression in words of the experience of the life. This is all the real originality that is possible. True originality is the working of...

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>11</sup> ...that one and the selfsame Spirit, distributing to every man severally as He will.

Thus there is no ground for anybody to complain of lack of education, nor any reason for one to ape another, for the Gospel itself provides the highest education for all. There is no teacher like God.

### **Psalms 19**

<sup>7</sup> The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

This wisdom is not on the surface, but is in the life and character.

### **Psalms 111**

<sup>10</sup> A good understanding have all they that do His commandments.

You may have heard the story of the poor washerwoman whose pastor, not so wise as she, chided her because she could not recall even the text of the sermon he had preached the day before. She was bleaching cloth on the grass, and she pointed to it saying:

“You see this cloth? I pour water on it, and the cloth does not hold any of it, yet it keeps getting whiter; so it is with the Word that I hear; I am not able to keep it all in my memory, but it leaves me whiter.”

The Gospel sermon that has been of more service to me than all others combined, changing the whole course of my life, and furnishing a constant supply of strength and courage, was one that I heard many years ago, and of which I cannot remember a single word. More than that, I could not have told the text or repeated a single sentence five minutes after the talk was finished. Indeed, there has never been any impression in my mind that I heard a word of it; but the influence of it will last through eternity. In it I saw Christ crucified for me, and that so completely absorbed my mind that every human utterance was obliterated. I have never regretted not being able to recall the words of that discourse.

But you may say that you would like to be able to recall and use some of the words of the Bible, and it is well that you should; for I do not wish to be understood as meaning that our knowledge of Divine truth is to be hazy and indefinite. It is possible for every person to be able to recall all the Scripture texts that he needs. God’s method of instruction is such that all may learn, and He teaches us to profit.

### **Proverbs 16**

<sup>3</sup> Commit your works unto the Lord, and your thoughts shall be established.

It all depends upon what is assimilated and incorporated into the life. If you would get the most benefit from the food you eat, you must chew it a long time. It is not the great quantity that you eat, that determines the amount of strength you will have, but that which you assimilate.

All the food that you can transform into flesh and blood and bone, does you good, and is available for use all the time. That which your system does not appropriate is of no use to you. And

thorough mastication, chewing the food for a long time, is the surest way to provide for its assimilation.

Even so it is with the Word, upon which we are to feed, that we may grow thereby. It is not by reading or hearing a great deal, that we grow spiritually, but by meditating a great deal on a little until we extract something from it that feeds our souls.

### **Psalm 1**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night.

<sup>3</sup> And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper.

You may never be able to recall at will all the Scripture texts that you have thus assimilated, and it is not necessary that you should. When the proper time comes,—when you need them in your own conflict with Satan, or to help some other struggling soul,—the Spirit of God will bring them to your remembrance, and you will be astonished to find how many you know, and how aptly they come to mind.

And you will remember not only the exact words, but often the location of them as well. The experiences that affect one's life are not only remembered, but they carry with them the impress of their surroundings. You have no difficulty in remembering just where certain things occurred in your life. Deaths, marriages, the meeting with or parting from friends, and a thousand other things, not only stand out prominently before you, but you can see every detail of the places where they occurred, although you have never made any effort to do so.

So as you feed upon the Word, those portions that mark an era in your life will remain with you, and will carry with them the

picture of their place in the Bible. So be of good courage, knowing that God has chosen the weak and foolish things of this world:

### **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And that Christ is made unto us wisdom, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:

<sup>30</sup> But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

## 12. The Eternal Sabbath

Present Truth, October 25, 1900

Since the Sabbath is the memorial of the creation of the earth, does not the fourth commandment constitute an exception to the statement that the law is the character of God, and therefore coexistent with Him? Could there have been any Sabbath before the creation of this earth? and if not, can the fourth commandment be considered strictly as of moral obligation, since moral principles can have no beginning except in God?

**T**HIS is a question which touches the very heart of Sabbath-keeping, and I am glad of the privilege of talking it over with the readers of *Present Truth*, since the failure to understand it has led many to make shipwreck of faith, and a right knowledge of it brings one into the closest fellowship with God.

In the first place we must remember that it does not necessarily follow that our first introduction to anything is the beginning of its existence. The fact that we did not know a thing before, does not prove that there was no such thing before. God himself is the Beginning, the source of all things, the universal storehouse of good. A thing that is first made known to the world in this age may have been hidden in Him for eternal ages. He is the sum of all truth and morality, and He reveals himself to His creatures just as they have need of Him.

So even if we consider the Sabbath as first made known in the universe at the creation of this world, that fact would not by any means detract from the morality of the fourth commandment. It all comes from God; therefore:

### **Romans 7**

<sup>12</sup> The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

God is Spirit; therefore:

## **Romans 7**

<sup>14</sup> We know that the law is spiritual.

This is as far as we really need to consider the subject, since what goes on in other worlds, or what took place before the creation of this world, does not specially concern us; but there is a principle involved in the question, which we may discuss without being irreverent or curious.

Everything that is, except God, had a beginning. He created all things by Jesus Christ.

## **Colossians 1**

<sup>14</sup> In whom [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

<sup>16</sup> For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him and unto Him;

<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Moreover all things have not been brought into existence at the same time. When the Lord...

## **Job 38**

<sup>4</sup> ...laid the foundations of the earth...

<sup>7</sup> The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

Now the Sabbath was given to man as a reminder of himself as Creator. It was given in Eden, in order that man in his unfallen state need never fall through forgetting his Maker; and since there is equal reason for all other created beings to remember God as their Creator, that they may give unto Him the glory due to Him, it is evident that the Sabbath is as old as the first created being.

Sabbath means rest. The word is but the untranslated Hebrew word for rest. It is God's rest, and, given to His creatures, teaches them to rest in Him. No angel in heaven created himself, or can

maintain his existence or his purity by his own power. All things are of God, and all things continue to exist only in Christ.

Rest in God is the universal law of existence. Wherever there is perfect rest in God, there is perfect righteousness and strength; and just to the extent that any creature undertakes to manage himself and his own affairs does he fall below the standard of perfection. Sabbath-keeping, rest in God, is therefore the seal of perfection, not only in this world, but also in every part of God's universe.

It is because the false principle of justification by works is so firmly seated even in the majority of those who decry it, that the Sabbath is so little understood. Men seem to think that they are raising an insuperable objection to the Sabbath when they exclaim:

“Oh, but we are not justified by works!”

Exactly, and just for that reason must we keep the Sabbath, that is, rest in God, if we would be righteous. Not to keep the Sabbath, not to rest in God, is to seek to establish our own righteousness.

We see therefore that from the very nature of the case the Sabbath of the Lord is as eternal as He himself. He rested in His own fullness and perfection in the days of eternity, before anything was made, and as soon as the first thing was created, that thing rested in His everlasting power. Instead of this earth being the only place where the Sabbath is kept, it is the only place where it is broken.

It need not take long to answer the question that may arise, concerning the varying length of days in the various planets. The seventh day is the seventh day, whether on the earth or on Jupiter, and the inhabitants of the latter planet cannot have any more difficulty in observing the seventh day than those of this planet.

And just as travelers to various parts of this earth may and should observe the Sabbath wherever they are, so in the ages to come, the explorers of God's universe will gladly join with the inhabitants of any planet where they may be, in keeping the Sabbath as it comes to them. And on this earth, which will then be the place of God's throne, the center of His universal dominion:

**Isaiah 66**

<sup>23</sup> It shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before the Lord.



## 13. How We Know the Bible is Inspired

Present Truth, November 1, 1900

How can we know that the Bible is the Word of God? Having accepted it as the Word, how may we know that we have the whole of it?

**T**HIS is a question that has vexed very many persons, and one with which the enemies of the Bible have delighted to perplex those whose faith was not well established in it; yet it really offers us no difficulty whatever, and may be answered by a little child. Indeed, there is nothing else in the world so plain, and so easy to be known, as that the Bible is the inspired Word of the living God.

### The Testimony of the Child

If you should ask a little child who, like Timothy of old, has been instructed in the Holy Scriptures, how he knows that the Bible is the true Word of God, he would not be able to give you a categorical answer. Childlike, he might say,

“Because it is,”

—and no better answer could be given. To one who, like Timothy, has from his childhood known the Holy Scriptures, it never occurs that there can be any question as to their authenticity. They are their own evidence.

To one who knows them, they are self-evidently the Word of God, and it is as impossible to demonstrate the fact to another as it is to demonstrate an axiom in mathematics. There can be no demonstration, except the sight of the eyes, that the whole of a thing is greater than any of its parts; and even so there can be no demonstration of the fact that the Bible is the Word of God, except that of experience. Faith is simply the recognition of things that are. Truth is “that which is,” and all we have to do is to get our eyes open to see it.

## Faith Comes By Hearing

But someone will say, with one writer, that this evidence leaves “no Bible for the impenitent,” that is, that if experience gives the knowledge, than those who have not yielded themselves to the Lord have no means by which they may know that what they read is His Word.

Do not think so for a moment. God has not left himself without witness, and although it is he that wills to do the will of God, who knows of the teaching,<sup>26</sup> it is also true that God works in every man to will as well as to do.<sup>27</sup>

### Romans 10

<sup>17</sup> Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

The power of the Word is such that the very first sound of it that is heard carries with it the conviction of its truthfulness.

### Psalms 119

<sup>130</sup> The entrance of your Word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

## Personal Experience

May I take advantage of our private talk to give you a little personal experience? It is not necessary to go into the details of how I, having been in my earliest childhood a reader of the Bible, came, through “the deceitfulness of sin,”<sup>28</sup> to doubt everything.

### Psalms 73

<sup>22</sup> So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before the Lord.

Having been led captive by Satan, I of course had no “mind of my own” (for nobody can have a mind of his own unless he has “the mind of the Lord”<sup>29</sup>).

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<sup>26</sup> John 7:17.

<sup>27</sup> Philippians 2:13.

<sup>28</sup> Hebrews 3:13.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:16.

### John 3

<sup>27</sup> A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

And therefore I like a simpleton echoed the stale doubts that have been repeated by skeptics for centuries, and fancied that they were original with me. So I went so far in my stupid unbelief as to say that the inspiration of the Bible was the same as that of Shakespeare or any other writer who has had power to hold the attention of the people.

Well, how did I become convinced of the reality of Divine things, and that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, given by His Spirit? Easily enough, and it took not more than a minute. The perfect knowledge which has left no room for a shade of doubt from that day to this was conveyed to me in far less time than it has taken you to read these lines.

The method was simple: God himself spoke to me by His Spirit. He did not enter into any argument to prove to me that He was speaking, or that His Word is true; He simply told me that I was a sinner, and pointed out some of the sins to which I was specially addicted. He showed me myself and all the deformity of my character; and, although if any person had told me the same things five minutes before, I should have contradicted him, and should have entered into an argument to prove that he was altogether mistaken, and that I was no such man as he said, it never occurred to me to make the slightest objection to the Voice that then spoke to me.

The very first utterance brought into my soul the conviction that this was the word of the Spirit, whose working I had denied, and that I was a guilty, lost sinner. I knew it as well as though I had always known it. It did not seem as though I had ever doubted it, or that there could ever have been any chance for doubt. It was not fancy, it was not what people ordinarily call belief; it was positive knowledge, so complete that nothing could

have made it more sure, and that no amount of argument could have shaken.

In order to tell the difference between light and darkness, one has only to have eyes, and to have them open; then there is no possible ground for argument; sight carries its own evidence. Well, my eyes were that moment opened, and I saw. A library of books, and years of reading, could never have done for me what the Lord himself did for me in an instant of time.

### **One Voice Throughout**

But the Lord did not leave me with the simple knowledge that I was a sinner. That would have been to sink me into the depths of despair. The Spirit first convicts of sin, and then of righteousness. So He revealed to me the fact that God loved me, and that Christ died for me; for me, of all people in the world.

I needed no assurance that this voice was from heaven; the positive, absolute knowledge came with it. From the time that God spoke to me until this minute I have known that the Bible is the Word of God, for it agrees from first to last with what God at that time spoke to my heart. I find the same voice everywhere in it. I know the voice, and have no fear of being led astray.

I know that the Bible is the Word of God in just the same way, although a good deal more surely, that you know your father, and that a letter which he writes you is from him. Nobody ever introduced you to your father, or ever told you his name, yet you know him; and in just the same way, only as I have said, a great deal more certainly, may we know the voice of God speaking to us in the Bible.

Even though we have wandered in the dark paths of sin, and have lost the simple faith of childhood, the Voice that never ceases speaking will produce the same conviction as though we had never doubted. It is possible for the oldest and most hardened sinner to become as a little child, and to have the simple faith of a child, which leaves no room for doubt or questioning.

## **Greater Witness Than That of Man**

Volumes have been written by learned divines to prove the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible. They may have done good, but not one of them ever converted or ever can convert a single soul. Not one ever produced or ever can produce the certainty in anybody that the Bible is the Word of God. Christ, who is the Word, and from whom the written Word comes, said:

### **John 5**

<sup>34</sup> I receive not testimony from man.

John the Baptist bore faithful witness to Him, but He said:

<sup>36</sup> I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me.

### **1 John 5**

<sup>9</sup> If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.

And this witness is given to every soul on earth, and whoever accepts it has the witness in himself.

## **The Councils and the Canon**

People will gravely, and with an air of great learning, tell you that it was the Council of Nice that fixed the Sacred Canon as accepted at present, and that we have our Bible only on the authority of the bishops there assembled. It is all the gravest sort of nonsense, and no one needs any surer proof of the falsity of the statement than the records of the early Councils, all of which are accessible to anyone who can read, which contain no evidence whatever that there was any doubt as to what constituted the Bible, or that there was any thought of deciding the matter.

Many times since then people have been moved to make a public profession of their faith; many times they have even thought it necessary to pass resolutions declaring their belief; but that settled nothing, and originated nothing. The Scriptures, just as we have them now, were known and accepted by all believers as the Word of God long before the Council of Nice.

More than this, unbelievers themselves bore witness to this fact, by attempting to overthrow them, and by bringing against them the very same objections that have been put forth by unbelievers ever since. Since the first century after Christ, when the last of the books of the Bible was written, no new objection to the Bible has ever been invented.

### **All the Sacred Writings Not Preserved**

To the question how we may know that we have the whole of the Word of God, the answer is just as simple. If you mean to ask if we have everything that has been written by inspiration of God, the answer is, No. We have the testimony of the Bible itself that many things which have been spoken by the prophets have not come down to us. John tells us that if everything that Jesus did were written:

#### **John 21**

<sup>25</sup> I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

We have frequent reference to “the book of Jasher,” and there is no doubt that Paul wrote three epistles to the Corinthians. But all this does not concern us. We have nothing to do with anything that has not been given to us.

The fact that there have been books written which we have never seen does not affect those which we have. If God had thought it necessary that we should have those lost books, He would have preserved them for us. That He could have done so if He had wished to, is evident from the fact that He has preserved those which we have, although the rage of devils working through men, even through the professed church of God, has been directed against the Bible, endeavoring to stamp it out of existence. But it remains to this day, a monument to the power and Divinity of God.

Moreover:

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup> His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

So that, although there may have been many books written, which we have not, those which we have are fully sufficient to make us...

## **2 Timothy 3**

<sup>15</sup> ...wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;

<sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

God's Word is one; all the various words that the Bible contains are but revelations of the one Word. Full salvation is in every one of them. The fullness of the life of the whole is in each part. Therefore:

<sup>14</sup> Continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them.

## **The Evidence of Prophecy**

There is another internal evidence of the truthfulness of the Bible—a test which the Bible itself gives us. It is the testimony of prophecy. We read these statements of the Lord:

### **Jeremiah 28**

<sup>9</sup> The prophet which prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord has truly sent him.

### **Deuteronomy 18**

<sup>21</sup> And if you say in your heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?

<sup>22</sup> When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

The Bible is full of predictions of events to take place, and nearly all of them are of things that are now in the past, so that

we may see how exactly every prediction has been fulfilled. This is exactly in line with what I have before said, that the Bible is its own witness.

## **Each Believer a Witness**

### **1 John 5**

<sup>10</sup> He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself.

And thenceforth he himself becomes a witness to the truthfulness of the Word of God. It is upon evidence of this nature that the Lord rests His case. In the controversy as to who is God, He says:

### **Isaiah 43**

<sup>8</sup> Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf people that have ears.

<sup>9</sup> Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; or let them hear, and say, It is truth.

<sup>10</sup> You are my witnesses, says the Lord; and my Servant whom I have chosen; that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am He; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me.

<sup>11</sup> I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour.

<sup>12</sup> I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you; therefore you are my witnesses, says the Lord, that I am God.

This is the sum of the matter. Skeptics may attempt to unsettle the faith of believers, and may bring learned arguments, and may refer to many books which the believer has never even heard of; but it would be easier to batter down Gibraltar with a pea-shooter than for any of their talk to shake the faith of anyone who has the faith of a child.

You may feel very ignorant in the face of all the learned references that infidels will flourish in your face; but such ignorance is



truly bliss; and secure in the positiveness of the knowledge which the world calls foolishness you may joyfully sing:

I know not how the Spirit moves,  
Convincing men of sin;  
Revealing Jesus through the Word,  
Creating faith in Him;  
But I know whom I have believed,  
And am persuaded that He is able  
To keep that which I've committed  
Unto Him against that day.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> D. W. Whittle, Hymn: *I Know Not Why God's Wondrous Grace*, 1883.

## 14. Christ's Death and Satan's Destruction

Present Truth, November 8, 1900

Reprinted: Medical Missionary, February 1902

In *Hebrews* 2:14-15 we read that, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, Christ “also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them that through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Why was it necessary for Christ to die, in order that Satan might be destroyed? I can understand, I think, why Christ must die to save men, but cannot see why He could not destroy Satan without himself dying.

**A**LTHOUGH there are many things in the work of salvation, for which we may not be able to give a reason, since they are beyond human comprehension, and all things will be better understood as the years of eternity roll by, this is a legitimate question, and one that may with reverence be answered; for the understanding of it is really necessary to our intelligently laying hold of the hope set before us.

### **Psalm 25**

<sup>14</sup> The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

The question on this text brings us to the study of the very heart of the Gospel,—into personal touch with God in His secret place.

### **Satan's Destruction, Our Deliverance**

Read the verse again carefully, and you will see that the deliverance of the children from bondage is coupled with the destruction of the devil. It is by the destruction of the devil that they are delivered. Christ died that He might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver them who through fear of death were sub-

ject to bondage.<sup>31</sup> To understand the one is to understand the other.

The deliverance from bondage is a present reality to everyone who believes Christ, and so accepts Him; and to such the devil is already practically destroyed, since he has no power at all over those who are in Christ.

### **Colossians 2**

<sup>15</sup> [Christ has] spoiled principalities and powers.

“In the faith” we may steadfastly resist the devil,<sup>32</sup> so that he will flee from us.<sup>33</sup> To the true disciple of Jesus,

### **Luke 9**

<sup>1</sup> ...power and authority [are given] over all devils.

And now let us have a short lesson in the science of salvation.

## **God's Mercy is His Justice**

God must be just, at the same time that He is...

### **Romans 3**

<sup>23</sup> ...the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

He is just in all His sayings, and the Judgment will show this. He will be clear when He judges.<sup>34</sup> Therefore the Judgment must reveal the fact that He has never done anything arbitrary—nothing for which a reason cannot be given which will be understood by every created being, and will be perfectly satisfactory.

If a single soul should be punished without the justice of his punishment being seen and acknowledged by him and by every other soul in the universe, there would be an opening for another rebellion similar to that of Satan. Every secret thing would not have been made known, and there would be room for the doubt to spring up in some mind, which the serpent insinuated into the

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<sup>31</sup> *Hebrews 2:14-15.*

<sup>32</sup> *1 Peter 5:9.*

<sup>33</sup> *James 4:7.*

<sup>34</sup> *Psalms 51:4; Romans 3:4.*

mind of Eve, namely, that God does things merely to please himself, without any regard to His creatures.

But this state of things can never be after the Judgment. The revelation of God in the Gospel will be so complete that there will be no room in any heart for doubt.

## **Salvation by the Universal Life**

It is by the life of Christ that we are saved.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>10</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

He is the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, and that was and is manifested in the flesh.

### **John 1**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup> The same was in the beginning with God.

The Word of life was manifested, in order that we might have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

<sup>2</sup> (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

<sup>3</sup> That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is simply the revelation of the life of God in Christ, and the formation of the life in us.

## **Luke 2**

<sup>10</sup> And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

<sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

## **Colossians 1**

<sup>27</sup> To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Remember now that all things are from God in Christ. He is the life. Without Him there is not one thing in the universe. All things, both animate and inanimate, the mountains as well as men, are His offspring, the product of His life. In His hand...

## **Job 12**

<sup>10</sup> ...is the soul of every living thing, and breath of all mankind.

God alone has life in himself, and it is His life that is manifested in every living creature. Nay, more, it is the power of His life that holds the particles of inanimate matter together, so that all the so-called “forces of nature” are but the varied manifestations of the working of the one life.

The highest angel in heaven and the tiniest creature that finds its whole world in a drop of water, are alike dependent on that life for existence. Nothing has any life in itself, nor any life of its own. Every act that is performed, every thought, every breath, every heart-beat, is by the power of the life of Him in whom...

## **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> ...we live, and move, and have our being.

## **The Burden of Sin on God's Life**

This is but a simple fact that must be acknowledged by every one who recognizes God as “the Former of all things,”<sup>35</sup> and the upholder of the universe. Yet it furnishes the solution to every question that can arise. Let us apply it to the case in hand.

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<sup>35</sup> *Jeremiah* 10:16.

The deliverance of the children from bondage means the destruction of sin, and that means the destruction of the devil,

### **1 John 3**

<sup>8</sup> For the devil sinned from the beginning.

He is the originator of sin, the father of lies. Now we can never know how it was that sin was first conceived in his mind, and we do not wish to, for it was not God's design that we should ever know evil, and the Gospel is for the purpose of getting us as far away from it as possible, and making us lose all knowledge of it. But one thing we do know, and that is that the sin that was first committed, and all that has ever been committed since, has been done with God's life.

But for the breath that God gives to us every moment, no one could have power to deny Him, or to take His name in vain. His life in us actually bears the sins that we commit. So it is a most literal truth that Christ "bears the sins of the world." God says:

### **Isaiah 43**

<sup>24</sup> You have made me to serve with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities.

Therefore He adds:

<sup>25</sup> I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins.

Sin is most hateful and disgusting to God, yet for our sakes He patiently endures it upon His life.

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>15</sup> The longsuffering of our God is salvation.

But He is most anxious to get the burden of it off from His life, and in doing that He clears it from every one who consents to be identified with Him.

## God Takes the Responsibility For Sin

You are doubtless familiar with the excuse that people make for their evil habits, when they try to throw all the responsibility for their sins upon the Lord, saying:

“I did not make myself; I had no choice in being born as I was; if the Lord made me thus, how can I help it?”

Now God has anticipated all that. It is not true that God has made us as we are, for His handiwork has been marred, and His image defaced. But since it is with His life that all the sin has been committed, He takes all the responsibility on himself.

No; that is not quite correct. He had all responsibility on himself from the beginning, since He made man free to sin; we should more properly say that God did not throw off the responsibility for man's actions. He remained with him, going with him down to the depths, and charging no sin against him.

### 2 Corinthians 5

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

The same principle applies to all sinners, as to Satan: If God had arbitrarily cut them off, it would not have been a revelation of His love and justice. He has a way of showing His abhorrence of sin, that is altogether different from man's way. Men show their abhorrence of an evil deed, by crying out against the transgressor, and cutting him off; God shows His abhorrence of sin by cutting himself off.

If He had at the beginning destroyed the devil, that would have indicated His abhorrence of the individual, but some other creature would have taken up the devil's work of sowing discord, and would have said, just as men even now do:

“God gave the devil life, and His life was all that the devil had with which to act, and therefore He was responsible for his actions. And now He has cut him off for that which he could not help.”

But God is love; He is justice; and He cannot deny himself; therefore it was not possible that He could destroy the devil, and still maintain His character before the eyes of the universe, without giving up His own life. In giving up His own life in Christ, He showed how greatly He hated the sin that had been brought upon it. Thereby He showed that He is...

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>26</sup> ...holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

## **Sin Put Away by the Sacrifice of Christ**

Christ has appeared...

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>26</sup> ...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

By himself He has made purification of sins.

### **Hebrews 1**

<sup>3</sup> Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

### **1 John 2**

<sup>2</sup> He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The sins of the world were on Him, and He could not have put them off without dying, except by denying himself, which He cannot do. But now, having given up His own life, thus showing not only His hatred of sin, but also the immutability of the law of righteousness, He has a new life, that has not been tainted by sin, to give to every one who will accept it.

His grace is as free as the air we breathe, and therefore there is no excuse for anyone who does not accept the new life in Christ. Whoever clings to the old life of sin must necessarily go to de-



struction, suffering the same penalty for sin that God himself suffered.

### **Forgiveness Free for All**

You say that this implies that forgiveness was offered even to Satan. Of course it does; who that knows the character of God can doubt it? It is true that the proclamation of the Gospel has no reference whatever to him, and that he is not on probation, for the reason that the offer to him was made and rejected, and his place in heaven was forfeited, before man was created. The case of all the angels was decided, and...

#### **Jude**

<sup>6</sup> ...the angels that kept not their first estate,

—had departed from the light of heaven into...

6 ...everlasting chains of darkness,

—before man saw the light. In being made flesh Christ...

#### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>9</sup> ...takes not hold of angels.

But the tender mercies of God are over all His works, and we may be sure that He did not allow...

#### **Ezekiel 28**

<sup>14</sup> ...the anointed cherub that covers,

—to leave His presence forever, without making every effort possible to save him. That was to offer himself, which was the most perfect and the only way that He could disprove Satan's charge that He was mindful only of himself and regardless of others.

It was not, however, merely to disprove Satan's charge, that God made the sacrifice. He did it because He is love, and love cannot be satisfied without the fullest and most perfect manifestation of itself. He did it not merely that certain lost ones might be saved, but that the millions of unfallen beings might have a sure

ground of trust. Righteousness, which means forgiveness,<sup>36</sup> is the foundation of His throne.

### **God Has No Complicity With Sin**

Now the sacrifice has been made, and God has shown that He has no complicity with sin and is not in the remotest sense the accomplice of sinners, although all sin has been committed with His life. Now, having taken the responsibility of all sin upon himself, and having given His life as an atonement for it, He can justly destroy the one who originated it, and who has obstinately continued in it.

Whoever continues in sin voluntarily chooses the death which the sinful life justly merits, and which God himself suffered. Through death Christ has won the right and power to destroy...

#### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>14</sup> ...him that had the power of death,

—and at the same time to deliver all who are bound.

### **A Full and Complete Salvation**

And right here comes in that which lifts this study out of the range of formal theological disquisition, and makes it most intensely personal and practical. Here is our encouragement: He who has won the power to destroy him that had the power of death, has won the power to abolish death itself. The offering was nothing less than the life that upheld the universe, so that the atonement having once been made, whosoever will may come.

For His own sake God made the sacrifice, and whoever will consent to link his case with God's, to be identified with Him, may share all His gain. Sin must be destroyed; but...

#### **1 John 2**

<sup>17</sup> ...he that does the will of God abides forever.

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<sup>36</sup> 1 John 1:9.

The offering once for all embraces all. God can save the whole world as easily as one soul. Will you accept as yours by right, deliverance from Satan's power, and take it now?

# 15. Knowing as We Are Known

Present Truth, November 15, 1900

Shall we know and have hereafter the love of those we have loved on earth? I ask the question, because I lost my wife when we had been married only three months...so you will understand that it is no idle question, but one that I have sought the Scriptures for an answer to many a time.

I quite believe that heaven will be joy to those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb; but I think that meeting some dearly loved one will be one of its greatest joys. I cannot think that God would plant a seed of love in our hearts for someone, ruthlessly to pluck it out again in a short time.

I HAVE often heard the question asked, "Shall we know one another in the world to come?" when it seemed to me to be so idle as scarcely to merit attention; but your letter, with all the details that you have mentioned, shows me that the question comes from a burdened heart seeking relief, and I gladly offer such as the Word of God authorizes me to give.

There are certainly many besides yourself, who are longing for the same information, and who do not know what the Bible teaches on this point. Let us first consider a case that is recorded in the Bible. When Christ was born, Herod was so anxious to kill Him that he...

## Matthew 2

<sup>16</sup> ...sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

<sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

<sup>18</sup> In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

All are familiar with this story; but not all are so familiar with the words of comfort which God by the same prophet spoke to those sorrowing mothers, and so to all mothers mourning the loss of little ones. The words just quoted are found in *Jeremiah* 31:15, and immediately after them come these words:

### **Jeremiah 31**

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the Lord: Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

<sup>17</sup> And there is hope in your end, says the Lord, that your children shall come again to their own border.

Here is a distinct promise of the resurrection of those infants. They are to be brought from the land of the enemy,—death,—and restored to their mothers in their own land, the new earth, the heavenly Canaan.

This is the hope set before the mourning mothers; they are comforted by the Lord himself, with the promise that their children shall come to them again; but there certainly would be no comfort if they could not recognize them. That would be no restoration; it would be but to mock their grief, and leave them more desolate than before.

### **Reunion at Christ's Coming**

Take again some words of comfort which the Lord charges His servants to speak to all whose Christian friends have been taken from them by death. The Apostle Paul writes:

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>13</sup> I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

<sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

<sup>15</sup> 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 [*go before, precede*] them which are asleep.

<sup>16</sup> 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;

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Some people in Thessalonica were mourning their dead friends, whom they thought were forever lost to them. They knew of the coming of the Lord, but were imperfectly informed as to the resurrection. They had not yet been fully freed from the heathen idea that death is an eternal sleep.

The Apostle, by the direction of the Lord, tells them and us that although we live till the coming of the Lord we shall not enter into glory before our dead friends do; for just as surely as God raised up Jesus, will He also bring with Him from the dead all those who sleep in Him, and that when He comes the sleeping ones will be awakened to immortality before we are changed, and then both they and we shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord; and in this manner we all shall be together forever with the Lord.

### **As It Was in the Beginning**

But what comfort would this be to the sorrowing ones, if they were not to know their loved ones when they meet them at the resurrection? The same “hope” is set before them that was given to the weeping mothers in Bethlehem,—the hope of resurrection at the appearing of Christ. We shall all know Him, and we shall also know each other. That will be the coming of that perfect day, when we shall know even as also we are known; when:

“The loves and sympathies which God himself has planted in the soul shall find truest and sweetest expression.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 677.

Let us note a few passages of Scripture, which show that this must necessarily be the case.

### **Matthew 19**

<sup>4</sup> Have you not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

<sup>5</sup> And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh.

<sup>6</sup> Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.

Note that man is essentially male and female; he was made so at the beginning. Thus we read again:

### **Genesis 5**

<sup>1</sup> In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God He made him;

<sup>2</sup> Male and female He created them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam [man], in the day when they were created.

Adam was first created, then Eve; but the woman was taken out of the man, and was called woman for that reason,<sup>38</sup> so that it plainly appears that Adam—man—is male and female. The two distinct persons are but a higher development, a more perfect manifestation of the perfect man.

## **The First Dominion Restored**

Now read further:

### **Genesis 1**

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

It was man—male and female—to whom God gave dominion over the earth in the beginning. The dominion has been lost:

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<sup>38</sup> *Genesis 2:23.*

### **Romans 3**

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

But...

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

And in Him the dominion is restored to man; for it is written:

### **Colossians 2**

<sup>10</sup> You are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.

### **Micah 4**

<sup>8</sup> And you, O Tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto you shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

This dominion every redeemed sinner has now in Christ, just to the extent that his faith intelligently grasps and appropriates the gift of Christ. The “new song” which God puts into our mouth even now, as soon as we are lifted out of “the horrible pit,”<sup>39</sup> is:

### **Revelation 1**

<sup>5</sup> Unto Him that loved us, and washed [loosed] us from our sins in His own blood,

<sup>6</sup> And has made us kings and priests unto God.

### **Psalms 113**

<sup>7</sup> He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill;

<sup>8</sup> That He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people.

### **1 Samuel 2**

<sup>8</sup> ...and to make them inherit the throne of glory.

All this simply means the restoration of all things as they were at the beginning, but with enlarged dominion.

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<sup>39</sup> *Psalms* 40:2-3.



## God's Work Eternal

Again: God built the rib which He took from the man into a woman, and...

### Genesis 1

<sup>22</sup> ...[He] brought her unto the man.

<sup>23</sup> And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.

### Matthew 19

<sup>6</sup> Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

God himself will certainly not put asunder what He has joined together, thus undoing the work of His own hands; for:

### Ecclesiastes 3

<sup>14</sup> I know that whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever.

## False Ideas Corrected

Does someone tell you that the idea of the loves and sympathies and relationships of this life being continued in the world to come is dishonoring and degrading to heaven? that it is altogether too gross? Then may God pity and forgive him, and open his eyes to know the Divine love, which is the only true love, and to appreciate the expression of it through the human agent.

Right here it becomes apparent that the consideration of this question is a necessity, and is not by any means idle speculation upon things of the future, of which we shall know the certainty when the time comes. For it is this false, gross idea of love and the family relation, the conception of it as inconsistent with heaven's holiness, which has produced so much perversion of it in this life.

The truth that we have just had opened up to us from the Scriptures, does not degrade heaven, but exalts love. If it were seen and appreciated and held, it would make people far more considerate. There would be no such thing as "a hasty marriage." There would be no marriage formed except by God, and none which could not

be continued throughout eternity; and there would be no act in the marriage state inconsistent with the holiness of the new earth.

There would be no such thing as “making love,” for “God is love,”<sup>40</sup> and the only real love that can exist among men is that which is eternal, and which is the manifestation of God’s presence. That which was given to man in Eden at the beginning, will not be withheld as unworthy of the same Eden restored.

## **God’s Children Spiritual**

Remember that all God’s true children are spiritual.

### **Romans 8**

<sup>9</sup> You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

<sup>10</sup> And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

<sup>13</sup> For if you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.

<sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Therefore:

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

## **Christ All and In All**

One thing more: Do not fail to note that the comfort which we are commissioned to give to those who mourn, which assures them of reunion with departed loved ones, closes with the statement,

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...so shall we ever be with the Lord.

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<sup>40</sup> 1 John 4:8.

It is the Lord's presence, not the presence of our loved ones alone, that will make heaven. If we were not with Him, if we did not see Him, there would be no joy, no happiness, no love, even in heaven.

"The loves and sympathies which God himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest expression."<sup>41</sup>

Because there Christ will be perfectly revealed and perfectly recognized in every soul. And just as His presence makes heaven, and brings out there the full truth and sweetness of the loves which He has planted in the soul, so it is He and His presence that sanctifies and makes perfect every relationship in this world, and which gives the true believer a heaven in which to go to heaven.

Ah, how little we have appreciated the rich gifts that God has provided for us, and which He leaves with us even in this sin-cursed earth!

### **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>9</sup> Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

And the reason why this is so is that we have been so gross, so unspiritual, and have perverted them; but in His great mercy,

### **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>10</sup> God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.

May the love of God be perfected in us all, that, being "in Him that is true,"<sup>42</sup> we may even now dwell in eternity.

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<sup>41</sup> Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 677.

<sup>42</sup> 1 John 5:20.

## Back Page

Present Truth, November 15, 1900

**W**E HAVE several questions on hand, which interested readers have sent in, and they will all receive attention as soon as possible. Let no one think that his case is forgotten, because an answer does not appear immediately.

Since beginning the "Editor's Private Corner" we have received more encouraging, appreciative words for the paper than ever before in the same length of time. To each one we would say, If you have received help, pass it on to some one else. That which does you good will be a blessing to another.

If each reader of *Present Truth* would secure one additional reader it would be a most practical way of showing thanks for blessings received.

## 16. To Him That Overcomes

Present Truth, November 22, 1900

Some years ago I backslid, but was restored, and for years have been happy in the Lord; but lately the promises “to him that overcomes” seem to trouble me, because the thought comes, “But you did not overcome;” so I thought I would write you.

### John 14

<sup>1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled.

THESE are the words that the Lord speaks to me, and I have nothing better to pass on to you. He says:

### John 16

<sup>32</sup> ...the Father is with me.

<sup>33</sup> These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

Do not think that it is the promises to him that overcomes that trouble you. The promises of God are not given for the purpose of giving trouble, but to save us from it. Your trouble comes from the whispered temptation of the enemy, who is seeking to blind your mind to what the promises say.

Read the text again. It does not say, “To him who *overcame*,” but to him that *overcomes*. This indicates present time. It is he who overcomes now, that the Lord saves. We live in the present, and Jesus is...

### Psalms 46

<sup>1</sup> ...a very present help in trouble.

So you need not be at all concerned over whether you did overcome or not at some time in the past; your care need only be:

“Am I now overcoming? Am I now fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life?”<sup>43</sup>

This matter is easily settled, and you may constantly be of good cheer. There is a phrase that is quite common with some people, namely,

“Once in grace, always in grace,”

—by which they mean that a man who has once received the grace of God can never backslide, and that if a professed Christian does go astray, that is evidence that he was never really a believer; that he was never converted. Thus they bring doubt and confusion into many souls.

The easiest way to show the fallacy of this is to take an actual occurrence. When Jesus came to the disciples as they were alone in the boat in the violent storm, Peter said:

#### **Matthew 14**

<sup>28</sup> Lord, if it be you, bid me come unto you on the water.

The Lord told him to come, and he at once got out of the boat and walked a little way toward the Master. The record plainly says that:

<sup>29</sup> He walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

And immediately Jesus lifted him up, and together they came back to the boat. Now it is certain that Peter had faith that he could walk on the water, or else he could not have walked at first. It is equally true that he lost his faith when he looked round at the boisterous waves; for Jesus said to him as He lifted him to the surface:

<sup>31</sup> O you of little faith, wherefore did you doubt?

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<sup>43</sup> 1 Timothy 6:12.

The fact that he had faith at first, and that he actually did a wonderful thing through faith, did not make it impossible for him to lose the faith, and with it the power; nor did the fact that he fell prove that he had not had faith, for he had demonstrated it by walking. Suppose now that Peter had said to himself,

“But I did not walk on the water,”

—then his case would have been the same as yours. You say that this would be foolish, for he did actually walk on the water. Well, so did you overcome, else you could not have backslidden.

But what is the use of worrying over the past, anyhow? What difference would it have made to Peter if he had not been able to walk a step on the water when he first got out of the boat, if he had afterwards walked when the Saviour got hold of him?

Even so with you; it does not so much matter whether or not you overcame some time ago; the question is:

“Are you walking with the Lord now?”

As well might the one who is just converted spend time mourning over the fact that he never served the Lord before. The Apostle Paul’s rule is best:

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>13</sup> This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

<sup>14</sup> I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Christ says:

### **John 16**

<sup>33</sup> Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

He is...

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...the same yesterday, and today, and for ever,

—so that the victory which He won in the flesh hundreds of years ago, is a present victory.

### **1 John 5 [RV]**

<sup>4</sup> This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

Remember that the victory does not depend upon what we do, but upon what Christ has done once for all.

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.

This “to the uttermost” does not mean simply that He is able to save the worst cases, but that to the uttermost limit of time, continually, He is able to save them that come to God by Him, because He ever lives. He himself is the victory, as we read:

### **1 Chronicles 29**

<sup>11</sup> Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty.

He is our sanctification, our righteousness, and our redemption;<sup>44</sup> and since He ever lives, the righteousness and the victory that He won in Judea is as real, and present, and active now as then. It is not simply individual sins that are to be overcome, but:

### **1 John 2**

<sup>16</sup> All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

We are saved by Christ’s life in us, by that life by which He overcame, and which is the victory.

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

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<sup>44</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:30.



Overcoming is nothing more nor less than laying hold by faith on the present life of Christ, and appropriating it as our own, so that the life that we live day by day is not from us, but it is the Spirit of Christ animating and using our bodies and every member and organ of them, just as He will. As “in Him is no sin,”<sup>45</sup> so sin shall have no more dominion over those in whom His life is given free course and full sway.<sup>46</sup> We are victors over sin, because Christ is ours, and His victory is our victory.

One thing must not be forgotten, and that is, that when we accept the life of Christ in exchange for our old way of living, we get the whole of it from the beginning. He is the One who...

#### **Revelation 4**

<sup>8</sup> ...was, and is, and is to come;

#### **Isaiah 57**

<sup>15</sup> [He] inhabits eternity,

—and He brings eternity into every day; so that, having Him now, we are the same as though we had never sinned; the union is so close that it is the same as though we had never lived a day or done a single thing apart from Him.

His life from the beginning takes the place of ours from the beginning, and so the past is obliterated. The blood of Christ...

#### **1 John 1**

<sup>7</sup> ...cleanses us from all sin.

This is the blotting out of sin:

#### **Jeremiah 50**

<sup>20</sup> The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

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<sup>45</sup> 1 John 3:5.

<sup>46</sup> Romans 6:14.

If we take Christ now, then we may know that we have Him for all that He has ever been and all that He ever will be. So we may in everything give thanks, knowing that:

**Romans 8**

<sup>37</sup> In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

## 17. The Labor Question

Present Truth, November 29, 1900

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Having had some personal experience in Labor Unions, Working Men's Associations, and of course in strikes, the question has come to me (because I have invariably found it that these Unions bring about the majority of strikes, with the distress and hunger which always follow, if the strike is prolonged),—What should be my attitude as a Christian toward these organizations?

If I do not become a member I am boycotted, and have to suffer in that way.

Again, Why should Christians yield up all things to men of the world? Why should they not have a share in the blessings and good things of the world? Why should the devil have all his own way? Should we not fight him for some of the good things he seems to have appropriated for his followers?

**I** THINK that your question answers itself, even if we take no thought of the moral aspect of the case, even allowing that it is proper for a Christian to “fight for his rights,” what is the use of fighting a losing battle? You say that a prolonged strike is always accompanied by hunger and distress, and every account that I have ever read has convinced me that this is true; what good things, then, are gained by fighting?

I have before me a Welsh newspaper's estimate of the cost of the Taff Vale strike. It is put at £400,000, of which sum the men had to sustain upwards of three-fourths. I have not exact statistics at hand, but I am aware that no one who has given thought to the matter will deny that there are very few strikes, even where the strikers gain their point, where the small increase in pay equals the loss of wages sustained in fighting for it.

There is the loss of wages for weeks, and sometimes for months, to which is to be added the wastefulness and demoraliza-

tion that always attend idleness. Often the strike is not for increased pay, but for fewer hours of labor, so that at best the actual gain to the workman is nothing; but if the strike for increased pay is “successful,” many months must elapse before the sum gained can make up for the cost of the struggle to gain it, and often the loss is never made good.

But the majority of strikes do not result in securing the end sought, and the strikers, after being out of employment for weeks or months, go back to work on the same terms as before. Where then does the gain and blessing come in? No; on a purely selfish, mercenary basis, a strike is one of the most foolish things in the world. It is much like a man cutting his own throat, to demonstrate his right to live independently.

You rightly say that “Trades Unions” and so-called “labor leaders,” are responsible for strikes and the attendant suffering. If these “labor leaders,” who are such, not because they lead in labor, or ever engage in honest toil, but because they had labor and laborers into captivity, were themselves affected, by the strikes which they encourage or impose, there would be fewer of these suicidal struggles. As with wars, so with strikes,—they are rarely begun by the people, but by men who serve their own ends at the expense of others who are foolish enough to be controlled by them.

### **Labor a Blessing**

But you are questioning me concerning your duty as a Christian, and therefore we must take our answer from the Christian’s Guidebook, without any regard to the matter of possible pecuniary gain to ourselves. Let us therefore take a brief, comprehensive view of the labor question as set forth in the Scriptures.

It is a popular error, fostered by many thoughtless Christians, that labor is a part of the curse that has come because of sin. This is a grave error. Man was set to work by the Creator as soon as he was created. The command was:

## **Genesis 1**

<sup>28</sup> Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth, and subdue it.

## **Genesis 2**

<sup>15</sup> And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and, to keep it.

Labor is a blessing, a privilege which makes man an associate with God, and which will be continued throughout eternity. Jesus said:

## **John 5**

<sup>17</sup> My Father works hitherto and I work.

The curse came upon the earth, making it less fruitful, and less responsive to man's efforts, and so more labor had to be expended for much smaller returns than before; but when the earth is made new again, and men are restored to the first dominion:

## **Isaiah 65**

<sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble...

<sup>22</sup> [For God's people] shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

<sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

## **Our Rule of Life**

The earth is yet under the curse, but true Christians are not; for:

## **Galatians 3**

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse.

And:

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ; he is a new creation:

Therefore Christians are to live in this earth the same as if it were already made new, or there had never been any curse. With them:

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> ...old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new;

<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God.

God is sole ruler, and His Word is our sole rule of life.

## **Our Lives Owed to the World**

Contrary to the lazy man's motto,

“The world owes me a living,”

—the fact is we owe our lives to the world. The Apostle Paul's words are true for all:

## **Romans 1**

<sup>14</sup> I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

If the world did owe us a living, and we were obliged to depend on it, we should surely die; for it would never pay the debt; it cannot give life.

## **1 John 2**

<sup>17</sup> The world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

## **Acts 17**

<sup>25</sup> He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

And since the life of the Lord has been given for the world, it is evident that the portion of His life which is in us belongs to the world also.

## **Destroying Labor and Life**

In order that the instruction from Scripture may be more impressive, and its practical necessity may be more apparent, I will quote for you a bit of an article by John T. Day, Editor of the *Shoe and Leather Record*, in the *Daily Mail* of November 15. Writing on the greater cost of producing boots and shoes in England than in America, he says:

For this lamentable state of things the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives is chiefly to blame. Its members are not allowed to do more than a certain quantity of work. Only a few months ago we had a lurid light thrown upon union methods in Leicester, where an operative named Shelton cut his throat rather than face the Union Committee, and at the inquest it came out that the charge to which he was invited to reply was merely that he had done too much work.

A penciled scrawl addressed to his wife and found upon his body ran thus:

“Dear Emma,—Forgive me for doing this, for I should be spotted all the remainder of my life. God bless you all.”

It is a well-known fact that the average laborer’s chief ambition seems to be to do as little work as possible in a given time, and not as much as possible, and that the Trades Unions are largely responsible for it. An active man is not allowed to do his best. Now this is in direct opposition to the Scripture injunction, “Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.” *Ecclesiastes* 1:10.

This is not an arbitrary commandment, but one which, like everything right, grows out of the very nature of things.

### **Proverbs 14**

<sup>23</sup> In all labor there is profit.

This has no reference to pecuniary remuneration; the profit is in the labor itself. Labor elevates. Every man degenerates physically, mentally, and morally by idleness. A man who idles his time away, or who slights his work, or who purposely does less work in a given time than he is able to do, is sure to lose his manhood. Even though he get full pay, and more than pay for his time, he suffers a loss which nothing can make good. So far at least as any man’s own personal profit is concerned, it would certainly be far better for him to labor hard for no wages, than to live a life of idleness with a regular income.

## **Laboring Because We Live, Not for a Living**

It must be remembered that we are not to “work for a living.”

### **John 6**

<sup>27</sup> Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life.

The Lord tells us not to be anxious about our needs:

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>31</sup> Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

<sup>32</sup> ...for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.

<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

We are not to labor in order to get a living, but to labor because God has given it to us, and has said:

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>9</sup> Six days shall you labor.

It is evident that if these scriptures were believed and followed, there could be no labor troubles. A Christian can no more quarrel with his employer, or go on strike, than he can lie or steal.

A man's work should have absolutely no reference to the wages he receives; he should do all he can, in the best way that he can, whether he gets little or much. If he be earning, say, thirty shillings a week, and for any reason his wages are reduced to twenty-five shillings, he should do just as much work as before.

To many this counsel will seem foolish, and purely theoretical, but it is practical; and the man who will follow it as a life principle will never lack employment or food.

## **No Equivalent for Labor**

People talk about “receiving an equivalent” for labor; but there is no such thing as an equivalent for honest toil, whether physical or mental. No money can be reckoned in comparison with a



man's best thoughts or muscular energy. Labor is life, and money is not to be mentioned as an equivalent for life.

If this be remembered, there will be an end of heart-burnings and jealousies because someone with no more ability than we, and who does even less work, receives greater pay. That is not our business. We serve the Lord Christ, and to Him we look for our reward.

But, you say:

“But we should be so oppressed that life would be a burden, if we lived according to this principle. Employers would take advantage of it, and would not give us anything.”

Well, it all depends upon whether or not the principle is correct. If it is, and it surely is, because it comes from God's word, then we may be sure that God will honor it in us if we live by it.

#### **Psalm 140**

<sup>12</sup> I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.

### **Essential Wickedness of Strikes**

Now a word as to the ethics of strikes, beyond that which is settled by the labor principle already set forth. Suppose we are oppressed: the Lord tells us to expect tribulation in this world.

#### **James 2**

<sup>6</sup> Do not rich men oppress you?

But “the just” do not resist, even when condemned and killed.

#### **James 5**

<sup>6</sup> You have condemned and killed the just; and he does not resist you.

Jesus said,

#### **Matthew 5**

<sup>39</sup> Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

<sup>40</sup> And if any man shall compel you to go a mile, go with him twain.

You may say that this is out of date or impractical; but it is the rule for Christians, and we are considering the matter from the Christian's point of view.

### **1 Corinthians 13**

<sup>5</sup> Love seeks not her own.

And:

### **Romans 13**

<sup>10</sup> Love is the fulfilling of the law.

Therefore he who strikes for higher pay, even though it be justly due him, is violating the law of God.

### **When Satan Has It His Own Way**

Again, you ask why we should yield up all things to men of the world, and why the devil should have it all his own way. The devil never does have it his own way, except when we depart from the principles of Christ, to gain some of the "good things of this world."

Satan once offered all the world to Christ, on condition that Christ would worship him. Christ would not do it, but chose rather to die, and thus He won the world. We may be sure that no man can get this world unless he does homage to Satan.

### **James 1**

<sup>20</sup> The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.

Every evil thing, every deed of violence that a man does, comes back upon himself.

### **Psalms 7**

<sup>15</sup> He made a pit, and dug it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.

<sup>16</sup> His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

Striving and fighting for that which we desire to have will never obtain for us anything that is real and lasting.

### **Working and Eating**

While it is true that we are not to work merely for a living, it is nevertheless a Divine commandment that if a man will not work he shall not eat.

#### **2 Thessalonians 3**

<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

If a man, therefore, for any reason whatever, refuses to work when he is able to work, and there is work to do, he deserves to starve; and whoever assists or encourages him in his idleness is encouraging disobedience to God.

### **Self-Confessed Slaves**

I know the plea that is often made by laborers:

“We would like to work; we have no personal grievance, and we have opposed the proposition to strike; but the strike has been declared, and we are obliged to stop work.”

This shows the wickedness of the whole thing, more than anything else. If trades unions were for the purpose of encouraging laborers, of instructing them in their trades; of assisting them to secure work, and helping them when they are ill, they would be useful; but the fact that they tyrannize over laborers, and enslave them, and terrorize them, shows that they are wholly bad.

We are not now making any plea for capitalists, as against laborers. They can take care of themselves, and need no help from us, although I must bear testimony that all attacks upon them, whether by word or deed, are wicked, no matter how oppressive they may be.

But the great objection to modern trades unions, aside from the moral aspect of the case, is that they are the greatest enemies of the working man. Laboring men have suffered more from them

than from oppressive employers. A labor monopoly is worse than a money monopoly.

The man who says that he is compelled to stop work against his will is as much a slave as the one who against his will is driven to his work by the lash of the overseer. Only in the latter case the man has been captured and sold; and so is not responsible for his condition, while in the former, the man has voluntarily placed himself in a state of servitude. Such slavery is utterly incompatible with Christianity; for:

### **1 Corinthians 7**

<sup>22</sup> He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free man.

We need not spend time to do more than refer to the wickedness of those who not only will not work themselves, but who, even with violence, hinder others from working. And what shall be said of professed Christian journalists who give countenance to such practices by stigmatizing as "blacklegs" the honest men who wish to obey God's commandment to work whenever they can find work? The term is a disgrace only to the man who uses it.

### **Content With What We Have**

Finally, remember that it is not this world, but the one to come, that we as Christians are to seek. Let those have this world who will.

### **Matthew 16**

<sup>26</sup> What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

And it is certain that he who gains this world does so at the expense of his soul. Gain is not godliness;

### **1 Timothy 6**

<sup>6</sup> But godliness with contentment is great gain.

<sup>7</sup> For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out;

<sup>8</sup> And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

## 18. Giving to the Lord

Present Truth, December 6, 1900

I am the wife of a workingman who is not a Christian, and who is opposed to my giving anything to God. How am I to act regarding giving a tenth? I have no money of my own,—only what is given me for housekeeping.

**T**HERE are many thousands of godly women in the very same condition as that which you describe; yet the circumstances of each one are different from all the others. In any case, one should be intimately acquainted with the details of all the circumstances, before venturing to give definite advice; and no one can know these so well as the one directly concerned. Consequently, all that I can say to you must be of a general nature.

In the first place you may be comforted with the thought that God does not require impossibilities, except when He himself expects to perform them; and if there be first a willing mind:

### **2 Corinthians 8**

<sup>12</sup> It is accepted according to that a man has, and not according to that he has not.

This 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of *2 Corinthians* really covers the whole question. It presents the case of the churches in Macedonia,

<sup>2</sup> ...in a great trial of affliction, [yet]...the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

This does not say how much they gave; they may have given an amount much less than that given by some others; for God does not count as men count. You remember that the poor widow who gave a farthing gave more than all the rich men who cast of their superfluity into the treasury; for her whole heart went with it. Notice that the Macedonians first:

<sup>5</sup> ...gave their own selves to the Lord.

When this is really done, the problem of giving is solved; for if one gives himself, all that he has or may acquire is of course the Lord's. We must guard against deluding ourselves with the thought that giving ourselves is a substitute for giving means to God; there can be no real giving of self that does not also include everything we have; and when that is done, we shall be watchful to see every opportunity that is provided, and we may be sure that there will be some.

I cannot tell you how you can have money to give to the Lord, for it is impossible for me to know all the circumstances; they vary with each person, and from day to day. But I can make a few suggestions about giving, that may be helpful to you. First, however, remember that:

## **2 Corinthians 9**

<sup>8</sup> God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work;

<sup>11</sup> Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness.

Believe this, and you will find the answer to your question as to how you can give to the Lord:

- You may find some means unexpectedly coming into your hands; or
- You may find where you can lessen expenses without in any way diminishing the necessary supply of food;
- You may be able to purchase more cheaply than you expect; or
- You may find that some article that you supposed was necessary is really needless, and that by doing without it, or substituting something else for it, you will have some extra money, and still be much better provided for than before.

In one of these ways, or in some other, God will enable you to give something; and the very means by which He enables you to give will prove a personal blessing to you.

This is, after all, the real reason why God asks us to give. We cannot enrich Him. He has no need of anything, and if He were hungry He would not tell us, for the earth is His, and the fullness of it.<sup>47</sup> King David probably made greater gifts for the building of the temple, than any other man ever gave; yet he said:

### **1 Chronicles 29**

<sup>14</sup> Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of You, and of your own have we given You.

All is from God, but He permits us to give back to Him of His own, in order that we may know the grace of giving. By it He makes us able to appreciate to some extent the blessedness that He experienced and does still enjoy, in giving himself for us; for He has said that...

### **Acts 20**

<sup>35</sup> ...it is more blessed to give than to receive.

And here I am reminded of a wish that is often expressed, and which is in your mind, namely:

“I wish that I had some way of earning money, so that I could feel that I am giving of my own.”

It is a natural wish, and yet it is not wholly right; for from the scriptures already quoted we can see that God does not wish us to feel that we are giving of our own. He certainly does not wish us to feel what is not so; and the truth is that we have not, and cannot have, anything of our own to give.

People often look upon a little child's gifts with a sense of amused superiority, as though it were only playing at giving, when it simply hands over to the contribution box the penny that has been given it for that purpose; but they have no business to feel that way. The child shames us. It gives freely, not merely a part of what it has received, but even all of it, while we often

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<sup>47</sup> *Psalms* 50:12.



grudgingly give only a part; and, moreover, the tiniest and most helpless child earns whatever it receives, just as truly as the strongest and most active man does.

Whatever we have is given to us, no matter how hard we work, just as truly as the little child's penny is given to it; but whereas the child takes its gift and unselfishly passes it on, we often selfishly eat our gifts up ourselves, as though we were afraid we should never have anything more; as though our lives depended on our holding fast to what we get.

Right here again comes in another mistaken idea. We say:

“O yes, the child can well give away even all that is given to it, because it knows that it is not at all dependent on that gift, but that all it wants will be supplied aside from that.”

Exactly; and the fact that we do not think that our wants will be supplied even though we should give away all our living, shows that we have not that childlike simplicity and trust that must characterize all “the children of the kingdom”<sup>48</sup> of heaven. We do not trust our heavenly Father as the little child trusts its father. We have too much pride and unbelief, too much of the spirit of “independence;” and although we cherish these feelings, we get no comfort from them.

How much better we should feel, how much more secure and restful, if, instead of feeling that now as adults we are “thrown on our own resources,” we should be as confidently dependent on God as the child is upon the father.

### **Luke 18**

<sup>17</sup> Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

We are taught to be just as trustful.

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<sup>48</sup> *Matthew 13:38; Mark 10:14-15.*

## **Matthew 6**

<sup>26</sup> Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?

<sup>32</sup> Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.

You say:

“How could I give away all that I have for my family’s living for any day?”

I do not know, and I do not say that you should. Indeed, if I were so thoughtless as to advise it, it would be wrong for you to act upon it. You must never give anything because somebody advises you to, or because people think you ought to, but because your heart makes you willing.

## **Exodus 35**

<sup>5</sup> Take from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass,

<sup>21</sup> And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all His service, and for the holy garments.

God alone can make you know when and how much to give, and the better we know Him the more simple and childlike will our giving be, and the more shall we see His wondrous working in supplying all our need...

## **Philippians 4**

<sup>19</sup> ...according to His riches in glory.

Before we part I must say just a word directly on the payment of the tithe, as it affects your special case. You have no money except that which is given you for housekeeping, yet no matter how great or small the amount, one tenth of it belongs to the Lord, and not to you or to anybody else.

Suppose you knew that a part of the money that is handed to you each week had been stolen; would you use it? Of course you would not. Now your husband does not know of or acknowledge the Lord's right to the tithe; but the fact is that, whether one knows it or not, withholding God's tithe is as truly robbery as it would be to appropriate trust funds. Many are unconsciously guilty of robbing God, and He has said that a curse surely follows such a course.

### **Malachi 3**

<sup>8</sup> Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings.

<sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation.

<sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

<sup>11</sup> And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, says the Lord of hosts.

<sup>12</sup> And all nations shall call you blessed: for you shall be a delightsome land, says the Lord of hosts.

<sup>13</sup> Your words have been stout against me, says the Lord. Yet you say, What have we spoken so much against you?

You need nothing further as to your duty; the next question is, can you do it, and trust the Lord for the consequences? You know that the principle of the tithe is that we are wholly dependent on God, and that nine-tenths of our income, or even nothing at all, with the blessing of God, is better than the whole without it.

Read again the text just referred to, and see what God says to those who are wholly faithful to Him. Do not make any experiments; it is not good to tempt God; but decide for yourself in His fear what is right, and what you are sure He will enable you to carry through, and then...

## **1 Samuel 10**

<sup>7</sup> ...do as occasion serves you.

## **John 2**

<sup>5</sup> Whatsoever He says unto you, do it.

## 19. Watchmen Who See Alike

Present Truth, December 6, 1900

“We cannot all see alike,” are the words with which very many people invariably excuse themselves from accepting some truth that is presented to them from the Word of God. They seem to think that if two persons should see exactly alike that would mean the utter destruction of the individuality of one of them. It is supposed that on account of our different temperament and training all things must of necessity appear differently to each person.

**I**F THIS were true, what would it indicate? Take for example, a light at a distance from a group of people. One says it is a white light, another calls it red, a third stoutly affirms that it is green, while a fourth declares that it is blue. Now it is certain that one light cannot be four different colors at the same time; it seems evident, too, that these four people cannot see alike; and therefore it is very plain that at least three of them have defective eye-sight.

The fact that they cannot all see alike is not something to be proud of, but the contrary. If they all had good, true eyes, the light would present the same appearance to each of them.

Suppose these four men are engine-drivers; then the case is of a very serious nature. That light is a signal, and has a definite meaning, and hundreds of lives are dependent on the engine-driver's ability to see it just as it is. Every applicant for the position of driver upon a railway engine is tested as to his ability to distinguish between different colors. The railway company expects that all drivers shall see exactly alike, and they secure their object.

With them it is no theory, no fad, but a matter of practical business. And they demonstrate that it is possible for thousands of men to see alike, and to read signals and understand them in just

the same way. A man who would think to excuse his failure to read any given signal correctly, by saying,

“We cannot all see alike,”

–would instantly find himself out of employment, if he did not suffer some worse punishment.

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>19</sup> We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

## **Psalms 119**

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

This word is unchangeable; the light is always the same; it never flickers nor burns dim. If it has a different appearance to different people, we may be sure that it is because they have poor eyes, and that they need the services of a physician. So the Lord says to all such blind and partially blind people:

## **Revelation 3**

<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to...anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see.

Christ is sent to give...

## **Luke 4**

<sup>18</sup> ...recovering of sight to the blind,

–so that all may see the same thing in the same way; and He declares that this will be the case with all His people, all of whom are commanded to “watch,”<sup>49</sup> before He appears:

## **Isaiah 3**

<sup>8</sup> Your watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

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<sup>49</sup> *Mark 13:37.*

It is apparent to all that it would be a serious matter if an engine driver or a ship's pilot could not see a light just as it is, and if all could not see it alike; but how much more necessary it is for God's people, who are to warn the world of the Lord's coming, to see exactly alike. If they could not, they could not all be sure that He is really the Lord, when He appears. But this difficulty will not exist, for all will see alike:

### **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>10</sup> Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Nor is there any chance for the objection that while all may have good eyesight, all cannot have the same point of view, and that so the same thing may present a different appearance to different persons. The Hebrew of the verse which reads,

“The watchmen shall see eye to eye,

—is literally,

“Your watchmen shall see eye in eye.”

All will have exactly the same point of view, and all will see the same as if all had but one eye. We have one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, one truth, one faith, one hope;<sup>50</sup> and all are unchanging; and God gives us all a single eye, that we may all see alike.

It is true that two persons who meet may not have seen the same thing; but if both have the eyes of their understanding enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God,<sup>51</sup> each one will see everything that the other really sees, as soon as it is pointed out to him.

Let us then give diligence to get good sight, and no more complacently boast of our blindness.

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<sup>50</sup> *Ephesians* 4:4-6.

<sup>51</sup> *Ephesians* 1:17.

## 20. A Sick Benefit Society and True Life Insurance

Present Truth, December 13, 1900

I have, been reading *Present Truth* for several year, and I am glad to see that of late you have been inviting questions from those in difficulty; therefore I take the liberty to write and ask you what the Bible teaches that Christians should do with reference to Life Insurance, Fire Insurance, "Sick Benefit" Clubs, and Trades Unions.

THE matter of Trades Unions was perhaps sufficiently dwelt upon a fortnight ago,<sup>52</sup> before your question was received; but I am very glad that you have opened up the subject of Life Insurance and of the so-called benevolent societies in general, which are all, in principle, insurance companies. The Christian's duty with respect to them is very clear, although very many follow the custom of the world, without a thought as to the inconsistency of their course.

Let us first consider the matter from the lowest point of view, that of economy. How many people there are who pay into these societies more than they ever draw out even if they meet with reverses, and thousands pay in the course of years large sums, for which they never realize anything whatever. Where is the gain in such cases?

You may say they are providing for a possible contingency. Then the business is really of the nature of a lottery. It is a species of gambling, in which the players hope to get something for nothing; for if people did not expect to get from any of these various forms of insurance more than they invest, they would not have anything whatever to do with them.

Put the managers of the business on one side and those who are "insured" on the other, and you will readily see that both parties

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<sup>52</sup> See Article 17, "[The Labor Question.](#)"



cannot make a profit, as in ordinary buying and selling. A merchant sells goods on which he makes a profit, but he gives to every customer an equivalent for his money, and so all are equitably dealt with.

But it is not so in insurance of any kind. Here the company has nothing with which to meet a loss, except the sums paid in as premiums by those insured. Therefore the people insured must pay their own losses. No company starts in with a fortune which it is desirous of distributing to persons in distress. So the insured pay their own losses, in addition to supporting the insurance companies, which, as everybody knows, always do well for themselves.

If therefore one wishes to lay up something to provide against a possible future loss, it would be a matter of economy for him to put the money in a savings bank. Then, barring accidents, he will have his money at his own disposal, instead of not getting any of it again.

“But ought we not to be willing to help others who are in need?”

Most certainly; but every man ought to be the distributor of his own liberality, and not to put his means into the hands of somebody else, to be applied without any reference to his judgment as to the necessity of the case. No one will claim, however, that any feeling of generosity prompts him to join any “benevolent” association or to engage in insurance. People do it with their own personal profit in view, so that it is idle to defend the system on the ground of benevolence.

Don't you think it is a strange sort of benevolence, that gives only to those who have first given something, possibly an amount equal to or greater than the sum received? But the case is even worse, for it often happens that those who have paid in large sums can get nothing whatever in return. If they have not paid up their premium or their dues in full, it is the same as though they

had paid nothing. All that they have paid in is lost, if they have failed to meet the last payment before their reverse.

The inherent and obvious selfishness of all these societies is sufficient reason why every Christian should keep clear of them. There is no society in existence that would accept people who are already ill. That is to say, there is no really benevolent association, that looks out for poor, afflicted people, and gives to them freely of its own funds. In all these societies which are called “charitable,” from Free Masons and Odd Fellows down no one is accepted as a member, who is not in apparent good health, and who has not some visible means of self-support.

Life Insurance companies subject every applicant to a severe medical examination, and if he has any ailment, he is rejected. This is to guard as much as possible against the probability of having to be put to any expense on anybody’s account. So it is self-evident that they are wholly selfish and mercenary in their object.

Now Christianity is just the opposite of all this. The followers of Christ are to seek out...

#### **Luke 14**

<sup>13</sup> ...the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind,

—and care for them,

#### **Luke 6**

<sup>35</sup> ...hoping for nothing again.

#### **1 Corinthians 13**

<sup>5</sup> [Love] seeks not her own;

—but in all these societies each person is actuated solely by the desire to get something for nothing, and that something, if he gets it, quite often comes from those who are more needy than he. Nothing that savors of selfishness has any connection with Christianity, and therefore Christ’s true followers can evidently have nothing to do with any such thing.

“Shouldn’t we provide for the future?”

—you ask. Yes, most certainly; and the Bible tells us how:

### **1 Timothy 6**

<sup>17</sup> Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in ascertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy;

<sup>18</sup> That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,

<sup>19</sup> Laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

If you say that this charge is only to the rich, then read the words of Christ to a certain rich man:

### **Matthew 19**

<sup>21</sup> If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.

When he had sold all, and given all to the poor, he would no longer be rich; and then he could be a follower of Christ. Here is Christ’s instruction to everybody:

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>19</sup> Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal;

<sup>20</sup> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

I do not find anywhere in the Bible any instruction to the effect that we must “provide for a rainy day;” but I do read:

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>31</sup> Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

<sup>32</sup> For after all these things do the Gentiles seek...

The societies under consideration, therefore, belong to heathenism, not to Christianity.

## **Matthew 6**

<sup>32</sup> ...For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.

<sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

<sup>34</sup> Be not therefore anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

How can laying up money for the future, no matter in what way, be reconciled with these scriptures? It is the Lord's work, and not ours, to provide for the future, even as He alone can provide for today.

The whole teaching of the Gospel is trust in God day by day:

## **Romans 1**

<sup>17</sup> The just shall live by faith.

We live moment by moment, just as we breathe. And do not forget that those who by faith are just are to live, and not to die.

In the giving of the manna, God gave His people a lesson for all time. None were to lay up anything for the next day; and those who gathered more than they needed were to divide with those who had not been able to go out to gather, or who were less active. Thus it came to pass that...

## **2 Corinthians 8** [Exodus 16:16-18]

<sup>15</sup> ...He that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack.

So can we pray:

## **Matthew 6**

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

If we have enough for today, we are not to worry about the future. He who gives us strength for today's need, will furnish strength wherewith to gather tomorrow's supply. Note the expression in:

## 1 Timothy 6

<sup>18</sup> ...willing to communicate.

That is, willing to have things in common, as the early disciples did. Instead of joining a society to secure themselves a support for the future, none of them...

## Acts 4

<sup>32</sup> ...said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own.

God has specially charged himself with the care of the poor, as the Bible everywhere testifies; and:

## Psalm 118

<sup>8</sup> It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men.

Well, we might talk a long time over this matter, but I will refer you to only one more portion of Scripture. It is the 58<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Isaiah*. Read the whole of it, and you will see that instead of planning to get something out of somebody else, for nothing, God's people are to be associated with Him in caring for the poor and the outcasts. Here is the Lord's own "sick benefit" society:

## Isaiah 58

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? when you see the naked, that you cover him, and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?

<sup>8</sup> Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily: and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rearward.

<sup>10</sup> If you draw out your soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall your light rise in obscurity, and your darkness be as the noonday;

<sup>11</sup> And the Lord shall guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and make fat your bones; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

This is a "sick benefit" society worth joining; for instead of providing for one when sick, it promises to keep him in health. This

is life insurance indeed. The Christian is not to make any plans for illness, because God promises to take sickness away from those who serve Him.

### **Exodus 23**

<sup>25</sup> And you shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless your bread, and your water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of you.

### **Psalm 41**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is he that considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth:

And if by any means he falls ill,

<sup>3</sup> The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: You will make all his bed in his sickness.

A life insurance which assures one to all eternity is incomparably better than any system which offers only a paltry sum of money, and that after one is dead.

Does someone say that he wants something present and practical? Well, this is practical enough; for if God can keep us alive and support us in eternity, He certainly can do it a few years. This is a practical test of whether or not we believe the religion we profess. Then:

### **Psalm 37**

<sup>3</sup> Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.

## 21. The Christmas Festival: Its Origin and History

Present Truth, December 20, 1900

Original title: Celebrating Christ's Birth—The Christmas Festival: Its Origin and History

Kindly favor a constant reader of the *Editor's Corner* with your views as to the proper observance of Christmas. Is it in any sense a sacred day? Are these good grounds for assigning to December 25 the birth of our Lord? How far back does this observance date?

**Y**OUR last questions must be answered first; for we must know the nature and origin of Christmas before we can know anything about its “proper observance.” As to the date you can read the following in *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

A festival of the Christian Church, observed on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of December, in memory of the birth of Jesus Christ. There is, however, a difficulty in accepting this as the date of the Nativity, December being the height of the rainy season in Judea, when neither flocks nor shepherds could have been at night in the fields of Bethlehem.

It is a “difficulty” indeed. It is strange that anybody could ever have been led to suppose that Jesus was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, and that shepherds were out in the fields with their flocks by night, in winter. Nobody in the world knows the date of Christ's birth; but nothing can be more sure than that it was not on the date commonly assigned to it.

It was not till some hundreds of years after Christ's birth that people thought of observing a day in memory of it, and it was some time later before they agreed as to what day they should take. October was by some regarded as the month in which Christ was born, and some time in spring was favored by others. In the East the 6<sup>th</sup> of January was observed for some time.

By the fifth century, however, whether from the influence of some tradition, or from the desire to supplant some heathen festi-

vals of that period of the year, such as the Saturnalia, the 25<sup>th</sup> of December had been generally agreed upon.<sup>53</sup>

In these statements all church historians are agreed. In the *Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, published by the “Christian Literature Company,” New York, Prof. Foster, of Oberlin, says:

The choice of the date, in the utter lack of all tradition, has been referred to different thoughts, but the most probable is the analogy between the birth of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, and the beginning of the return, or the rebirth, of the natural sun upon December 25.

Dr. Schaff, the celebrated church historian, says:

After the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, and among the new institutions which were intended for the benefit of the church, we seem authorized to place the commemoration of Christ’s advent....It is generally admitted that the designation of the 25<sup>th</sup> of December for the festival was first made about the middle of the fourth century.

He adds that many think that that day was chosen...

...because it was the day on which the Romans celebrated the festival of *natalis solis invictis* (the birth of the unconquered sun), or of the sun’s passing the southern solstice and beginning to return northward.

When we remember that “the establishment of Christianity by Constantine” was the paganizing of the Church, and learn of the heathen festival to the sun, which was celebrated the last days in December, we can see that Christmas is wholly pagan in its origin, and that it has no sacredness whatever. To keep it as a sacred day, therefore, is as much a sin as to disregard a day which is sacred. That is, to presume to sanctify a day which God has not sanctified shows as much contempt for His authority as to treat as common a day which He has sanctified.

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<sup>53</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*.



I think this fully answers all your questions; but now I hear another question:

Even though we do not know the exact day of Christ's birth, is it not well, and may it not be pleasing to God, for us to keep one day in memory of it? and since December 25 is commonly accepted, is there any harm in devoting it to that event?

I must repeat what I have just said, that to presume to sanctify a common day is as wicked as to make common a sacred day. The fact that nothing is said in the Bible about celebrating the day of Christ's birth, and that not the slightest hint as to when it occurred is given, is ample evidence that God does not wish to have any day devoted to it.

To celebrate a day which it is well known cannot be the day of Christ's birth, is as absurd as it would be for me to go to a shop and buy a photograph of a man whom I never saw, and carry it about most carefully, and proudly exhibit it to people, as the picture of my father. When people have done all that God has commanded, they will have no time nor inclination to devote their energies to that which He has not commanded.

One thing in which the Gospel is conspicuously distinguished from heathenism is that it has no festival days whatever. There is not a single day set apart to commemorate any event in Christ's life or earthly ministry. We have only the Sabbath, which is not a festival day, and which was before the Gospel, dating from creation.

As to the celebration of Christmas, there can be no harm in making it the day of the annual reunion of families, as then the scattered members are free from business, since it is a regular holiday; and if we wish to give our friends, and especially the poor, some useful and needed article, there is no objection to making December 25 the date of its bestowal, provided it is not more urgently needed at some other time; but true Christians will cer-

tainly avoid making it a day of hilarity and surfeiting, or looking upon it as sacred in any sense whatever.

The practice of setting apart a day for the commemoration of Christ's birth indicates an utter failure to understand the nature of that birth. It is a thing for and of eternity.

**Micah 5** [margin]

<sup>3</sup> His [Christ's] goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.

He is the One who was, and is, and is to come:

**Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and for ever.

God gave His only begotten Son from the beginning, even before the world was made:

**Revelation 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

He is the Word that was with God in the beginning, and was God, and He was "made flesh" when Adam was created. His appearance as a babe in Bethlehem was to make so plain that none could fail to see it, that He does not despise us in our low state, but continues to dwell even in fallen, sinful flesh, in order that we may be born again, and become as new and as innocent as Adam was when God created Him.

Every day and every hour, yes, every minute in our lives, should be a celebration of the birth of Christ; not the mere keeping of it in memory, but the actual repetition of it in us. Christ is to be formed in us, and the life of Christ manifest in our mortal flesh is to be...

**2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>16</sup> ...renewed day by day.

He is “the Son of man,”<sup>54</sup> and therefore every soul of man may say continually:

**Isaiah 9**

<sup>6</sup> Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.

And as He who is our peace<sup>55</sup> abides with us, so that the peace of God rules in our hearts,<sup>56</sup> we may continually join in the chorus of the heavenly host:

**Luke 2**

<sup>14</sup> Peace on earth, good will to men.

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<sup>54</sup> *Daniel* 7:13; *Revelation* 1:13, 14:14; and many references in the Gospels.

<sup>55</sup> *Ephesians* 2:14.

<sup>56</sup> *Colossians* 3:15.

## 22. Christ's Second Coming

Present Truth, December 20, 1900

I have heard it said that the promise of the second coming of Christ is fulfilled in the advent of the Holy Spirit into the heart of the individual believer, but fail to harmonize such a position with texts like *John* 14:1-3, *Acts* 1:11, and similar scriptures. May I ask you to elucidate this matter?

**N**O MATTER what we have heard said, our only dependence must be on "what says the Scripture."<sup>57</sup> The words of Christ himself, and of the apostles, are so plain that there is not the slightest reason for anybody to be in doubt as to the manner and purpose of Christ's second advent.

It is not at all surprising that you cannot harmonize the idea that Christ's second coming is only the coming of the Spirit into the hearts of believers, with such texts as *John* 14:1-3 and *Acts* 1:11; for there is not and cannot be any harmony between them.

### The Coming of the Spirit

Suppose we read these texts. Christ was just about to be crucified, and had told His disciples that He was about to go away and leave them, and that they could not go with Him. At this they were very sorrowful, for they loved Him. Then He said:

#### John 14

<sup>1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.

<sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

Christ was not only personally, but visibly, present with the disciples, when He made this promise. They sorrowed because they soon were to lose Him from their sight; He comforted them by as-

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<sup>57</sup> *Romans* 4:3; *Galatians* 4:30.

sureing them that if He went away He would come again, so that they could see Him. And remember this: In another place Jesus told them of the Holy Spirit, His Representative, who should abide with them for ever,<sup>58</sup> and therefore He said:

### **Matthew 28**

<sup>20</sup> Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

But in this place He did not speak of returning to be with them, but of returning to take them to himself, so that they could be with Him. It is not of His coming to stay with us, but our being taken to stay with Him, that Christ speaks in *John* 14:1-3.

### **At the Resurrection**

This is made apparent in *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18, where the Apostle Paul gives us the word of the Lord concerning our being with Him. The Thessalonian brethren were sorrowing over their dead friends, whom they, not having been fully emancipated from heathen notions, thought were forever shut away from Christ. The assurance is that we who are alive shall not go before those who are asleep, but that both they and we shall see the Lord at the same instant.

This disproves the idea that the coming referred to is the presence of the Spirit; for the dead have no consciousness, and no part in anything that is done under the sun; yet they are to share in the joy and glory of Christ's second coming, equally with those who live till that event. The apostle continues:

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> 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;

<sup>17</sup> 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.

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<sup>58</sup> *John* 14:16.

Thus it appears that the second coming of Christ, instead of being the present communion with Him by the Spirit, is something in which no one can have a part until the resurrection of the just.

### **A Visible Appearance**

The Spirit is invisible, but Christ at His second coming will be as visible as at His first advent. After His resurrection He walked with His disciples from Jerusalem to Bethany, and while they were talking He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and promised them the power of the Spirit to enable them to be witnesses for Him.

#### **Acts 1**

<sup>9</sup> And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

They saw Him slowly recede from them, and as they gazed after Him with loving longing, straining their eyes in the attempt to see Him even after the cloud had enveloped Him,

<sup>10</sup> Behold two men stood by them in white apparel,

<sup>11</sup> Which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

There is no mistaking this language, Christ's second coming will be as open and as plainly visible as was His ascension. He went up in full view of His disciples, and gradually receded from their view, until at last they could see only a cloud. He is to come as He went away. Accordingly we read:

#### **Revelation 1**

<sup>7</sup> Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.

This cloud will be the first thing seen and then as it approaches the earth, Christ will be seen sitting on it.

## Revelation 14

<sup>14</sup> And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

From all this you can clearly see that the second coming of Christ is yet future, and entirely different from the Spirit's coming to individual believers. A few words on the relation of the first and second coming will be found on the last page of this paper. [This part is included in the section below.]

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## Article: Christ's Coming

EVERY thoughtful reader of the Old Testament, that is, of all the Bible that was written before Christ's birth in Bethlehem, must have noticed that it makes no distinction between the first and the second coming of Christ. All the references are simply to the coming of the Lord, combining as in one event...

### 1 Peter 1

<sup>11</sup> ...the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

This is because that which we now look forward to as the second coming of Christ is only the consummation, the development, the filling out, of His first advent. The manger and the cross, contained all the glory of the second coming, only it was veiled.

Christ is coming again in pursuance of the very object for which He died, namely, to save His people. When He comes again, the bright beams of glory that reveal His power will proceed from the side that was pierced. Likewise all the power that will attend His appearing—power that will shake both heaven and earth, and will bring forth the dead from their graves in immortal freshness—is the power that was with Jesus at His first advent, and that is constantly at the service of all who receive Christ in the Spirit.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is not the second coming of Christ, but is the preparation for that event. When the disciples asked Jesus what should be the sign of His coming, and of the end of the world, He replied, among other things:

#### **Matthew 24**

<sup>14</sup> This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Christ's second coming is the end of the world, as He says in *Matthew* 13:40-43; but the whole world must hear the Gospel of the kingdom before He comes; and it cannot be preached except by the power of the Spirit with which Christ himself preached.

Moreover, it is the Spirit that makes us acquainted with the Lord, so that when He comes He will not come to us as a stranger. It is the Spirit that makes our mortal bodies alive at His coming, and that sanctifies us, to keep us blameless till He comes.<sup>59</sup> The Spirit is the water of Life which Christ gives, which in every one who believes will be a...

#### **John 4**

<sup>14</sup> ...well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Not only so, but this well is to overflow in a stream which will refresh others:

#### **John 7**

<sup>38</sup> He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

<sup>39</sup> (But this He spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Thus will Christ's coming be hastened. Those who have the most of the Spirit's presence in their hearts, look most earnestly for Christ's second coming. John, full of the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, in response to Christ's words,

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<sup>59</sup> *1Thessalonians* 5:23; *1 Corinthians* 1:8.



## **Revelation 22**

<sup>20</sup> Surely, I come quickly, [prayed,] Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Let us then welcome the Spirit into our hearts, that our lives may be only the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh, and that we may...

## **2 Timothy 4**

<sup>8</sup> ...love His appearing,

—and may rejoicingly say when He comes to bring us the crown of glory, honor and immortality:

## **Isaiah 25**

<sup>9</sup> Lo, this is our God, and we have waited for Him, and He will save us.

## 23. One Mediator

Present Truth, December 27, 1900

In order that all the readers of *Present Truth* may understand the reference in the first part of the following question, it may be necessary to state that the Sabbath school lessons to which the questioner refers are on the *Epistle to the Galatians*, and were written by the editor of this paper. The matter referred to is also more fully dealt with in the little book on *Galatians*, called *The Glad Tidings*.

In studying our S. S. Lesson, it has seemed to me that you have not recognized the fact that Moses was a mediator. He received the law for the people by their request. *Acts* 7:38; *Deuteronomy* 5:31. Is not Moses, as a mediator, contrasted with Christ as the mediator of a better covenant?

Christ's ministry is more excellent, to the extent that, He is the mediator of a better covenant. *Hebrews* 8:6. Is not His mediatorial work His ministry? Christ is the mediator of the new testament (*Hebrews* 9:15), and is not Moses the mediator of the first testament? Verses 18-19.

Was it not in connection with that first covenant that the law entered because of transgressions? Christ as mediator brings man to God; Moses as mediator stood between man and God, to keep them apart "lest they die." I know that the law was spoken by Christ as a mediator; but was not the "hand of a mediator" the hand of Moses?

I can understand the law being ordained by ministering spirits in the hand of Moses, but I cannot see the meaning of its being ordained by angels in the hand of Christ. If I am wrong, I would be glad to know wherein I have missed the point.

YOU have asked a very comprehensive question, yet I think we may give it a fairly thorough consideration in the time allotted to us, and I am sure that no subject can be studied with greater profit.

## Covenant not Testament

In the first place, let me caution you against falling into the too common habit of treating the words “covenant” and “testament” as synonymous. It is true that they are so used in our common English version, but it is wholly arbitrary and unwarranted. There is but one Greek word from which they are both translated, and in every other version than the English this word is uniformly translated by one word, which means “covenant.”

Even though you may not read the Greek, you can to some extent satisfy yourself on this point. Thus: it is evident that the very same thing is referred to in both *Hebrews* 7:22 and 8:6-7, yet “testament” is used in one place, and “covenant” in the other. But *Hebrews* 8:8-11 is quoted from *Jeremiah* 31:31-34, where the word “covenant” is used, and the Hebrew word there used never has any other signification than that of covenant.

It is true that the Greek word for “covenant” was also used to indicate a will or testament, but this latter meaning never occurs in the Bible. So drop the word “testament” out of your vocabulary, so far as the Bible is concerned, and when in your reading you come to it, always say “covenant” instead, as it will save much confusion.

Many theories and arguments have been built on the idea of a will which Christ made, and which came into force after His death, but not before; but all of them were wasted breath and energy; yes, worse than wasted, for they tend only to mislead the hearers or readers, instead of to instruct them.

## The Covenants of Promise

Before we can fully understand the office and work of the mediator of a covenant, we must have a clear understanding of the nature and object of the covenant. Remember that God’s covenants are...

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>12</sup> ...covenants of promise.

The first covenant of which we read was an unconditional promise not to destroy the earth by a flood.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, every promise of God must necessarily be unconditional, since we have nothing to give, can do nothing, and are nothing.

*Galatians* 3:14-18 shows also that God's covenant is His promise, for the disannulling of the covenant would be to make void the promise. The promise made to Abraham, and confirmed by God's oath<sup>61</sup> is in *Galatians* spoken of as the covenant confirmed.

### **The Covenant with Abraham**

God made a covenant with Abraham, promising to give Him "all the land of Canaan,"<sup>62</sup> which constituted him...

#### **Romans 4**

<sup>13</sup> ...heir of the world.

This promise was...

<sup>13</sup> ...through the righteousness of faith.

It was...

#### **Galatians 3**

<sup>16</sup> To Abraham and his seed.

And it assured the land to them...

#### **Genesis 17**

<sup>8</sup> ...for an everlasting possession.

It was confirmed by the oath of God,<sup>63</sup> not for Abraham's sake, but in order...

#### **Hebrews 6**

<sup>18</sup> That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.

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<sup>60</sup> *Genesis* 9:8-17.

<sup>61</sup> *Hebrews* 6:12-18.

<sup>62</sup> *Genesis* 15:3-28; 17:4-8.

<sup>63</sup> *Genesis* 22:15-18.

So we see that the covenant which God made with Abraham 430 years before the law was spoken from Sinai, is the covenant by which we now find salvation. It embraces...

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>8</sup> ...all nations,

even

### **Genesis 28**

<sup>14</sup> ...all the families of the earth.

It assures righteousness to all who trust in God through Christ, and through the righteousness in Christ, everlasting life in the kingdom of God. That covenant included all that God has to give to any people, and all that He ever requires of anybody.

It was to this covenant that God referred when He said to the Israelites:

### **Exodus 19**

<sup>4</sup> You have seen, what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

<sup>5</sup> Now therefore if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine;

<sup>6</sup> And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

No other covenant than that made with Abraham was needed, for that was...

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>17</sup> ...confirmed in Christ.

And it was not God's design to make any other.

## **The Covenant with Israel**

There are many covenants mentioned in the Bible, but the terms "first covenant" and "second covenant" have reference to two covenants made with the whole house of Israel.

The first covenant was that made at Sinai,

#### **Galatians 4**

<sup>24</sup> ...which genders to bondage.

It was essentially the people's covenant; for when God exhorted them to keep His covenant,—the covenant already made with Abraham,—which meant that they should keep the faith, the people self-confidently interposed their own promise.

God told them what He had done, and what He would do, and they, without thanking Him for His...

#### **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...exceeding great and precious promises,

—immediately proceeded to tell what they would do. But inasmuch as...

#### **Psalms 39**

<sup>5</sup> ...every man at his best state is altogether vanity,

—their promises were worth nothing, and so that covenant was “made void”<sup>64</sup> from the beginning. They promised to keep the law, but:

#### **Galatians 2**

<sup>16</sup> By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

By virtue of that first covenant, therefore, the people of Israel never got anything, for there was never any virtue in it.

### **The Second Covenant with Israel**

#### **Hebrews 8**

<sup>7</sup> If the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

A faulty covenant can never make a perfect people; but there is nothing faulty in what God does. The covenant was not faulty because the people did not promise to do the right thing, but be-

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<sup>64</sup> *Psalms 89:39.*

cause the making and performing of promises that are of any value at all rests with God alone. So the second covenant is better than the first, because its promises are God's promises, and not man's.

### Hebrews 8

<sup>8</sup> Finding fault with them, He said, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

<sup>10</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;

<sup>11</sup> And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.

<sup>12</sup> For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

This covenant includes nothing that was not in the covenant with Abraham, but it is simply an act constituting "the commonwealth of Israel"<sup>65</sup> God's people for evermore. It has not yet been made, as can be seen by reading *Jeremiah* 30 to 33, but it is a matter of promise, to be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ.

The fact that Christ is the "Surety" or pledge of this covenant<sup>66</sup> shows that the covenant itself has not yet been made; for we need no surety for that which we already have. The house of Israel has not yet been gathered out from among the nations; among every people there are "lost sheep of the house of Israel,"<sup>67</sup> and these must be gathered out before the second covenant with that people can be made.

When it is made, there will be no more need for the preaching of the Gospel, for all will know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. In the meantime, we have the covenant made with Abra-

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<sup>65</sup> *Ephesians* 2:12.

<sup>66</sup> *Hebrews* 7:22.

<sup>67</sup> *Matthew* 10:6; 15:24.

ham, confirmed to us by the oath of God in Christ, which brings us to God, and makes us His heirs:

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

## **The Mediator of the New Covenant**

The Mediator of the new covenant is Christ, as we are plainly told in *Hebrews* 9:15. Knowing what God's covenant embraces, we can know the work of its Mediator. God's covenant is first of all the promise of righteousness, through which we are fitted for an eternal inheritance. Righteousness is the perfect manifestation of the requirement of the law; it is the law in living form,

## **Romans 8**

<sup>2</sup> ...the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

It must be put into us, for we do not possess it by nature, and cannot get it for ourselves.

## **Romans 3**

<sup>22</sup> The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ...

<sup>21</sup> ...witnessed by the law and the prophets,

<sup>22</sup> ...[is] unto all and upon all them that believe.

## **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>30</sup> Christ is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Only by His life in us, by the exercise of His power over our flesh, can we be made righteous.

## **Romans 5**

<sup>19</sup> By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.

Thus Christ is the means, the medium, by which God's promises become realities to us.

## **2 Corinthians 1**

<sup>20</sup> For all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him, Amen.



He is thus the Mediator.

### **1 Peter 3**

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>18</sup> Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

<sup>13</sup> [We] are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

His name is Emmanuel,

### **Matthew 1**

<sup>23</sup> ...God with us,

—and as He is made flesh, even our flesh, He is the means by which God, and consequently His righteousness, dwells in us, filling us with His fullness.

## **Christ the Only Mediator**

### **1 Timothy 2**

<sup>6</sup> There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

This text settles the question as to whether or not Moses was a mediator. Moreover, the very text which most plainly tells us that Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant, shows us that the first covenant had no mediator, and that herein lies the advantage of the second over the first. Thus:

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>15</sup> He is the Mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

You see it is only by virtue of Christ as Mediator of the new covenant that the transgressions that were under the first covenant were forgiven.

That first covenant was the promise of the people to keep God's law. If it had only had a mediator—someone to put the law into

them—it would have lacked nothing, and they would have been perfect. But it had no mediator, and so they would have been in a hopeless condition if it had not been for the covenant made with Abraham, and confirmed in Christ by an oath of God.

I must not forget to remind you that the scripture that speaks of Christ's "more excellent ministry,"<sup>68</sup> is not contrasting His work with that of Moses, but Christ's priesthood with that of human priests.<sup>69</sup> His priesthood is as much better than theirs as God's promises are better than man's, and as...

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>16</sup> ...the power of an endless life...

—is better than the weakness of mortal flesh.

### **A Mediator not a Separator**

Christ is the Mediator between God and men, and thus He brings them together. This is the sole work of a mediator. But how was it with Moses? You have already said that he kept God away from the people. When God had spoken the Ten Commandments, they said to Moses:

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>19</sup> Speak with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

<sup>21</sup> And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

God had already said to them:

### **Exodus 19**

<sup>4</sup> I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

And this was done through Christ, the one Mediator, so that they needed no other; but they blindly rejected Christ, and asked Moses to take His place, to keep God away from them. Thus Moses was just the opposite of mediator, although he himself had

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<sup>68</sup> *Hebrews* 8:6.

<sup>69</sup> See *Hebrews* 7:21-22; 7:1-7.

free access to God. He could not be mediator, any more than you or I or any other man could.

### **In the Hand of Christ**

This expression, “in the hand of a mediator,”<sup>70</sup> which seems so difficult to you, is one of the most precious assurances in the Bible. You say you can understand the law being ordained by ministering spirits, in the hand of Moses, but you cannot see the meaning of its being ordained by angels in the hand of Christ. The very reverse of this seems to me to be the case.

We have not time now to go much into detail, but it will help you if you will remember what the work of a real mediator is. The Mediator between God and men must bring them together, and must put His righteous law into the hearts and lives of men.

Perhaps this may help you:

#### **Deuteronomy 33**

<sup>2</sup> The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of His saints [holy ones]; from His right hand went a fiery law for them.

<sup>3</sup> Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in your hand.

So both the law and the saints are in the hand of Christ. That is good; that unites them. His hand under and upon us protects us and keeps us in the law, and the law in us. He says of His people:

#### **John 10**

<sup>28</sup> I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

We need nothing except to be brought to God, and Christ is in himself alone abundantly able to do this. He joins Divinity and humanity in a perfect union. The law was “ordained to life,”<sup>71</sup> but if we meet it apart from Christ we shall find it to be unto death. We have cause for everlasting rejoicing that the hand from which

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<sup>70</sup> *Galatians* 3:19.

<sup>71</sup> *Romans* 7:10.

the fiery law proceeds also holds us, and that in Him, who is our peace,<sup>72</sup> we are saved from the wrath which it works.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Ephesians* 2:14.

<sup>73</sup> *Romans* 4:15; 5:9.

## 24. Knowing and Doing God's Will

Present Truth, January 3, 1901

If a person, while not clearly understanding the plan of salvation, acts up to known duties, will this bring him where he can better understand and appreciate this truth, or will it only show that he is seeking justification by his own works?

What says the Scriptures?

### **Acts 10**

<sup>34</sup> God is no respecter of persons;

<sup>35</sup> But in every nation he that fears Him, and works righteousness, is accepted with Him.

### **John 7**

<sup>17</sup> If any man wills to do His will; he shall know of the teaching.

### **Romans 2**

<sup>14</sup> When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves,

<sup>15</sup> Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or also excusing one another.

### **Psalms 145**

<sup>9</sup> The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.

### **Psalms 102**

<sup>19</sup> He has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth;

<sup>20</sup> To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

### **John 3**

<sup>19</sup> This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.

**G**OD is anxious to save, not to condemn. God is listening to hear the first faint longing of every human heart for that which is good, and is waiting to supply the want; for:

### **Psalm 107**

<sup>9</sup> He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

This being the case, it is evident that God will not condemn any soul for that which he does not know. If a man knew only one single thing as being right, and loved and did that one thing, he would certainly be saved. And if he really loved the good, he would certainly do all the good that should be revealed to him; and more would certainly be revealed, for:

### **Psalm 97**

<sup>11</sup> Light is sown for the righteous.

And when this man, loving the good, should find out, as he very soon would, that in the Lord alone is there righteousness and strength, he would most surely lay hold of that only means of righteousness. In the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith:

### **Romans 1**

<sup>17</sup> For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

## 25. The Preparation for Eternity

Present Truth, January 3, 1901

What will fit a person to dwell on the earth made new, in the presence of the God who made heaven and earth, who cannot bear sin in His kingdom?

HERE is the question repeated, and answered by inspiration:

### **Psalms 15**

<sup>1</sup> Lord, who shall abide in your tabernacle? who shall dwell in your holy hill?

<sup>2</sup> He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.

<sup>3</sup> He that backbites not with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor.

<sup>4</sup> In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honors them that fear the Lord. He that swears to his own hurt, and changes not.

<sup>5</sup> He that puts not out his money to usury, nor takes reward against the innocent. He that does these things shall never be moved.

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

And how shall we obtain this righteousness?

### **Romans 3**

<sup>21</sup> The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

<sup>22</sup> Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference;

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

<sup>24</sup> Being justified [made righteous] freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.



## 26. Shaving, Hair-Cutting, and Pruning

Present Truth, January 3, 1901

Does the teaching of *Leviticus* 19:27 apply to us in these days? Is it right to remove that which God has given to man, evidently for protection, for the sake of personal appearance?

THERE can be no doubt but that whatever commandment God has once given applies equally at all times. Yet this is far from being the same as saying that a man should never shave, or have his hair cut. Although this may seem to be a trivial matter, and is so in one sense, I think it is worthwhile devoting a few moments to it, since some people are greatly troubled because of a misunderstanding of it, and some judge others harshly.

I once knew a man who disfellowshipped an entire church, refusing to take the communion with them, because there were some who shaved, and because all the men at least had their hair trimmed.

Now let us read some texts. The one referred to says:

### **Leviticus 19**

<sup>27</sup> You shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shall you mar the corners of your beard.

The verse following continues:

<sup>28</sup> You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you; I am the Lord.

This indicates that it is some special mark of idolatry, that is forbidden.

In *Leviticus* 21:5 we read that the Lord's priests were forbidden to "make baldness upon their head." They were also forbidden to make "cuttings in their flesh." Compare this with *2 Kings* 18:28, where we read that the priests of Baal cut themselves till the blood gushed out upon them, in their frantic attempts to make their god hear them, and it is evident that making baldness upon

the head and cuttings in the flesh were customs peculiar to heathen priests. The custom of making baldness in the head is perpetuated still by the Romish priests, and is undoubtedly as wrong now as when God first forbade it. It is a sign of heathenism.

Nevertheless the priests of God were not forbidden to cut their hair. In *Ezekiel* 44:19-20 we read that the priests were to change their garments when they came forth from the sanctuary to sanctify the people:

#### **Ezekiel 44**

<sup>20</sup> Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads.

We must certainly allow God to interpret himself. He would not tell the priests to cut their hair, if He had forbidden it.

The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Numbers* contains the law of the Nazarites. All the days of their vow, no razor was to come upon their heads, but when the days of his separation were fulfilled, the order was:

#### **Numbers 6**

<sup>18</sup> The Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

So we read that Paul sailed into Syria,

#### **Acts 18**

<sup>18</sup> ...having shorn his head in Cenebrea; for he had a vow.

And he wrote:

#### **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>14</sup> Does not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

From all this, therefore, you may know that you are not transgressing a commandment, nor defiling the temple of God, if you cut your hair or your finger nails.

In a perfect state it would undoubtedly be unnecessary to do more for plants than to train them up in the way they should

grow, but on account of the curse it is necessary for the gardener to use the pruning knife, and to cut off many things that God makes grow.

So in the new earth, with new bodies, there will be nothing superfluous about our bodies, that will need to be cut off, even as we shall not need to wear clothes; but while we have these mortal bodies we are under the necessity of constantly using the pruning knife and shears.

## 27. God's Long-Suffering and Justice

Present Truth, January 10, 1901

In reading a recent number<sup>74</sup> of *Present Truth* that the beating of the heart is Christ's knocking at the door, this question came to my mind: What is God's object in allowing a person to live, who has sinned against the Holy Ghost, and who therefore has forever refused to allow himself to be influenced by the Spirit of God?

THE only way by which we can understand any question concerning the reason why God does certain things, the answer to which is not expressly stated in the Bible, is by remembering that the Judgment, which closes the history of this world, is to be the decision of the universe upon the character and actions of God, and that man's place in it is secondary to God's.

It is primarily God's case that is on trial now, and we stand or fall according as we take sides for or against Him. The matter has often been dealt with in the *Present Truth*,<sup>75</sup> but it touches the very core of the Gospel, and I will briefly set forth some of the facts upon which we build our faith and hope.

When God made man, He made him a partner with himself in His Government. He gave him dominion over this earth and everything that pertained to it. We know that this is in keeping with God's dealing with all His creatures, His plan being to invest each one with responsibility,

### Matthew 25

<sup>15</sup> ...to every man according to his several ability.

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<sup>74</sup> See article 2 in the Appendix: "[A Royal Visitor](#)."

<sup>75</sup> The most full presentation about "God's case on trial" is in the series of articles on the book of *Isaiah* (October 13, 1898 to June 21, 1900), which has been released under the title, *The Gospel of Isaiah*. See especially chapter 4: "The Great Case at Law," chapter 47: "The Great Case in Court," chapter 48: "The Summons to the Trial," chapter 54: "God's Witnesses," chapter 61: "Object of the Earth's Creation," and chapter 62: "The God That Can Save."

We read that “all His saints” have the honor of executing judgment,<sup>76</sup> and of Lucifer (now called Satan) we read that it was his place to affix the seal to the perfect ordinance. So we have it in *Ezekiel* 28:12, literally rendered, which, as the verses following clearly show, can apply only to the one described in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Isaiah*.

Sin among men is only the ruling in them of the spirit of Satan,<sup>77</sup> so that in the temptation of Eve we know that we see the very thing that caused him who is now Satan to lose his former place in glory. First there was an insinuation against the kindness and justice of God, and then an appeal to pride and ambition to become like God himself.

The serpent made Eve believe that God had prohibited the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, solely that He might be exalted at their expense, for, said he:

### **Genesis 3**

<sup>5</sup> God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, knowing good and evil.

So seeing—fancying—that the tree was...

<sup>6</sup> ...to be desired to make one wise,

—she ate of it. It is evident that her sole desire was the same as that of Lucifer, when he said:

### **Isaiah 14**

<sup>14</sup> I will be like the Most High.

It was a desire to be able to rule independently of God. Before that time, however, Satan had been cast out of heaven. He had sinned against the greatest light possible, and consequently against the highest manifestation of the love of God, and having deliberately and definitely rejected God’s authority, and having fully determined to set up an independent government of his

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<sup>76</sup> *Psalm* 149:5-9.

<sup>77</sup> *Ephesians* 2:2-3.

own, his probation was ended. For six thousand years Satan and his angels have had their lives continued, yet with no hope of their ever repenting. They are:

### **Jude**

<sup>6</sup> ...reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the Judgment of the great day.

Yet it is only by the life of the Lord that they live, and they have no power at all, except the power that they get from the life of God. Why is this? Why did not God put an end to Satan and his rebellion when He cast him out of heaven? This is the question under consideration.

In the first place we must remember that the coming Judgment is to be final.

### **Nahum 1**

<sup>9</sup> Affliction shall not rise up the second time.

Never more will there be in the whole of God's universal kingdom a sound of anything but love and praise to Him as this supreme Ruler. But all service must be the willing service of love. There must not be any place left in the heart of any created being, for a doubt of God's loving-kindness and justice.

The Judgment must set forth God's righteousness and love so completely that even His enemies will be compelled to acknowledge it, and so that His saints, who hitherto have trusted His love even when they could not comprehend His motives, will have everything made clear.

Everybody must be able clearly to see that all who perish fully merit their fate; and the wicked themselves must be brought to acknowledge this so plainly and emphatically that no one can ever again possibly have room to think that perhaps some have not had a full opportunity for repentance and salvation.

## Teaching the World and Angels

Now we know that it is not so at the present time. On every hand we hear doubts expressed as to God's care for His creatures. Thousands of professed Christians are teaching that there must be a probation after death for those who, as they say, "did not have a chance" in this life; and this thought, together with the pagan idea that the dead are really alive and conscious, is the foundation of the Roman Catholic purgatory.

If the Judgment did not reveal God's long-suffering, which is the ground of repentance there would be many saints who would sometimes wonder if such and such a one might not have repented if he had been allowed to live longer.

We know that even the angels do not understand the mystery of the Gospel.

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>12</sup> ...them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

It is the church's mission to make known even to...

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>10</sup> ...the principalities and powers in heavenly places...the manifold wisdom of God.

Think then what a shock it would have been to them if Lucifer had been destroyed at the very beginning of his rebellious career. We know that he succeeded in deceiving many, and winning them from their allegiance to God, and so we may be sure that those who remained loyal did so without being able to answer all of Lucifer's artful insinuations against God.

Lucifer set out to establish an independent government. Man has followed in his steps. God, instead of arbitrarily putting an end to it, has allowed them to go on with their experiment; and the Judgment will not come until they have demonstrated what

an utter failure any form of Government is in which God is not lovingly and loyally recognized as supreme.

Another thing to be remembered is that God never casts off any creature. He is the one who is rejected. He has taken all the responsibility for all the sins of the world on himself, and has suffered for them, so that no one need be separated from Him. Indeed God is still suffering, as He is being made to serve with the sins of the creatures whom His life sustains.

### **Isaiah 43**

<sup>23</sup> You have not brought me the small cattle of your burnt offerings; neither have you honored me with your sacrifices. I have not caused you to serve with an offering, nor wearied you with incense.

<sup>24</sup> You have bought me no sweet cane with money, neither have you filled me with the fat of your sacrifices: but you have made me to serve with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities.

<sup>25</sup> I, even I, am he that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins.

Every sin that is committed comes upon the life of Him to whom sin is loathsome. So you see that the term “long-suffering,” as applied to God, is wonderfully expressive. His goodness and patience are such that He suffers the manners even of those who have fully denied and rejected Him.

### **Life the Evidence of Acceptance**

Now you will say:

“What then becomes of the statement that while there’s life there’s hope, and that life itself is hope? Can we indeed take the fact that we are alive as evidence that God accepts us?”

Yes, we can; the fact that there are living men who have committed the unpardonable sin,—have fully rejected God’s goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, and done despite to the Spirit



of grace, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing,<sup>78</sup>—does not warrant anybody in supposing that he himself is one of the number.

Quite the contrary; for the fact that a person is troubled over sin is proof that he has not committed the unpardonable sin, which is refusal to be forgiven. So long as a person lives, there is hope for him, provided he will.

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>17</sup> Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Understand, and never forget, that God never makes it impossible for anybody to repent and find mercy. Men are lost, not because they cannot be saved, but because they will not. It is true that men do become so set in their rebellious ways that they cannot turn, but it is not God who has fixed them in that way. They themselves have forged their own chains of darkness.

The fact that God allows His bitterest enemies to live on for years, and supplies life to those who live only to curse Him, is proof that...

### **Psalms 136**

<sup>1</sup> ...His mercy endures for ever.

What stronger evidence of His desire and willingness to save us can we possibly have than the fact of His kindness to the unthankful and the unholy?<sup>79</sup>

There is another lesson that we should learn, and that is one of forbearance. Since God bears so long with mankind, and even suffers those whom He knows to be incorrigible, how patient we ought to be with all men, of whom we are not justified in regarding one as beyond the hope of salvation. So may the goodness of God not only lead us to repentance, but fill us with the fullness of His love.

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<sup>78</sup> Hebrews 10:29.

<sup>79</sup> Luke 6:35.

## 28. Avoid Doubtful Disputations

Present Truth, January 24, 1901

I shall be obliged if you will give an explanation of *Romans* 14:1-2. I have been asked if it does not show lack of faith, to eat herbs. From reading the entire chapter it seems that different foods were eaten, according to the day kept. Is this so?

THE principal difficulty about this text arises from taking certain expressions, and putting an arbitrary meaning on them, without regard to the general subject of which they form a part. To study the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter, so as to grasp its teaching, in an hour, is a large task; but we may get enough of an understanding so that you need not be troubled over it any more. Thus if you have your mind freed from wrong ideas you may be able to go on studying it intelligently.

Remember that chapter divisions are purely arbitrary, and do not indicate any change in the subject. Read the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter carefully, and you will see that its subject is real service to God as supreme.

### **Romans 13**

<sup>8</sup> Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loves another has fulfilled the law.

<sup>10</sup> Love works no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>14</sup> Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

The 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> chapters deal with our relation to one another, and especially as members of the body of Christ.

### **We Are Not To Be Judges**

In the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, the law of God, as the rule of life and the standard of the Judgment, is set forth, and the 14<sup>th</sup> contains a warning against our presuming to judge one another.

## **Romans 14**

<sup>4</sup> Who are you that judges another man's servant? to his own Master he stands or falls.

<sup>10</sup> Why do you judge your brother? or why do you set at nought your brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

<sup>11</sup> For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

<sup>12</sup> So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

<sup>13</sup> Let us therefore not judge one another any more.

Now can you not see that the Lord, by the Apostle, is not in this chapter telling us some specific things that we are to do, but is speaking of our general treatment of one another?

<sup>19</sup> Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

With these verses in mind read the first of the chapter:

<sup>1</sup> Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations.

The margin has "not to judge his doubtful thoughts." The margin of the Revision has, "for decisions of doubts." The word in the Greek is the same that is rendered "imagination" in *Romans* 1:21, and "thoughts" in:

## **1 Corinthians 3**

<sup>20</sup> The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

It indicates uncertainty, so in:

## **Luke 24**

<sup>36</sup> Why are you troubled? and why do *thoughts* arise in your hearts?

So the first verse is well rendered in the French of Segond:

"Accept him that is feeble in the faith, and do not discuss his opinions."

The Danish and Norwegian translations are the same. One recent Danish translation has it:

“Receive him that is feeble in faith, without judging thoughts.”

The teaching is plainly the same as in:

## **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>23</sup> Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

Also:

## **1 Timothy 1**

<sup>4</sup> Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith.

## **Romans 14**

<sup>5</sup> Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

## **Full Assurance by the Word**

But this does not by any means indicate that it makes little if any difference what one believes. Far from it. On the contrary, it teaches that there should be no doubts, but positive certainty.

<sup>23</sup> He that doubts is damned if he eat, because he eats not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

This is the idea conveyed in the term “fully persuaded.” The Greek word is the same as in *Luke* 1:1, where we read that the Gospel was written:

## **Luke 1**

<sup>1</sup> ...to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are *most surely believed* among us.

But there is no uncertainty about the *Gospel of Luke*. Luke, as well as Peter, could say:

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>16</sup> We have not followed cunningly devised fables.

We have the same word in:

## 2 Timothy 4

<sup>17</sup> The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me that by me the preaching might be *fully known*.

### Opinions are Excluded

Opinions have no place in the Gospel, nor in anybody's Christian experience. They have no connection whatsoever with *faith*.

## Romans 10

<sup>17</sup> Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Whatever the Word of God says is sure, and therefore we may *know* it. When the Word speaks, there is no room for doubts or opinions; and the expression of *our opinion*, in such a case, is evidence of lack of faith.

Nevertheless we are not to condemn any person. The Church of Christ is not in the least like any society formed by men, where certain tests are applied to any applicant for membership, and those who do not meet the minds of the members are rejected. Instead, it is the body of Christ, and, like Christ himself, it is a school, to which all are called to come and learn. If a man comes who has less faith than some others, he is not to be condemned, but instructed and helped. Ignore his expressions of mere opinion, and feed him upon the Word, until he knows the certainty of the things that are believed.

This, in brief, is the general teaching of the chapter, as a thoughtful reading must convince you. Certainty is set over against doubt. Nobody has any business with mere opinions, but if any man has them, leave him alone with them and give yourself to the Word, which casts down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:5.

## What About Eating Herbs?

“But,” you say, “you have not said anything about the health question.”

Here is another friend, who refers to several texts, *Romans* 14 among them, and says:

Many desire light on these texts, and they are usually not touched when health reform is considered, but cast aside, as if we knew them to be against the subject.

Well, there is a good reason why they are not considered in dealing with the health question, and what food is best for one's body, and that is, that they have no connection whatever with that subject. When I am talking about health, there is no reason in the world why I should turn aside to talk about a text that has no bearing on the question.

The only place in the Bible where we have any talk about eating herbs is *Exodus* 12:8, in the instructions concerning the Passover lamb.

### **Exodus 12**

<sup>8</sup> They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

But we do not kill a lamb, and sprinkle its blood on the door posts, and then eat its flesh, because:

### **1 Corinthians 5**

<sup>7</sup> Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

And therefore we have no occasion to eat bitter herbs with it. No one with perfect knowledge of Christ could keep up that ancient custom; but if anybody should do so in the unbelief of ignorance, we should not be justified in condemning him as a heretic. Receive such a one, not to doubtful disputations,<sup>81</sup> nor to dispute about his opinions, but to feed him with the Word, and:

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<sup>81</sup> *Romans* 14:1.

## Romans 14

<sup>4</sup> God is able to make him stand.

Some people imagine that this chapter is against Sabbath-keeping, just as our friend supposes it is against healthful living. But the Sabbath is a thing definitely commanded, and is as plain as the duty to worship only one God, and there is no opportunity for anybody to have any doubts about it. It is simply a question of belief.

Yet even here the words, “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,” apply; for everybody should know the law of God for a certainty; and professed Sabbath observance, that does not spring from positive knowledge—“the full assurance of faith”<sup>82</sup>—is not Sabbath-keeping at all.

## Eating All Things

### Romans 14

<sup>2</sup> For one believes that he may eat all things...

I suppose I must say a word about the words “all things,” in connection with eating. It is evident that this term excludes things unfit to eat, just as the command to gather manna, “a certain rate every day”<sup>83</sup> did not include the Sabbath day. It had reference only to days on which such work might lawfully be done.

It is strange how people will seize upon these words as proof that no attention ought to be paid to what one eats, and at the same time they would themselves exclude from their dietary such things as caterpillars, snakes, toads, rats, beetles, etc. When the apostle says,

<sup>2</sup> One man believes that he may eat all things,

—it is evident that he has reference only to those things which are fit to be eaten. Similarly, when he says:

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<sup>82</sup> *Hebrews* 10:22.

<sup>83</sup> *Exodus* 16.

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;

–and,

<sup>22</sup> As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,

–it is evident that he is not speaking of the wicked, but only of those who are in Christ.



## 29. How Can We Know the True Sabbath?

Present Truth, January 31, 1901

How are we to know that Saturday is the seventh-day Sabbath, since the days and years have been so changed?

**I**T IS just as easy as for a man to know his own birthday; yea, much easier, for one's birthday comes but once a year, while the Sabbath comes every week.

Moreover, but very few persons have any interest in any ordinary man's birthday, while there are several hundred millions of people who are interested in keeping count of the days of the week; so that there are several thousand million more chances that everybody in the world is mistaken as to when his birthday comes, than that there is any doubt as to which day is the seventh day of the week—the Sabbath of the Lord.

In fact, it is an absolute impossibility that there can be any mistake in the matter of the Sabbath.

### The Sabbath and the Week

Let us consider the question together. In the first place, we will accept, as beyond reasonable controversy, the statements in the fourth commandment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of *Genesis*, that:

#### **Exodus 20**

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord,

—and that in the beginning God rested upon the seventh day, after having devoted the preceding six to the creation of the heavens and the earth; and that:

#### **Genesis 2**

<sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created.

Thus the week was instituted. It is a division of time that has been common in all ages, and it is marked only by the Sabbath, and it was known among the ancients by the same name.

It will readily be seen that no chance for the numbering of the days could be lost before the flood, because two or three men's lives spanned the entire period from the Creation to the flood. Even if we allow the supposition that the correct reckoning was lost, we must see for a certainty that the correct day was found at the Exodus. At Mount Sinai God made known to the people of Israel His holy Sabbath.

### **Nehemiah 9**

<sup>13</sup> You came down also upon mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments:

<sup>14</sup> And made known unto them your holy sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses your servant.

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is identical with the Sabbath of creation; for the fact that at the close of the creation week God rested on the seventh day, is given in the fourth commandment as the ground of the Sabbath, and we may be sure that God had not lost the reckoning of time in twenty-five hundred years.

### **From Moses to Christ**

From the days of Moses until the coming of Christ, Israel existed as a distinct people in the midst of the heathen, and the seventh-day Sabbath was their distinguishing characteristic. It was that by which the people showed themselves worshipers of the true God; for we read this injunction and promise:

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>20</sup> Hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.

There was therefore no possibility that the day of the Sabbath could be lost while the people of Israel continued to worship God. Just stop and think how quickly a man is set right by neighbors, or by the members of his own family, if he chances to make a mistake in the day of the week, and then try to calculate the possibilities that not only one man, nor a single family, but a whole nation made a mistake in reckoning, and all made the same mistake at the same time, so that nobody discovered it! The thing is manifestly impossible, but we have not yet finished the proof.

### **Christ and the Sabbath**

About four thousand years after the creation, or a little more than two-thirds of the distance, in point of time, from the creation till now, Christ came to:

#### **Isaiah 42**

<sup>21</sup> ...magnify the law, and make it honorable.

#### **Colossians 1**

<sup>19</sup> It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,

#### **Colossians 2**

<sup>9</sup> ...[even] all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

<sup>2</sup> ...[yea,] all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

So that He certainly knew the exact truth about everything. He himself is the truth, and therefore He was not mistaken as to the day of the Sabbath. If the people had lost the reckoning of the days of the week, and so lost the Sabbath (an impossibility, as we have already seen), He would have set them right. But while He was sharply criticized because He did not conform to the Rabbinical perversions of the Sabbath, there was never a question as to which day was the Sabbath.

The fact that Jesus recognized the day upon which the Jews rested as the Sabbath, shows that no mistake had been made up to that time. It shows more than this, also. It proves that the day which the Jews professed to keep—the seventh day—is the Sabbath for Christians, because Christ kept it.

Throughout the New Testament, which was written between six and sixty years after the crucifixion, the day is invariably referred to as the Sabbath (except in *Revelation* 1:10, where it is called “the Lord’s day”), and there is not only no intimation that the Jews were mistaken as to the day of the Sabbath, but there is no hint of any change.

After the crucifixion the disciples “rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment”<sup>84</sup>; so we know that this day on which Christ and His disciples rested, in common with all the Jews, is the day commanded at Sinai, and set apart at creation.

Moreover, since the New Testament is, even by those who lightly esteem the Old Testament, confessed to be the Scriptures given for the guidance of Christians, as it was written by Christians under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it follows that the day which the Jews professed to observe, in the days of Christ and the apostles, is the Sabbath for Christians.

No one who uses Scripture language, and who regards the Bible as final authority in religion, can apply the term “Sabbath” to any other day than the seventh day of the week.

### **The Sabbath Since the Crucifixion**

Now what about the time since the ascension of Christ? There is in this period less possibility of losing the Sabbath than at any previous time. Soon after the ascension Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans, and destroyed, together with the temple, and the Jews dispersed throughout the whole world. In every nation Jews are to be found, and all keep the Sabbath with more or less strictness.

Now if the exact day of the Sabbath were lost, we should find a disagreement among the Jews; some would be keeping one day, and some another; but this is not the case. If all the Jews were assembled from all parts of the world, all would be found in perfect harmony as to which day is the Sabbath.

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<sup>84</sup> *Luke* 23:56.

Can any sane person suppose that all these people, so widely scattered, have lost the count of the days of the week; and, what is more wonderful still, have all made the very same mistake, so that there is no confusion; and, still more remarkable, that they all made the same mistake at the very same instant, so that nobody could discover that another had made an error in his reckoning? The thing is too self-evidently absurd for a moment's serious thought.

### **The Sabbath and Sunday**

Still further: Within two hundred years after the ascension of Christ, professed Christians began to observe the first day of the week—the “day of the sun,”—in deference to the vast number of heathen who were willing to join the church, provided they could do so without too great a sacrifice of their heathen customs.

In the fourth century this custom was quite common in the church, and one of the main reasons given for the change was that they ought not to have anything in common with the Jews.

By the sixth century Sunday had been completely substituted for the Sabbath, throughout the entire Catholic Church, only a few scattered Christians remaining faithful to the commandment of the Lord. The Catholic Church's zeal for Sunday, and its determination to have nothing in common with the Jews, increases to the highest degree the impossibility of there having been any mistake in the reckoning of the days of the week.

### **A Change of Dates**

But you say there has been a change from Old Style to New Style, by which ten days were dropped out at one time. Very true, but those days were not blotted out of existence. Nobody lost ten days out of his life. They simply agreed to call the fifth day of a certain month the fifteenth, but there was not the slightest interference with the numbering of the days of the week.

The surest proof of that is the fact that to this day Russia reckons according to the Old Style, and is about twelve days behind

the rest of Europe, as to the numbering of the days of the month; but the Jews of Russia keep exactly the same day as do their fellow-religionists in Germany, England, and America, and all the people in Russia who observe Sunday are in perfect accord with those of the same persuasion in all other countries.

Another thing which also tended to the preservation of the Sabbath intact, making it forever distinct from all other days, was this, that it was the only day of the week that had a name, until comparatively modern times. The “six working days” were known from the beginning as the first day, second day, third day, and so on to the sixth day; but the seventh day was “the Sabbath” from the beginning.

Surely you must agree that nothing in the world can be more sure than that the day commonly called Saturday,—the seventh and last day of the week,—is the exact seventh day in regular succession from the creation. God in His Word, which “lives and abides for ever”<sup>85</sup> says:

#### **Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

<sup>9</sup> Six days shall you labor, and do all your work;

<sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work.

Here is a question for you to answer in your private corner: What do you propose to do about it?

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<sup>85</sup> 1 Peter 1:23.

## 30. Eternal Salvation

Present Truth, February 7, 1901

I am reading much of the religious literature of the present day, and one would get the idea that there was no possibility of conversion and salvation before the first advent of Christ. What about Abraham and Enoch? When was the Spirit given?

### The Bible and Religious Literature

I WOULD strongly advise you, then, to read less of such religious literature, and more of the Bible, which speaks to you as directly as to anybody else. Any religious literature that casts doubt upon the full conversion of men before the crucifixion of Christ, really discredits conversion and salvation since that time.

You ask me why the *Present Truth* is published, since I discount religious literature so much, in favor of the Bible. I can tell you very quickly. It is published for the purpose of calling the attention of people to the Bible, awakening their interest to study it, and showing them how plain and simple it is. It has no other mission than to open the Word of God before the people, and induce them to read it for themselves, with prayerful and unbiased minds.

If everybody in the world would do this now, there would be no need for the *Present Truth*, and it would cease to be published. Let us now see something of what the Bible has to say about salvation before the revelation of Christ nineteen hundred years ago. Whatever it has to say about salvation then, is necessary for our salvation now.

Where shall we begin? Well, since you have named Abraham, we might as well begin with him, but we have not time for nearly all that is said about him.

## What Did Abraham Find?

First, the Gospel was preached to Abraham.

### Galatians 3

<sup>8</sup> And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed.

This Gospel was identical with that which Paul preached; for there is but one real Gospel,<sup>86</sup> and God himself preached it to Abraham. The ancient prophets had the very same Gospel that the apostles afterwards preached:

### 1 Peter 1

<sup>10</sup> Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

<sup>11</sup> Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

<sup>12</sup> Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

<sup>13</sup> 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;

<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

<sup>15</sup> But as he which has called you is holy, so be holy in all manner of conversation;

<sup>16</sup> Because it is written, Be holy; for I am holy.

<sup>17</sup> And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

<sup>18</sup> Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

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<sup>86</sup> *Galatians* 1:6-8.



<sup>19</sup> But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Still more emphatic is the statement in *Hebrews*, where we read that:

#### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>2</sup> Unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them.

The question would be fully answered, if the text said that the Gospel was preached to them as well as to us; but the fact is that we come in second. The Gospel was first preached to them, and the same promise remains for us. We are merely sharers in that which was first given to the ancients.

The Gospel which was before proclaimed by the prophets in the Holy Scriptures was:

#### **Romans 1**

<sup>1</sup> ...the gospel of God,

<sup>3</sup> Concerning His Son Jesus Christ.

Christ was therefore preached to Abraham, and Jesus said to the Jews:

#### **John 8**

<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.

Abraham, then was a happy Christian, and his happiness is thus described:

#### **Romans 4**

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

This blessedness (happiness) came to Abraham while he was still an uncircumcised Gentile:

<sup>11</sup> And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be

not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

### **The Promise to Abraham, Our Hope**

Thus we see that, instead of conversion and salvation being impossible to the men who lived before the advent of Christ, they become possible to us only through them.

#### **Galatians 3**

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree;

<sup>14</sup> That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

This is made still more emphatic in the record of the promise and the oath to Abraham. I will not now stop to read the whole of *Hebrews* 6:13-20, but you can read the verses at your leisure. The substance is that God confirmed His promise to Abraham by swearing by himself,

#### **Hebrews 6**

<sup>18</sup> That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

That is to say, all our hope of salvation rests upon the promise and the oath of God to Abraham. He believed God:

#### **Romans 4**

<sup>22</sup> And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

<sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

<sup>24</sup> But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

<sup>25</sup> Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

## The Testimony of the Prophets

The Apostle Paul declared that he believed all things that are written in the law and the prophets,<sup>87</sup> and that he never preached anything except what the prophets and Moses had said.<sup>88</sup> Peter, preaching to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, concerning Christ, ordained of God to be the Judge of living and dead, said:

### Acts 10

<sup>43</sup> To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.

This testimony of the prophets, to salvation through Christ, was not merely a promise of something to come, but a statement of what was in their day a thing present for all. Listen to what some of them say, and note that their language is that of true witnesses who speak from personal knowledge and experience.

### Isaiah 53

<sup>4</sup> Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows;

<sup>5</sup> He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

This was no visionary fancy on the part of Isaiah, for a heavenly messenger direct from God's glorious throne had long before touched his lips with a coal from the altar, saying:

### Isaiah 6

<sup>7</sup> Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.

Speaking from his burning lips, the Lord said,

### Isaiah 14

<sup>22</sup> Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth.

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<sup>87</sup> Acts 24:14.

<sup>88</sup> Acts 26:22.

That was the call to all the world, to accept salvation then present, just as the boundless offer was again proclaimed in the gracious invitation:

### **Isaiah 55**

<sup>1</sup> Ho, every one that thirsts, come you to the waters, and he that has no money, come you, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.

<sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.

Who does not know this blessed exhortation and promise:

<sup>6</sup> Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near;

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

Would the Lord issue such positive promises by the mouth of His servants, only to disappoint the seeking soul who came in sincerity, by telling him that the words were not intended for him, but for those who should live several hundred years later, and they were uttered merely as a piece of rhetoric? Such trifling would be unworthy of God, and cannot be imputed to Him by anybody who knows Him. Hear how He anticipated any such charge, and showed that righteousness and salvation were already accomplished facts:

### **Isaiah 44**

<sup>22</sup> I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed you.

<sup>23</sup> Sing, O, you heavens; for the Lord has done it; shout you lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord has redeemed Judah, and glorified himself in Israel.

By the prophet Jeremiah God said to the people:

### **Jeremiah 2**

<sup>20</sup> Of old time I have broken your yoke, and burst your bands.

And this was said, not to the Jews only, but to all people; for Jeremiah was ordained, even before his birth, a prophet to the nations, or, to the Gentiles.<sup>89</sup> Through Hosea He said,

**Hosea 7**

<sup>13</sup> Though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

And again:

**Hosea 14**

<sup>1</sup> O Israel, return unto the Lord your God; for you have fallen by your iniquity.

<sup>2</sup> Take with you words, and return to the Lord; say unto Him. Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.

This was not a vain call, for God said:

**Isaiah 45**

<sup>19</sup> I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek me in vain; I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

Micah spoke of what he knew by experience, when he said,

**Micah 7**

<sup>18</sup> Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retains not His anger for ever, because He delights in mercy.

But we cannot quote from all the prophets, much less read at one time all that they have said about salvation as a work completed in their day. We must, however, have a few words from David:

**Psalms 103**

<sup>1</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

<sup>2</sup> Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;

<sup>3</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

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<sup>89</sup> *Jeremiah* 1:5.

<sup>4</sup> Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

This is testimony concerning what was already done, and it is made more emphatic in the verses that follow:

### **Psalm 103**

<sup>10</sup> He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

<sup>11</sup> For as the heaven is higher than the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.

<sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Who is there in these days, that can say anything more than that?

### **Enoch and Elijah**

In order that we may have the most positive proof of the reality of salvation before the first advent, the Lord has left on record the account of the translation of two men to heaven without seeing death. More than six hundred years before the flood:

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>5</sup> Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

<sup>6</sup> But without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Enoch therefore had the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, and his salvation was so complete that he was taken to heaven to dwell with God.

Several hundred years later, but more than eight hundred years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the servant of Elijah the prophet was asked by the curious students of the school of the prophets:

### **2 Kings 2**

<sup>3</sup> Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from your head today?

He knew it, and did not lose sight of him till:

## **2 Kings 2**

<sup>11</sup> There appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Yet this same Elijah was...

## **James 5**

<sup>17</sup> ...a man subject to like passions as we are,

—a sinner saved by faith, and taken to heaven hundreds of years before the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. This effectually disposes of the Roman Catholic idea of “limbo,” a place where the souls of men are said to have been kept till the resurrection of Christ.

Not all righteous people went to heaven, it is true, any more than they do now; for the coming of Christ is the time when the saints receive immortality;<sup>90</sup> but two at least were taken to heaven without dying, and at least one—Moses—was raised from the dead before the first advent, as proof of the presence and power of the cross from the beginning.

Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and He is the Beginning: therefore life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel from the very beginning of man’s history on earth. We have no intimation that anybody has been taken to heaven since the ascension of Christ.

## **God’s Unchangeableness**

### **Psalm 90**

<sup>1</sup> Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations;

<sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God.

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<sup>90</sup> *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54.

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> [Jesus Christ] is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

And the Father says to the Son:

### **Hebrews 1**

<sup>12</sup> You are the same, and your years shall not fail.

### **Micah 5** [margin]

<sup>2</sup> [His] goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.

### **Acts 5**

<sup>31</sup> Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.

But this was true hundreds of years before His manifestation in the flesh; for the Lord said by David:

### **Psalms 2**

<sup>6</sup> Yet have I anointed my King upon Zion, the hill of my holiness.

<sup>7</sup> I will declare the decree: The Lord has said unto me: you are my Son, this day have I begotten you.

And therefore Isaiah sang:

### **Isaiah 9**

<sup>6</sup> Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given.

## **Only One Power**

### **Romans 1**

<sup>16</sup> ...the Gospel...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.

God's power has always been the same; He is no more powerful now than He was in the beginning; therefore no new force needed to be developed in order to save men after the fall. The power that saves is the everlasting power that ever since the creation or the world has been clearly seen in the things that are made, even in ungodly men; for:



## **Romans 1**

<sup>19</sup> That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them.

The power that created is the power that saves, for redemption is the work of creating people anew in Christ Jesus.

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

We have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Christ, because:

## **Colossians 1**

<sup>16</sup> In Him were all things created,...

<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Therefore it is that:

## **Psalms 74**

<sup>12</sup> God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

When man fell, God did not have to cast about for some means by which to save him, for it was all ready and waiting, in the power that had created. It is true that we can get a clearer view of God's power in redemption from sin than in the first creation, because it comes closer to our personal consciousness; but it is no greater.

Sin did not make the slightest jar in God's plans; Satan thought to throw the whole machinery of heaven and earth out of gear; but God knew the end from the beginning, and the power that had made man was all sufficient to redeem him. Redemption was in the first creation.

## **Christ's Dying is Our Life**

### **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>10</sup> Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

<sup>11</sup> ...[even] in our mortal flesh.

All who know anything of the Gospel know that the life that Jesus poured out on the cross was given to us. He expired—breathed out—that we might breathe in. His was the wonderful life of God, which survives and conquers death.

God can give forth His life to all mankind, yea, to all the universe, and still retain it; because:

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

In the pouring out of Christ's soul unto death on Calvary, there was not the slightest diminution in the life of God, who:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> ...was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

When God made man of the dust of the ground:

### **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> [He] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

The very same thing was done then that is done for the sinner whose peace with God is made:

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>20</sup> ...through the blood of His cross.

God simply imparts His own life in Christ, and the conscious acceptance of it by the sinner is his salvation. We are:

### **Romans 5**

<sup>10</sup> ...saved by His life.

So the creation of the very first living creature was by the power of the cross, and was exactly the same process as that by which the sinner is created anew.

## Christ Made a Curse for Us

### Galatians 3

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.

What is the curse? It is death. When did it come upon the world? In the beginning, when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. But they did not die that day. No, because Christ bore the curse for them, and has been bearing it ever since. If He had not, there never would have been another man. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of all who went astray,<sup>91</sup> and that from the very beginning, else all the race had been hopelessly lost.

Christ bears our sins in us, not apart from us. When Adam was created, the son of God,<sup>92</sup> the Word was made flesh; and when he sinned, the everlasting, infinite love of God was shown in continuing the life to him, so that the life was manifest in sinful flesh; but not until Jesus of Nazareth was born was there one found who would allow the life to reveal its fullness.

## When the Spirit was Given

### Genesis 1

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

<sup>2</sup> And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved [brooded] upon the face of the waters.

From that moment the Holy Spirit of God has occupied the depths of the earth, as well as the heights of heaven:

### Psalms 139

<sup>7</sup> Where shall I go from your spirit? or where shall I flee from your presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend up into heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

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<sup>91</sup> *Isaiah* 53:6.

<sup>92</sup> *Luke* 3:38.

There is no power in man, no power in creation, but that of the Spirit of God.

### **Job 33**

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

So He has formed our reins, knitting us together in our mother's womb.<sup>93</sup> Our first birth, as well as our second, is by the agency of the Holy Spirit; and the fact that we live is proof of the presence of the life that redeems; yea, the various vital operations carried on in the body are to teach us the reality of the new birth.

If you wish texts plainly stating that the Spirit was given to men of old, you will find plenty of them. Here are a few:

### **Nehemiah 9**

<sup>20</sup> You gave also your good Spirit to instruct them, and withheld not your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst.

Compare the first part of this verse with:

### **John 14**

<sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

### **John 16**

<sup>13</sup> Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.

The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets, making them faithful witnesses.<sup>94</sup> There were...

### **2 Peter 1**

<sup>21</sup> ...holy men of God,...[who] spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

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<sup>93</sup> *Psalm 139:13*, RV, margin.

<sup>94</sup> *1 Peter 1:11*.

And:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>9</sup> If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

So every man of God mentioned in the Old Testament, was one who was possessed by the Spirit of God. David,

### **2 Samuel 23**

<sup>1</sup> ...the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel,

—said,

<sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was in my tongue.

And when he sinned grievously he prayed:

### **Psalms 51**

<sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from your presence; and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

## **The Eternal Spirit**

But time would fail us if we attempted to exhaust the wonderful story of eternal salvation. Let one more quotation suffice to show us its breadth, and the firm foundation on which our faith rests—the foundation of the prophets, as well as of the apostles. It is this:

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>14</sup> How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?

It was through the eternal Spirit that the changeless Son of God...

### **Hebrews 5**

<sup>9</sup> ...became the Author of eternal salvation.

Thus we see that salvation is eternal, not merely with respect to the future, but to the past, as well. Our salvation is assured to us

by the fact that the cross in which we rest for it, is that by which the worlds were made. Is it not enough? Yet, boundless as it is, who would be satisfied with less?

## 31. The Dispensation of Law and Grace

Present Truth, February 14, 1901

One said to me today: “The ten commandments have nothing to do with us now; we are not in the dispensation of the law, but of grace, so that the law is not binding on us; it is all done away with.” I do not quite understand this doctrine.

I read that Christ said He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it—to prove its righteousness. The Bible tells me that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, not the word of God.

The law has no terror for those who have Christ dwelling in their hearts, as He enables them to live the Christ life, and thus keep the law. I should be glad to have your opinion.

**I** WILL not give you my opinion, for that is something that nobody has any right to have concerning Scripture; but I will tell you something of what I know, and the ground of my knowledge. We are to know the truth, and not merely to have opinions about it.

You have already stated the truth of the matter very clearly, in the last words of your question, and we may begin with them. Christ said:

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>17</sup> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

To fulfill does not mean to abolish, but to perform. One fulfills an appointment by keeping it. When John the Baptist would forbid Jesus to be baptized, Jesus said:

### **Matthew 3**

<sup>15</sup> Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.

But Christ did not come to abolish righteousness, nor to relieve men from the necessity of being righteous. We are to be...

## **Philippians 1**

<sup>11</sup> ...filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

And all the commandments of God are righteousness. Therefore we are to be filled with the fruits of God's commandments.

### **Exceeding the Righteousness of the Pharisees**

How strange it is, that anybody can read the words of Christ, and profess to be His follower, and yet claim that he is at liberty to disregard all or any one of the ten commandments. Immediately after stating that He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, and that not one jot or one tittle could possibly pass from the law, Jesus added:

#### **Matthew 5**

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

What was the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? It was a most scrupulous adherence to the letter of the law, preciseness in carrying out every detail, so that no one could find the slightest fault with them, so far as outward acts were concerned. But their righteousness was only outward. Theirs was a mere surface religion; they were...

#### **Matthew 23**

<sup>27</sup> ...like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

<sup>28</sup> Even so you also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Now Jesus did not reprove the Pharisees for their scrupulous observance of the letter of the law, and for their outward right-



eousness; the fault which He found with them was not that they had too much righteousness, but that they did not have enough. To us He says:

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>20</sup> Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

To exceed means to have the same amount, and more. So to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, we must have all their regard for the letter of the law, and in addition to having outward righteousness, must have the living spirit of the law in our hearts.

## **Righteousness is the Keeping of the Law**

Righteousness is the doing of the law.

### **Deuteronomy 29**

<sup>29</sup> The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

All God's commandments are righteousness.

### **Psalms 119**

<sup>172</sup> My tongue shall speak of your word: for all your commandments are righteousness.

### **Romans 7**

<sup>12</sup> The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

A blessing pronounced upon those who do His commandments is almost the last thing in the Bible.

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

How then can any professed Christian say that we ought not to keep them?

### **The “Dispensation” Error**

In nothing else do people show their utter failure to comprehend the Gospel, so much as in the use of the word “dispensation.” Without the slightest warrant in the Scripture, they have divided up the time from creation to the end of the world into periods which they term “dispensations.”

Some have more, and others fewer; but all who have the “dispensation” idea agree that God acts differently in each of them, treating the people in one “dispensation” differently from what He does those in another, and having a different Gospel, a different way of salvation, in each.

Indeed, some, by applying the term “Gospel dispensation” to one period of time, imply that there has been a time since the fall, when there was no Gospel, and, consequently, no salvation. It seems as though the mere statement of the case should be sufficient to show anybody how dishonoring to God is such a position.

### **Only One Standard in the Judgment**

God declares that His way is equal.

#### **Ezekiel 18**

<sup>25</sup> Yet you say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

<sup>29</sup> Yet says the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

He is God from everlasting to everlasting:

#### **Psalms 90**

<sup>2</sup> ...from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

And His love is unchangeable and everlasting.

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

If God had different standards in different periods of the world, —if the Gospel were not identically the same in every generation, then one Judgment Day would not suffice for the world. He would have to judge the world in sections, and the people of one age would see themselves condemned for doing certain things, while those of another period would be saved for doing the very same things.

Would such a judgment as that vindicate the character of God? Most decidedly not. Even the saved would know that if the others were justly condemned, they were unjustly saved, and the Judgment Day itself would lay the train for such an explosion of anarchy as has never yet been known.

No; God declares that He changes not:

### **Malachi 3**

<sup>6</sup> For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.

And He has but one law and one Gospel, which, like himself, changes not.

### **The True Dispensation of the Law**

It is true that we are not now in the dispensation of the law, and it is well for mankind that this is the case. That is to say, judgment has not begun. When the dispensation of the law comes, it will mean death to all who disobey it; because:

### **Romans 4**

<sup>15</sup> The law works wrath.

And the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience.

### **Ephesians 5**

<sup>6</sup> Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience.

Yet even when the law with its thunders of wrath is visited upon those who hate God, His mercy continues upon those who love Him and keep His commandments.

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>6</sup> And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

There have been times of special judgments ever since the fall, times when the law was dispensed to the rebellious; but God's mercy endured, nevertheless, and grace at the same time saved all who were willing to acknowledge and accept God's sovereignty.

But the Bible gives not the slightest warrant for anybody to suppose that at one period of time men were saved by the law, and at another by grace.

And yet in another sense we may say that this is the time of the dispensation of the law of God, even as has been the case from the beginning. First, let us recall the fact that the commandments of God are righteousness.

### **Psalms 19**

<sup>7</sup> The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

<sup>8</sup> The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

<sup>9</sup> The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

### **Psalms 119**

<sup>138</sup> Your testimonies that You have commanded are righteous and very faithful.

<sup>172</sup> My tongue shall speak of your word: for all your commandments are righteousness.

We see it also from the following:

### **1 John 5**

<sup>17</sup> All unrighteousness, is sin.

## **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> Sin is the transgression of the law.

Therefore all unrighteousness is the transgression of the law. But unrighteousness is just the opposite of righteousness; and transgression of the law is directly opposed to obedience to the law. Therefore, all righteousness is conformity to the law of God. Nothing can be plainer than this conclusion.

Now read:

## **Romans 1**

<sup>16</sup> I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

<sup>17</sup> For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

This is equivalent to saying that obedience to the law is revealed in the Gospel. The Gospel puts the law into the heart of every believer, so that its righteousness is revealed in his life. This is the same as what we read in *Romans* 8, that Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemning sin in the flesh,

## **Romans 8**

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Christ did not die to absolve man from allegiance to the law of God, but to enable them to keep it.

## **Romans 3**

<sup>31</sup> Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.

## **The Law and the Gospel Inseparable**

### **Matthew 1**

<sup>21</sup> You shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.

But,

### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> Sin is the transgression of the law.

Therefore the name Jesus stands for salvation from transgression of the law, or, in other words, it ensures obedience to the law to all who accept it in truth.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>7</sup> If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin,

—or from all transgressions of the law. Do you not see how impossible it is to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ without accepting the law of God?

### **Under Grace**

“But we are under grace,” your friend says.

Thank the Lord for that; but bid him beware lest he receive the grace of God in vain.<sup>95</sup> What does the grace of God do? It brings salvation.

### **Titus 2**

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

And from what are we to be saved? From sin, which is transgression of the law.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>1</sup> Shall we continue in sin, [in transgression of the law] that grace may abound?

<sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

God's grace is extended to us, in order that we may be saved from our lawlessness; and it is emphasized by the fact that it is given to us although we have rebelled against His law. His mercy spares us in spite of our sins, in order that we may become doers

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<sup>95</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:1.

of the law; and it is the office of the very grace that spares us, to put the law into us, so that we can do it.

### **Not Saved By Works, but For Works**

Still, your friend will exclaim,

“But we are not saved by works!”

Of course not; and nobody knows this so well as he who understands the law of God. It is only those who are ignorant of God’s righteousness, who go about to establish their own righteousness:

#### **Romans 10**

<sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

No; we are not saved by works, but we are saved in order that we may work.

#### **Ephesians 2 [RV]**

<sup>8</sup> By grace have you been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, that no man should glory.

<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

### **The Throne of Grace and Law**

God sits upon a throne of grace, and we are exhorted to come boldly to it, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

#### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Yet from that same throne come the thunders and lightnings of Sinai,<sup>96</sup> because righteousness—the law—is the foundation of it. The law works wrath to all transgressors of it; but it is...

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>19</sup> ...in the hand of a Mediator [Christ Jesus].

And if we accept it at His hand it will work righteousness in us, and...

### **Romans 5**

<sup>9</sup> ...we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Remember that there were thunders and lightnings at Calvary, for there the wrath of the law was wrought upon the head and heart of Christ; but He was made a curse in order that the blessing might come to us. The blood flowing from the throne of God, in the midst of which is the slain Lamb<sup>97</sup>—brings to us the righteousness of the law that is within His heart. This is a most gracious dispensation of law.

Let all beware of rejecting the law, for in so doing they reject Christ himself. The law is binding upon us, but its bonds are those of love;

### **1 John 5**

<sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.

The bonds of the law do not chafe those who love the Lord: to all such it is one easy and delightful yoke, linking them to their Master and Saviour.

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<sup>96</sup> **Revelation 4** <sup>5</sup> And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices.

<sup>97</sup> **Revelation 5** <sup>6</sup> And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.



## 32. Consciousness of Sin: Two Ways of Destroying It

Present Truth, February 21, 1901

I read in *Hebrews* 10:1-2 that if the sacrifices anciently offered year by year had been able to make comers thereunto perfect, they would have ceased to be offered, “because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.” What relation to sin does that indicate on the part of them who are born again? Does it mean that they will no more be tempted?

WE CAN very easily settle this matter by the Scriptures, especially those passages which speak particularly of the experience of Christ; and when we have learned what the Bible teaches on this subject, we shall have grasped the most comforting fact in the infinite possibilities opened up to us by the Gospel. It will involve a brief study of the last ten verses of the tenth chapter of *Hebrews*, one of the richest portions of the Bible, which we can no more than begin upon in the short half-hour allowed us here.

### The Only Remedy for Sin

It needs no proof to show that:

#### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>4</sup> It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.

Sin is in man, and can be put away only by the death of the sinner.

#### **Romans 6**

<sup>2</sup> How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

<sup>7</sup> He that is dead is freed from sin.

Death is the only remedy for sin; for:

## Hebrews 9

<sup>22</sup> ...without shedding of blood is no remission.

But a lamb or a goat or a bull has not sinned, and if it had, its death would have no effect upon us. No other person's death, even though it were our own firstborn, could remove sin from us.<sup>98</sup> Sin can be purged only by taking the life of the person whose life is sinful.

## One Death for All

You ask how it can then be that Christ...

### Hebrews 1

<sup>3</sup> ...by himself purged our sins,

—and how His blood can...

### Hebrews 9

<sup>14</sup> ...purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

It is simply because He is the life, and:

### Colossians 1

<sup>17</sup> ...in Him all things consist.

It is His life that we use when we transgress the law of God, so that we weary Him with our sins, and make Him to serve with our iniquities.<sup>99</sup> He has...

### Hebrews 2

<sup>9</sup> ...tasted death for every man,

—and in that He died for all, all are dead.<sup>100</sup> His life is the life of all creatures, so that:

### Hebrews 9

<sup>26</sup> Now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

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<sup>98</sup> See *Micah* 6:6-8.

<sup>99</sup> *Isaiah* 43:24.

<sup>100</sup> *2 Corinthians* 5:14.

All men are reconciled to God by the death of Christ,<sup>101</sup> for:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

This being so, whoever truly acknowledges, and abides in the same confession, that he is crucified with Christ, and that he lives only as Christ lives in Him, must be as free from sin as Christ himself.

### **Christ “Knew No Sin”**

Now of Christ it is said that:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> [He] knew no sin,

–yet in the very same breath it is declared that He was made to be sin for us.<sup>102</sup> The sins of the whole world were upon Him, yet so effectually did He bear them away, that no eye ever saw a trace of sin upon Him. He was...

### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>15</sup> ...in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

It was real temptation, too, for:

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>18</sup> He...suffered being tempted.

It is evident that if Christ could suffer in the flesh, through the fierce temptations that assailed Him, and still not know sin, it is possible for those who arm themselves with the same mind<sup>103</sup> to have the same experience. It is not only possible for them to have the same experience, but it cannot be otherwise. The worshipers once purged can have no more conscience of sins.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *Romans 5:9-10.*

<sup>102</sup> *2 Corinthians 5:21.*

<sup>103</sup> *1 Peter 4:1.*

<sup>104</sup> *Hebrews 10:2.*

The word here rendered “conscience” is uniformly so rendered in the New Testament, yet in classical usage it means all that is conveyed by the word “consciousness,” and it is so rendered in the Danish and Norwegian versions.

Of course the idea is not that the worshipers will not know the difference between right and wrong, nor even that they will never be tempted; but, as we well know from the reference to Christ, they will be free from sin, so that it will be no part of their nature or their thought. The flesh will still be mortal and sinful, but the new mind will so control the flesh that it will have no power to assert itself. It will be as amenable to the mind of the Spirit as though it were already spiritual.

### **The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**

In Christ we have perfect redemption from the curse. The curse came through sin, and the first sin—the sin that included all sin—was the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Our first parents knew good, and that was enough; all that is necessary, in order that one be not led astray by evil, is that he know and cleave to the good. They had access to the tree of life, even as we have, for wisdom is...

#### **Proverbs 3**

<sup>18</sup> ...a tree of life to them that lay hold on it,

—and Christ, who is our life is the wisdom of God, and so the tree of life to us. But in Him we learn no evil; He imparts only the knowledge of good, and that is all that God wishes us to know; it is all that God himself knows.

### **Purged by the Life**

Note the statement that:

#### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>2</sup> ...the worshipers once purged should have no more conscience [consciousness] of sins.

It is because they are purged. Sin has been removed from them by the pure life of Christ, which fills them, and they become as innocent before God,

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>2</sup> As newborn babes.

How often we have wished that we had never known certain things—that we had never heard of them; well the Gospel of Jesus Christ provides complete deliverance from the load, so that we shall forget our sins and iniquities, even as God himself does.

We shall never forget that we have been sinners, and that Christ has rescued us from that horrible pit of corruption; but we may be so completely emancipated from sin that we shall no more think of the evil than we did before we ever heard of it. What a wondrous relief this is!

### **Doing the Will of God**

How can this be? Because:

#### **Philippians 2**

<sup>13</sup> It is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

This takes us to the next verses in the tenth chapter of *Hebrews*. When Christ, in coming into the world, said,

#### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>5</sup> Sacrifice and offering You would not,

—because they could not take sin away, He added,

<sup>5</sup> ...but a body have You prepared me.

For what purpose was this body prepared for Him? For sacrifice, that in it He might do the will of God; for in the same connection He says,

<sup>9</sup> Lo, I come to do your will, O God,

—and further,

## **Psalm 40**

<sup>8</sup> ...yea, your law is within my heart.

The law of God is His will.<sup>105</sup> Remember now that the same Spirit by which Christ offered himself is given us to put God's law in our mind, and write it in our hearts,<sup>106</sup> and that when the law is in the mind, the thought will be only the righteousness of the law.

## **Psalm 1**

<sup>2</sup> His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law does he meditate day and night.

## **The Body Prepared for Christ**

Remember also that a body has been prepared for Jesus, in which to do the will of God. Where is that body? It is wherever there is a human being. Our bodies are made to be the temples of God; our flesh was created for the indwelling of the Word. The body of Jesus of Nazareth, in which the will of God was so fully done, was but a sample of what all bodies may and ought to be. If we yield ourselves to Him,

## **Romans 6**

<sup>13</sup> ...as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God,

—the will of God will be as perfectly performed in us as it was in Jesus, or as it is in heaven.<sup>107</sup>

The Gospel provides for just this perfect identification of the Holy Spirit with even our mortal bodies. Jesus promised to send the Comforter,

## **John 14**

<sup>17</sup> Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him;

—but to His disciples He said,

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<sup>105</sup> *Romans 2:17-18.*

<sup>106</sup> *Hebrews 8:10.*

<sup>107</sup> *Matthew 6:10.*

## **John 14**

<sup>17</sup> ...but you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you.

And again we read:

## **Romans 8**

<sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

The possibility and the reality of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is shown to us by the air that vitalizes our bodies.

## **Job. 33**

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me understanding.

It is only by the Spirit of God that any person has life. If we fully yield our bodies as the rightful agents of the Spirit, then the Spirit of God will think with our brains, and not through our members. The Spirit is to permeate us, animating us, so that His work is really our work, because our only life is one life of the Spirit of God.

We live, yet not we, but Christ lives in us by the Spirit. So the righteousness manifest in our sinful bodies will be our own righteousness, and at the same time God's righteousness; for:

## **Jeremiah 23**

<sup>6</sup> ...this is His name whereby He shall be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The Spirit will so control the sinful flesh, that the sin will not merely be held in abeyance, but will be purged.

## **1 John 1**

<sup>7</sup> If we walk in the light as He is in the light,...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

## The Will of God

### Hebrews 10

<sup>9</sup> He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.

What is this “first” and “second”? The next verse makes it clear, for it continues without break,

<sup>10</sup> By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.

“The second” is the will of God by which we are sanctified. This is what Christ establishes in every human body that He is allowed to control. “The first,” then is evidently “the will of the flesh,”<sup>108</sup> which is yielded up to Him, that He may take it away, and which must necessarily be removed from those who become sons of God through receiving Christ. With the mind and will of God established in us by the indwelling of Christ through the eternal Spirit, it is evident that one’s consciousness will be all of God’s presence, and not at all of sin.

That is the right way of losing the consciousness of sin. The wrong way, which is by far the most common, is to persist in sin, to refuse to confess that we are sinners, until the conscience becomes...

### 1 Timothy 4

<sup>2</sup> ...seared with a hot iron,

—so that it cannot feel the presence of sin, and evil seems the same as good. The person in that condition says with Lucifer fallen,

“Evil, be my good.”

This state of things is hopeless, but it is certain to be the final result with everyone who does not regard his body as a thing prepared solely as a sacrifice unto God, that He may do His own will in it.

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<sup>108</sup> *John* 1:13.



## **Romans 12**

<sup>1</sup> I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

### 33. What is the Church?

Present Truth, February 28, 1901

I cannot understand the references often made to the church. *Matthew* 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” to my mind implies a gatherer. How can a company of people called Baptists, or Wesleyans, or Catholics, gathered to the names of men, be the church of God? My way of looking at this is that every believer is in the church of Christ, which is His body, but not in the church of God. I am much perplexed about this thing, and if you would spare space in *Present Truth* to make it plain, I should be thankful.

**Y**OU are in the main correct in your view of the matter, but you certainly are somewhat confused. I think a very few words will make it plain to you. The word rendered “church” is a compound Greek word, meaning “called out.” It corresponds exactly to the word “congregation,” which occurs so frequently in the Old Testament. Thus,

#### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>12</sup> In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto You,

—is from:

#### **Psalms 22**

<sup>22</sup> In the midst of the congregation will I praise You.

The word “congregation” is from two Latin words meaning a flock collected together. The root of the word means flock. This is what the people of God are—a flock gathered out by Christ,

#### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>20</sup> ...that great Shepherd of the sheep.

#### **Acts 20**

<sup>28</sup> The church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood,

–is “the flock.” Really, the word “church” ought never to be used with reference to people. It means a building in which people worship, while the people themselves are the congregation. The word “congregation” is in common use, to indicate a collection of people; but since all whom the Lord calls out of the world are gathered to Him, it applies to all His people, however widely scattered they may be in the earth, since all are one in Him. The congregation of the Lord, or church, as it is in ordinary speech, is all who in every place worship the Lord in sincerity.

The term is appropriately applied to any company assembled together in one place, or to any body of people gathered about any name; only it is evident that if they are gathered to any earthly name they do not constitute the church of Christ. In this country the term “the church” commonly designates the church of England, since it is the one established by law; but all such uses are purely matters of custom and convenience. Strictly speaking, there is but one church—the congregation—just as there is but...

#### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>5</sup> ...one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

<sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all.

The church, or congregation, is the body of Christ, of which there is but one, and:

#### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>13</sup> By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.

But you certainly have no warrant for thinking that the church of Christ is not the church of God. Christ said,

#### **John 10**

<sup>30</sup> I and my Father are one.

He is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the impress of His substance.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *Hebrews 1:3.*

## **Ephesians 5**

<sup>7</sup> The kingdom of Christ and of God...

—is one and the same thing. The Father and the Son have no separate interests, and Christ does all His work for the glory of the Father.

### **1 Peter 3**

<sup>18</sup> [He] suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

Let us not, however, in our discussion of technical terms, forget the practical, comforting, edifying part of this truth. It is this, that we are actually the body of Christ. This is true of the entire congregation of believers, solely because it is true of each individual member of the church.

## **Ephesians 5**

<sup>30</sup> We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

### **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>3</sup> The head of every man is Christ,

—and therefore,

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>18</sup> He is the head of the body,

—the congregation. Our bodies, yours and my respectively, are the bodies of Christ—temples of the Holy Ghost,<sup>110</sup> for God to dwell in,—bodies prepared by God for Christ to use in revealing God in the flesh. If we hear His voice, we are His, and then we may be sure that He will make us wholly like himself.

When He comes the second time He will...

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto himself;

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<sup>110</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:19.

–and this will be but the culmination of His...

**John 17**

<sup>2</sup> ...power over all flesh,

–by which He now compels even sinful flesh to obey the mind of the Spirit.

## 34. The Nature of Man

Present Truth, March 7, 14, 21, 28, 1901<sup>111</sup>

I have heard a prayer by a minister, in reference to the death of our late Queen Victoria, in which he said that she is now reigning with Christ in heaven, in the highest sense of the term. I believe there is perfect harmony in Scripture, and although I have asked from a number of fellow-disciples an explanation of *Luke* 23:43; *Philippians* 1:21-23; *2 Corinthians* 5:6-8, in the light that the dead are in a state of unconscious sleep, I have not as yet had it explained clearly. Can you help to remove the darkness? I shall be obliged if you can give an explanation of these passages.

CHRIST is the Light of the world, and it is “the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ,”<sup>112</sup> who is the image of God, which, shining in us, removes all darkness. It is not by any dogmatic statements as to the meaning of certain isolated texts that we have come to the knowledge of the truth, even as set forth in those texts, but by the revelation of Jesus himself.

This is preeminently true as regards the subject before us, which is one of life and death, since the light which He gives is...

### John 8

<sup>12</sup> ...the light of life.

### John 1

<sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Therefore if you will kindly consent to defer the direct consideration of the texts referred to, until we have first had a little talk about the Gospel of life, I think you will be able to see the light in

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<sup>111</sup> This is the first in a series of five “Editor’s Private Corner” articles which answer this one question, and deal with the topic of man’s mortality. The five are titled: “The Nature of Man,” “From Death to the Resurrection,” “Departing and Being with Christ,” “Absent from the Body, and Present with the Lord,” and “The Evil of Spiritualism.”

<sup>112</sup> *2 Corinthians* 4:4.

them yourself, when we come to them, without very much explanation.

## **The One Object of Christ's Coming**

### **1 Timothy 1**

<sup>15</sup> This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

This truth is worthy of “all acceptance;” that is, it is worthy of acceptance by all people, and not only so, but it is worthy of acceptance to the exclusion of everything else. Nothing else is worthy of acceptance; everything that is of any value is included in this. All men ought, with the Apostle Paul, to be content to know nothing,

### **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>2</sup> ...save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

The sole desire of each soul should be,

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>10</sup> That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

### **Psalms 27**

<sup>4</sup> One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple.

Jesus said that the work of the Comforter is to convince the world of sin and of righteousness.<sup>113</sup> Sin is in the world.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>12</sup> By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Sin is a horrible thing in the world, and its presence means death and desolation. It separates man from God,<sup>114</sup> and heaven,

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<sup>113</sup> *John* 16:8.

<sup>114</sup> *Isaiah* 59:2.

and turns the earth into a hell. The one grand problem of the ages is how to get rid of sin, and nothing else is worth the attention of any mortal.

## **Saved by His Life**

### **James 1**

<sup>15</sup> Sin when it is finished, brings forth death.

Death came into the world by sin, because it is in sin.

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin.

This must not be forgotten, that sin and death are inseparable. Christ came into the world to save sinners, and He does it by giving life.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>10</sup> If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

So although the sole thing for which Christ came into the world was to save sinners, it is likewise true that He came for no other purpose than to give life.

### **John 14**

<sup>6</sup> I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

### **John 6**

<sup>48</sup> I am the Bread of life.

<sup>51</sup> I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

### **John 10**

<sup>10</sup> I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

### **1 John 3**

<sup>5</sup> You know that He was manifested to take away our sin; and in Him is no sin.



He takes away our sin by imparting to us continually His own sinless life.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>7</sup> If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

The blood is life,

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>22</sup> ...and without shedding of blood is no remission.

## **Grace Antedates Sin**

When the earth was new, when:

### **Genesis 1**

<sup>31</sup> God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good,

–the Garden of Eden was the chief feature of the earth, and the central thing in the Garden was the tree of life.<sup>115</sup> So long as Adam remained obedient to the commandments of God, he had perfect life; but of the forbidden tree God said to him,

### **Genesis 2**

<sup>17</sup> In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die.

Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and instantly the sentence of death was in them. But for the grace of God in Christ, which antedated the creation of the world, they would have died instantly, never to see life again; that would have put a summary and eternal end to their existence; but while their fall was a total fall, they fell into “the everlasting arms,”<sup>116</sup> and life was continued to them in order that they might have another trial of it, to see if they would choose it.

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<sup>115</sup> *Genesis 2:8-9.*

<sup>116</sup> *Deuteronomy 33:27.*

## Sinful Means Mortal

If it now be asked,

“What is the nature of man?”

–the reply must be,

“He is sinful by nature.”

Since the fall of Adam all have been...

### **Galatians 4 [RV]**

<sup>4</sup> ...born under the law.

### **Mark 7**

<sup>21</sup> From within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

<sup>22</sup> Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

<sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

In the flesh...

### **Romans 7**

<sup>18</sup> ...dwells no good thing,

–therefore “the flesh” is but a synonym for corruption. So because man is sinful by nature, he is by nature mortal.

## The Incorruptible Life

In Christ is no sin, and therefore in Him is life.<sup>117</sup> He can lay down His life, and take it again. He swallows up death in His own life, just as He could take all the sins of the world upon himself, and yet never have the least trace of sin upon Him. His life is the light of men, and lights every man that comes into the world.<sup>118</sup>

### **Titus 2**

<sup>11</sup> The grace of God that brings salvation to all men has appeared...

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<sup>117</sup> *John* 1:4.

<sup>118</sup> *John* 1:4, 9.

–in the life of Christ, so that whoever will accept the Son of God has the eternal life. Although...

### **Romans 5**

<sup>18</sup> ...judgment passed upon all men to condemnation,...the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live and move, and have our being;

–His life in us bears the curse that has come on us, and that is why we still have an existence although sin, and death as a consequence, is in us. The life of Jesus is to a degree manifested in the mortal flesh even of those who do not acknowledge Him.

## **No Life Apart from Christ**

### **1 John 5**

<sup>11</sup> This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

<sup>12</sup> He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

### **James 4**

<sup>14</sup> What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.

The millions who go about their daily business, seemingly full of life, have no life in reality; the life of the Lord is lent them for a little season, to see if they appreciate it enough to lay hold on it; but if God should gather unto himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would turn again unto dust.<sup>119</sup>

There are many who do not know the Lord, having never yet heard of Him; others have heard of Him, but have not yet seen the life that is manifested; many revile Him, and say that they want nothing from Him, yet He knows that they do not know what they are talking about, and waits the time when they will

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<sup>119</sup> *Job 34:14.*

understand and know Him; and there are doubtless even now many who have definitely and finally rejected the Lord as their Master, yet even these are suffered to live, as monuments of the forbearance and longsuffering of the Lord.

But the time will come when every person will have definitely and understandably decided either for or against the Lord, and then only those who have become one with Him will live; all others...

### **Obadiah 1**

<sup>16</sup> ...will be as though they had not been.

## **The Fountain of Life**

Let us put the case in another way, and then the truth of this statement will be more apparent. Remember always that the great plague to be got rid of is sin, and that sin and death are one and inseparable, so that:

### **Ezekiel 18**

<sup>4</sup> The soul that sins it shall die,

—or, which is the same thing, the life that sins, it shall cease to be. There is no way possible for sin to be exterminated except by death. This is set forth in the words already quoted:

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>22</sup> Without shedding of blood is no remission.

Now let the fact once and for ever fixed in your mind, that with God is...

### **Psalms 36**

<sup>9</sup> ...the fountain of life.

He is the life. His name is I AM. He is “the living God,” the self-existent One, and this is that which distinguishes Him from all false gods.<sup>120</sup> The possession of life is a characteristic of the God-head. The King of kings and Lord of lords is a one...

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<sup>120</sup> *Jeremiah* 10:6-12.

## **1 Timothy 6**

<sup>16</sup> Who only has immortality.

He not only possesses life, but He is life. If there were in the universe any other being possessing life in himself, and not either directly or indirectly deriving it from God, then that other being would likewise be God, and not subject to God. There would be two Gods, and there would inevitably be a question between them as to the extent of their respective dominions, and which of them should be supreme.

Such a state of things is an impossibility; but there is a being—Satan—who has claimed to be God, and who disputes God's right to rule, and denies that God has any authority over him.

### **Life the Attribute of God Only**

I repeat, then, that life is the attribute of God, and whoever claims to have life in himself, claims to be a god.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>10</sup> The Spirit is life because of righteousness,

—so that for one to claim to have life in himself is the same as the claim to have no sin, or to be able to free himself from sin. But no one has nor can have righteousness from himself, since no one has life of himself.

Every creature and every created thing springs from and depends upon God. Lucifer, now Satan, who originated sin, as well as men who have followed Satan in the sin, depend upon God for the life with which the sin is committed. The man who blasphemes God and denies His existence, does so with the breath of life which God breathes into his nostrils. God says,

## **Isaiah 43**

<sup>24</sup> You have made me to serve with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities.

It was God's life that was perverted by Lucifer from its rightful use, and employed for sin and rebellion; and there has never been

a single sin committed, except with the life of God. It is for this reason that God, in His infinite mercy and goodness...

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> ...was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses on to them.

Inasmuch as sin was committed with God's life, although through no fault of God's, He assumed the responsibility for it, and gave up His life in order to be freed from it, to demonstrate the fact that He has no complicity with it, and to save all who will consent to die with Him.

God can save those who die with Him, for He alone can die and yet live. He lays down His life solely to take it again, so that all who die with Him are sure to live with Him. The cross means the resurrection, so that:

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

But since God has given up His life, because of sin, it follows that whoever refuses to acknowledge absolute dependence on God for life and righteousness, cuts himself off from the resurrection life, and so perishes.

## **1 John 2**

<sup>17</sup> The world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

From all these things it is evident:

- a) That life comes only from God, since righteousness comes from Him alone.
- b) That sin must eventually cease to be, since God has laid down His life.

To claim immortality for the sinner, is to claim that God is defeated in His fight against sin.

### **1 John 3**

<sup>8</sup> For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

To say that sin and sinners will continue to exist throughout eternity anywhere in God's universe, is to deny the efficacy of the atonement; it is to say that God failed in that which He undertook. Outside of and away from God there is absolutely no life.

Next week we shall continue the consideration of the subject, coming direct to some of the texts which trouble our friend.

## 35. From Death to the Resurrection

Present Truth, March 14, 1901

**L**AST week we learned from the Scriptures that sin is death, and that just as there is no righteousness apart from Christ, so there is no life apart from Him. To claim the possession of life, even for a single moment, other than that of Christ, is to claim to be sinless in one's self,—that one's own ways are perfect,—in short, that one is God.

### No Immortality for Sinners

This makes it apparent that there is no immortality for any sinner. Christ came...

#### Hebrews 9

<sup>26</sup> ...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,

—and to say that sin will not be completely put away, out of the universe, is to say that the object of His coming to earth has failed, that His sacrifice of himself is insufficient.

If the monstrous and diabolical doctrine of an ever-burning hell were true, where lost sinners are condemned to perpetual and never-ending tortures which only the ingenuity of a devil could invent, and the constantly multiplying blasphemies of the victims only augment the sentence to be executed upon them, that would not simply be a blot on God's universe, but would be a standing witness to the weakness of His Government, and the failure of His attempt to purge His kingdom of rebellion.

No ranting infidel ever conceived so positive a denial of the atonement as is the doctrine of hell, which is so jealously cherished by so many professed Christians. The Gospel demands the utter extinction of sin, not merely from some of the inhabitants of the earth, but from the earth itself, and from every part of God's creation, so that God can say,

#### Revelation 21

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I make all things new;



–and this means that every creature who will not allow sin to be taken away from him must be taken away and destroyed with it. In the Gospel,

### **Romans 1**

<sup>17</sup> The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man.

### **Where Only Eternity Can Be Spent**

Evidence might be multiplied, but this is sufficient to show that so far as the time after the Judgment is concerned, the wicked must cease to be.

### **Obadiah**

<sup>15</sup> For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as you have done, it shall be done unto you; their reward shall return upon their own head.

<sup>16</sup> For as you have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

In mission halls we often see the question,

“Where will you spend eternity?”

But there is only one place where it can be spent, and that is in the bosom of God. He only is...

### **Psalms 90**

<sup>1</sup> ...our dwelling place in all generations.

### **Psalms 37**

<sup>37</sup> Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.

The word “end” here is from the Hebrew word meaning future, after time. The future of the upright shall be peace. But the next verse continues:

### **Psalm 37**

<sup>38</sup> But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the future of the wicked shall be cut off.

It is only to the righteous, that God gives a future, and He gives it to them because they abide in Him, who is...

### **Psalm 90**

<sup>2</sup> ...from everlasting to everlasting.

## **Death is Separation From God**

Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews,

### **John 8**

<sup>21</sup> I go away and you shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go you cannot come.

A little while afterwards He said to His believing disciples:

### **John 13**

<sup>33</sup> Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, you cannot come; so now I say to you.

Death is separation from God; the withdrawal of His life; but although we should all die, and become...

### **2 Samuel 14**

<sup>14</sup> ...as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again,...yet does He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him.

What are the means that He has devised? Jesus has told us, in the words of comfort which He spoke to the disciples, who were sorrowing because He had told them that He was going away from them and that they could not go with Him.

### **John 14**

<sup>1</sup> Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.

<sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

This assurance is repeated by the Spirit through the Apostle Paul, in writing to those who were sorrowing for dead friends.

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>15</sup> 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 go before them which are asleep.

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

From these texts we see that death does not take us to be with the Lord, but that His coming and the resurrection is the only means by which we can be with Him. Job said,

#### **Job 14**

<sup>14</sup> If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

<sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You; You will have a desire to the work of your hands.

#### **Job 17**

<sup>13</sup> If I wait, the grave is my house; I have made my bed in the darkness.

<sup>14</sup> I have said to corruption, You are my father.

This testimony concerning waiting in the grave, in corruption, till the Lord calls and the change comes, exactly coincides with that by the Apostle Paul:

#### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

## **Death is Not Conscious Existence**

It is evident that there is no being present with the Lord between death and the resurrection, even for the righteous; let us then consider the necessary condition of the dead during that interval. This ought not to call for any consideration, and it would not if pagan philosophy and papal theology had not put darkness for light, and light for darkness, and robbed plain words of their meaning.

Death is the opposite of life; it is opposed to life in every particular. Think of all the characteristics of life, all the signs that indicate it, and you have the statement of what death is. To speak of consciousness in death is a contradiction of terms, as much so as to speak of alert wakefulness in deep sleep. There may be life without consciousness, but there can be no consciousness without life.

When it is said that a man is conscious, it is not necessary to say that he is alive. So to say that a man has a conscious existence between death and the resurrection, is equivalent to saying that between death and the resurrection he is not dead. In short, to talk about conscious existence in death is nonsense. There can be no possible contradiction of terms that has less meaning.

## **Christ's Coming in His Kingdom**

Within three days of His crucifixion, Jesus said to His disciples:

### **Matthew 25**

<sup>31</sup> When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:

<sup>32</sup> And before Him shall be gathered all the nations.

That time has not yet come. We still look for the second coming of Christ...

#### **Matthew 24**

<sup>30</sup> ...with power and great glory,

—when He returns,

#### **Luke 19**

<sup>15</sup> ...having received the kingdom;

—because now He has gone...

<sup>12</sup> ...into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

It was not until the day of Pentecost, however, fifty days after the resurrection, that the disciples grasped the correct idea of the kingdom of Christ. When He was betrayed, and they saw that He suffered himself to be bound and led away by a hand of armed men,

#### **Mark 14**

<sup>50</sup> They all forsook Him, and fled.

Even after they had heard of His resurrection, they did not believe it, and thought that all hope of His ever having a kingdom was destroyed, saying mournfully:

#### **Luke 24**

<sup>21</sup> We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.

### **The Crucified Thief's Request**

Is it any wonder, then, that one strong expression of faith, breaking forth like a gleam of light amid this darkness of unbelief, should have a prominent place in the sacred narrative.

This poor Jew, condemned as a malefactor at the same time that Jesus was, saw the rejection of Jesus, and all the spiteful usage to which He was subjected. All this had been foretold in prophecy, but none of those whose business it was to teach the

Scriptures, not even those who had been with Jesus, saw in it the fulfillment of God's word, and the proof that Jesus was the Christ.

But to the heart of this poor outcast criminal the Holy Spirit spoke. The patience of Jesus when He was beaten and spit upon, His meekness under the grossest insult, His gentle, fervent prayer that His murderers might be forgiven, all revealed the presence of the King, and he cried out,

### **Luke 23**

<sup>43</sup> Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom!

### **What Christ Promised**

Greater faith than this is rarely seen. He did not believe that this was the end of all; his faith grew out of that which discouraged more favored ones.

But what was it that he asked for? To be remembered at the second coming of Christ, when He shall come in His glory, sitting on the throne of His glory. And his faith was not in vain; hanging on the cross, which was for the time being His throne, the outcast King said, according to the reading in our version:

### **Luke 23**

<sup>43</sup> Verily I say unto You, Today shall you be with me in Paradise.

Did the thief go to be with Jesus in Paradise that day? Assuredly not; for Jesus himself did not go there. The tree of life, before the throne of God,

### **Revelation 2 [also 22:1-2]**

<sup>7</sup> ...is in the midst of the Paradise of God,

—so that whoever goes to Paradise goes into the presence of God. Yet the third day after the crucifixion, after Jesus had risen from the dead, He said to Mary:

### **John 20**

<sup>17</sup> Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Later in that same day He allowed the disciples to touch Him, showing that in the meantime He had ascended to heaven, and received from the Father the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted, and had returned.

Did Jesus disappoint the penitent thief? Not by any means, for he did not ask to be received into heaven that day, neither did Jesus promise that he should be with Him that day. What Jesus did assure him was that he certainly should yet be with Him in Paradise, and we may be sure that this promise will be fulfilled at the very time to which the thief looked forward, namely at the coming of Christ in glory.

I hear you say,

“But the text says that Jesus told him that he should be with Him that day.”

To this I reply that Jesus cannot deny himself; and when He says that He did not go to Paradise that day, we are bound to believe Him; and the more so, that it is contrary to nature and the Scripture for anybody to enter Paradise at death.

These words of Jesus to the thief are the stronghold of the doctrine that men go to heaven at death; yet the whole argument hangs on the punctuation, which is not a matter of inspiration, and is of comparatively recent date. In the Greek text, as written, there was no punctuation whatever and when it was inserted it was according to men's idea of the sense. Believing the pagan doctrine that there is really no death, those who put the marks into the text of the Bible; inserted a comma between “you” and “today,” so as to make it seem to agree with their notion.

They did this, without doubt, in all sincerity, supposing that Jesus meant to tell the thief that he should meet Him in Paradise that day. But if they had known the truth, they would rather have inserted it after “today,” thus making the sentence harmonize with all the circumstances in the case.

Again you say,

“But in that case it would make the words of Jesus a question, and not a promise; thus: Verily I say unto you today, Shall you be with me in Paradise? and that would be nonsense.”

I must remind you that in the Greek, as in other ancient languages, the subject of a verb, when it is a personal pronoun, is not usually expressed, but is indicated by the form of the verb. Jesus did not ask a question, but made a direct, emphatic statement, thus:

“Verily I say unto you today, You shall be with me in Paradise.”

When? At the very time that the thief asked to be remembered when Christ comes into His kingdom. This does not change a single letter of the text, and makes the Scriptures perfectly harmonious.

Do you ask why it was necessary for Jesus to use the adverb “today”? The answer is obvious, when we consider the situation. The priests were mocking and reviling Him. They taunted Him, saying,

#### **Matthew 27**

<sup>40</sup> If You be the Christ, come down from the cross,

<sup>42</sup> ...and we will believe on You;

#### **Mark 15**

<sup>31</sup> He saved others, himself He cannot save.

The other thief joined in the railing and said,

#### **Luke 23**

<sup>39</sup> If You be the Christ, save yourself and us.

There was “none so poor to do Him reverence;”<sup>121</sup> everything seemed to indicate that He was an imposter, or at least self-deceived. It looked as though God himself had forsaken Jesus, yet He was not cast down, and did not lose faith in His mission. His sublime faith answered to that of the suppliant, and He declared,

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<sup>121</sup> William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act 3, Scene 2.



“Verily I say unto you today, even today, in spite of the seemingly hopeless outlook, you shall have your request, you shall be with me in Paradise.”

If He had meant what people commonly suppose He meant, He would have said,

“You shall be with me in Paradise today;”

—but He did not mean that, and so did not say that.

Let us contemplate this wondrous assurance. It is a sad fact that it has been so perverted, and that people do not derive the comfort from it that it was designed to convey to us.

Since Jesus, even when He hung on the cross, despised and disowned, could so confidently assure a penitent sinner that he should be saved, what surpassing confidence we may have, when we come to Him as He is “highly exalted,” sitting at...

#### **Hebrews 8**

<sup>1</sup> ...the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

We know beyond the shadow of the possibility of a doubt, that He will not cast out the poorest and most despised who comes to Him, and that:

#### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> He is able to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by Him.

Next week, God willing, we shall consider one or both of the other texts referred to in the question last week. While on this subject, we shall also give some attention to the subject of Spiritualism.

## 36. Departing and Being with Christ

Present Truth, March 21, 1901

I have heard a prayer by a minister, in reference to the death of our late Queen Victoria, in which he said that she is now reigning with Christ in heaven, and the highest sense of the term. I believe there is perfect harmony in Scripture, and although I have asked from a number of fellow-disciples an explanation of Luke 23:48; Philippians 1:21-23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, in the light that the dead are in a state of unconscious sleep, I have not as yet had it explained clearly. Can you help to remove the darkness? I shall be obliged if you can give an explanation of these passages.

**T**HIS question was inserted in the article from March 7,<sup>122</sup> and in that and the following number the nature of man and the state of the dead were briefly considered.

Before we proceed to the consideration of *Philippians* 1:23, concerning which you asked, I hope you will carefully review the two talks that we have already had, on the nature of man, and the state of man between death and the resurrection. In them we have the principles which will enable anybody to understand the whole subject, and our further talk will be but a repetition of them.

The text now before us reads thus:

### **Philippians 1**

<sup>23</sup> I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

If one had not from a previous teaching imbibed the idea that men must die, in order to be with Christ, it would be impossible to imagine such a thing from this text, because it teaches exactly the opposite. No language could be conceived, which would make it plainer that death is not the way by which men go to be with

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<sup>122</sup> See article 34, "[The Nature of Man](#)."

Christ. This will appear, when we take into consideration the context.

The Apostle Paul was in Rome, in prison for the faith, but he had no complaints to make. After telling the Philippians how earnestly he prays for them, and how much he desires their welfare in everything, he refers to his bonds, but only to assure them that:

<sup>12</sup> ...the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel.

The Gospel and its advancement is the burden of his thought. He said that his bondage had made others bold to preach Christ, and that while some preached Him of love, knowing that the apostle was set for the defense of the Gospel, others preached Him from envy and strife; but that in whatever way it might be, Christ was preached, and in that he rejoiced, and would continue to rejoice.

Still dwelling on the one theme, he said that his earnest expectation and desire was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it was by life or by death.<sup>123</sup> In all this we see that Paul had no thought for himself, except as he might be a factor in carrying on the work of Christ.

Then comes the statement, so often quoted and misquoted:

### **Philippians 1**

<sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Can you think for a moment, in view of the words immediately preceding, that Paul was here speaking of gain to himself? His sole desire was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life, or by death. What was life to him? A means of glorifying God. And what was death? It was gain. To whom? Why, to Christ, of course.

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<sup>123</sup> *Philippians* 1:14-20.

How incongruous, and opposed to all that goes before, to make Paul suddenly begin to speak about gain to himself. He was not longing for death, as a time when trouble would end; his only desire was for the advancement of the cause of Christ. If he lived, he knew that it would not be he, but Christ living in him.<sup>124</sup> And if he died, he knew that death would also be a gain to the cause of Christ, as it indeed was; for Paul did not die of a lingering disease, by which he was unfit for labor, but by the axe of the executioner. He died as a martyr, a witness to the truth, and that was in accordance with his expectation and his hope.

What then were the two things by which Paul was oppressed? They were life and death. He did not know which of them he should choose, if the choice were given him, because he did not know by which one of them he could better glorify the Lord; but there was a thing which he knew was, according to the Greek idiom, “very much more better”<sup>125</sup> than either life or death.

So much is very plain from the text. How anybody can think that the Apostle Paul could pen such nonsense as to say that he did not know which to choose, whether life or death, but that he chose death, is a marvel.

## What To Long For

What is the thing which Paul declared to be for a much better than life on this earth, or death? It was the departing and being with Christ. And what is that? Paul himself has told us more about this, than any other writer. Read again:

### 1 Thessalonians 4

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

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<sup>124</sup> See *Galatians* 2:20.

<sup>125</sup> *Philippians* 1:23.

Or take the words of Christ:

### **John 14**

<sup>3</sup> If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

These words, and many more that might be quoted, show that the departing and being with Christ is only at His coming. So it was for the coming of the Lord that the Apostle Paul longed.

Do you say that Paul knew that he could not live till the coming of Christ? We do not know whether he did or not; he certainly always classed himself with those who should be alive at the coming of the Lord; but in any case, it is no more strange that Paul should express a longing for the coming of the Lord, than for John, who wrote:

### **Revelation 20**

<sup>20</sup> He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

The coming of the Lord has been the one blessed hope of the faithful in Christ in all ages, since the fall of man.

We see, therefore, that the words of Paul to the Philippians, instead of teaching that death takes man into the presence of the Lord, make it most emphatically that such is not the case. If it were as is popularly supposed, then we should have no ground for hope in anything, because the Scriptures would contradict themselves. But such is not the case. The words of Scripture are but one harmonious whole, and they are a sure foundation for our faith and hope.

All believers in Christ are kings and priests, and in the future life they will sit upon thrones, even though in this life they have been trodden upon. We may believe that Queen Victoria was a faithful servant of the Lord, according to all the light given to her, "ruling in the fear of God,"<sup>126</sup> and that therefore in the world to come she will occupy a throne infinitely higher than the throne of

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<sup>126</sup> 2 Samuel 23:3.

England; but for that honor she must wait till the coming of the Lord and the resurrection.

We may not long for death, for we cannot tell whether or not it would glorify God, and it is cowardly to long for it as a release from earthly toil; but we may long for the coming of the Lord,

**1 John 3**

<sup>2</sup> [For] every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

Our intelligent longing for the coming of the Lord does not lead to idle dreaming, but to earnest action, that others may know the blessed hope, and rejoice in anticipation of the great salvation to be revealed at the appearing of Christ.

## 37. Absent from the Body, and Present with the Lord

Present Truth, March 21, 1901

THESE words were also referred to in the question, and they fit so naturally with the text considered in the preceding article that we will give them a brief study in the same connection. As is always the case, the misunderstanding of them arises from not giving thought to the connection in which they stand. Let us avoid the mistake, and come to an understanding of the words, by reading what goes with them.

### 2 Corinthians 5

<sup>1</sup> For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

<sup>2</sup> For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;

<sup>3</sup> If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

<sup>4</sup> For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

<sup>5</sup> Now he that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

<sup>7</sup> (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

<sup>8</sup> We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

It is impossible fully to grasp the force of these words, and of the entire chapter in which they stand, without a study of the two preceding chapters; for this we have not time at present. Our work now is more negative, to show what they do not teach; some other time we shall make a study of the grand truth, the

statement which begins in the second chapter, and continues without a break in the sixth.

You will see that in the verses quoted three states are presented, namely,

- a) Clothed,
- b) Unclothed [or Naked], and
- c) Clothed Upon.

These are three different conditions, and one of them is so plainly defined that from that we can know the meaning of the other two.

### **Clothed Upon: Mortality Swallowed Up of Life**

In verse four we have learned that “clothed upon,” is identical with...

#### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>4</sup> ...mortality swallowed up of life.

This is called being...

<sup>2</sup> ...clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

Therefore our...

<sup>1</sup> ...building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,

–is the state of immortality, incorruptibility. When is it that...

#### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>53</sup> This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality?

It is “at the last trump,” when...

#### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>52</sup> ...the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

<sup>54</sup> Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.



Thus we see that here, as in the first chapter of *Philippians*, the Apostle Paul talks of the coming of the Lord as the thing to be desired above all others.

Since being clothed upon with the house which is from heaven is the swallowing up of mortality by life, it is evident that...

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>1</sup> ...our earthly house of this tabernacle...

—is mortality, our present mortal state. In it we groan, being burdened, for the whole creation groans under the weight of the curse;<sup>127</sup> and although...

## **Galatians 3**

<sup>13</sup> Christ has redeemed us from the curse,

—we still have to bear the burden of mortality; the flesh is not redeemed, but power is given us over it, until Christ shall come and exchange our fleshly bodies for spiritual bodies.<sup>128</sup>

## **Unclothed: the State of Death**

What then is the state of being “unclothed,”<sup>129</sup> “found naked,”<sup>130</sup> a condition which the Apostle Paul did not desire? Evidently it is death. He wished to be released from the burden of this present earthly tabernacle,—this mortal body, but only that he might immediately “be clothed upon”<sup>131</sup> with the heavenly house,

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>4</sup> ...that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

He did not wish for any waiting in the grave, and no healthy mind can long for that place. In this mortal state we are absent from the Lord, because:

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<sup>127</sup> *Romans* 8:22.

<sup>128</sup> Read *1 Corinthians* 15:35-46.

<sup>129</sup> *2 Corinthians* 5:4.

<sup>130</sup> *2 Corinthians* 5:3.

<sup>131</sup> *2 Corinthians* 5:2.

## 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>50</sup> Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherent incorruption.

If we were “absent from the body,”<sup>132</sup> we should also be absent from the Lord, unless we were “clothed upon;” for death is corruption, and the seeming triumph of it. What the apostle desired, therefore, was to be...

## 2 Corinthians 5

<sup>8</sup> ...absent from the body,

—but only in such a way as to be...

<sup>8</sup> ...present with the Lord,

—that is, to have mortality immediately...

<sup>4</sup> ...swallowed up of life.

## Made for Immortality

One thing more, in order that we may not, by this partly negative treatment of the text, lose the whole of the blessedness of it.

## 2 Corinthians 5

<sup>5</sup> He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given us the earnest of the Spirit.

What is the selfsame thing for which God has wrought us? The words immediately preceding show that it is...

<sup>4</sup> ...that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

That is, God has made us for immortality, and He has given us the assurance of it in the gift of His Spirit, by which even now the lusts and infirmities of mortal flesh are controlled. In this we are confident, and so we give ourselves to the one end, namely, that,

<sup>9</sup> ...whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him,

—that is, that whether we live or die, we may be the Lord’s.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:8.

<sup>133</sup> Romans 14:8.

## 38. The Evil of Spiritualism

Present Truth, March 28, 1901

**V**ERY few of those who read and talk about Spiritualism realize what a terrible thing it is. Most people suppose that it is simply a foolish fad, not especially wicked, but exceedingly silly. They have heard so much about table tipping, rappings, etc., and there have been so many “exposures” of the tricks performed by professed spirit mediums, that it is quite commonly supposed that Spiritualism is a clumsy sort of fraud.

### **The Essence of Spiritualism**

While there are very many adjuncts to Spiritualism, and it develops in many different forms, the thing itself consists always and only in this one teaching, namely, the conscious existence of the dead, and the possibility of their communicating with those still on earth. That is the whole of Spiritualism, or Spiritism, as it is more properly called, and everybody who holds to the unscriptural doctrine of the consciousness of the dead is essentially a spiritualist.

“Not a very dangerous thing,” you say. Well, there is never any safety in falsehood, and we have seen in the three preceding studies in this “Corner” that there is no truth in that doctrine. The Scriptures of truth teach us that man is mortal by nature; that mortality is exchanged for immortality only at the coming of the Lord; and that between death and the coming of the Lord there is a period of absolute unconsciousness. Now let us see wherein the danger lies in the opposite view.

### **Ministering Angels**

It is a fact that there are spirits that go about on earth, walking among men, unseen by them. These are not, however, the spirits of the dead. God sends His holy angels as ministering spirits, to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation. These angels

“excel in strength,”<sup>134</sup> and serve men in thousands of ways. We are indebted to their good offices for preservation from many dangers and accidents.

While they do their work in silence, and are content to do their duty, even though their ministration be not recognized, it is possible for them to appear to us, and angels have often been seen by men. The Bible contains numerous instances of such manifestations.

## **Fallen Angels**

But these angels of God are not all the spirits that go about on this earth. There are...

### **2 Peter 2**

<sup>4</sup> ...angels that kept not their first estate,

### **Jude**

<sup>6</sup> ...angels that sinned,

—and left their habitation. Satan himself, their leader, was once the highest and most exalted created being in heaven, but now he spends his time...

### **Job 1**

<sup>7</sup> ...going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it,

### **1 Peter 5**

<sup>8</sup> ...as a roaring lion [walking about] seeking whom he may devour.

Though he and his host of fallen angels have lost all their goodness, they have not lost all their power, and their wisdom has degenerated into cunning. Fallen though they be, they are in every particular far more than a match for mere human beings.

## **Try the Spirits**

It is for this reason that we are exhorted not to believe every spirit, but to...

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<sup>134</sup> *Psalm* 103:20.

## **1 John 4**

<sup>1</sup> ...try the spirits, whether they are of God.

How are we to try them? Here is the rule:

## **Isaiah 8**

<sup>20</sup> To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

Now there is not the slightest ground for doubt that men have had and do still have communications from these spirits, and that what has been done in this line in the past is but a small beginning. Can you not see that the truth concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead is not a matter of indifference? If it be held that the dead are conscious, there is no ground for denying their ability to communicate with those whom they have left behind.

True, very many who hold that doctrine do not believe that they can so communicate, but let them once receive a communication concerning something which no one ever knew anything about, except themselves and some one who is now dead, or, stronger still, let them see the form of the departed one, and let them talk with one who looks like him, and who reminds them of all the incidents of bygone days, and they will inevitably believe that the dead can communicate with men in the flesh. This has been the experience of thousands, and it will be the experience of many thousands more.

## **Not the Spirits of the Dead**

But who are these pretended friends? We know for a certainty that they cannot be the spirits of the dead, for:

## **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not anything.

The conclusion is evident, therefore, that they are naught but the sinful angels that kept not their first estate, and who have now nothing to look forward to but the day of destruction, and who find their delight in seducing to destruction as many human

beings as possible. Be assured that every time anybody receives a communication purporting to come from some dead friend, he is in direct communication with the devil or some of his host of fallen angels. Is it not terrible to contemplate?

I have known ministers of the Gospel who have fallen into Spiritualism through their belief in the conscious state of the dead. When the “evidence of their senses” was added to what they regarded as a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, they of course accepted it. And when Spiritualism has once been accepted by any person, the doctrines of the Bible, and the morality of the Bible, no longer are final authority to him. He is at the mercy of the enemy of all good, and:

### **Proverbs 12**

<sup>10</sup> ...the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

How many there are who depend for their belief wholly upon what their favorite minister says, or upon the traditions of men, even though they be contrary to the Bible! In fact, most people go to some man, to find out the meaning of whatever the Bible says. When they depend so much on what men still in the flesh say, is not to be expected that they would attach still more weight to the sayings of those who profess to have come direct from heaven?

If a man gets his religion wholly from some learned clergyman, will he not depend still more upon a message purporting to come from that man after he has been dead and supposedly in heaven for many years? The only safety against the gross deceptions of Satan in the last days, is strict adherence to the Word of God.

And this emphasizes the fact that acceptance of the righteousness of God in Christ is the only hope of man. It matters not how correct the form of doctrine which one believes, if he does not believe unto righteousness,—if he cherishes any sins,—he is an easy prey to the deceptions of Satan, because he is already submitting to him. The devil must be stoutly resisted, “steadfastly in the

faith,”<sup>135</sup> and he will flee. The prince of this world will have no power over those in whom he finds nothing of his own.<sup>136</sup>

### **Life in Christ Only**

So we end where we began, with absolute dependence on Christ for righteousness and life. Life and righteousness are inseparable, and both come only from God in Christ.

Spiritualism denies the necessity for any atonement and this is the inevitable conclusion from the teaching that men have life in themselves, apart from Christ, for whoever has life in himself has righteousness also. The wrath of God comes upon the false prophets, because, He says,

#### **Ezekiel 13**

<sup>22</sup> With lies we have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way, by promising him life.

Do not be afraid to trust the Lord for everything, and in all your ways to acknowledge Him as the source of everything, and He will make your way right.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> *1 Peter* 5:9.

<sup>136</sup> *John* 14:30.

<sup>137</sup> *Proverbs* 3:6.

## 39. Inspiration of the Bible

Present Truth, April 4, 1901

What authority is there that the Bible is inspired more than any other book?

**I** DO not think I can indicate the correct answer to this question any more directly than by asking another, namely,

“What authority is there that the sun gives us any more light than the moon?”

You say that you see and feel the greater light and heat of the sun. True, and just so we feel the power of the Word of God, such as cannot possibly be felt from any other words, because there are no other words like those of God.

Jesus said,

### **John 5**

<sup>34</sup> I receive not testimony from man.

Do you think that if Jesus were on earth you would want a testimonial from some man, to the effect that He is indeed the Christ? Do you not see that if you should depend on another's assurance that He is what He professes to be, that would show that you held that other one as greater, and more to be depended on, than Jesus himself? In like manner, to look elsewhere than in the Bible itself for proof of its inspiration, is virtually to deny its inspiration, and to make it secondary to some other book.

The prophecies contained in the Bible, foretelling events hundreds of years in advance, which have been fulfilled to the letter, are one of the strongest evidences that it is the Word of Him who knows all things from the beginning. Only God can speak of...

### **Romans 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...those things that be not, as though they were.

But the Bible as a whole is prophecy; for none of it came...



## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>21</sup> ...by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

I hear you say,

“That is begging the question; I know that the Bible itself claims to be inspired; what I want is to have its claim verified.”

Well, you will never find any authority for the inspiration of the Bible, outside of the Bible itself. The Catholic Church claims to be above the Bible, but in so doing it discredits the Bible as being the Word of God, or else it sets itself above God. It really does both; but the fact is, that the true church of Christ is subject to the Bible, and is guided by it. The church is built upon the Word, and is the true church of Christ only as long as it conforms to that Word.

Suppose Sandow<sup>138</sup> should seize you in his hands and exert all the power of his muscles on you; would you ask him,

“What authority is there for the statement that you are the strongest man living?”

Certainly not; his grip upon you would be all the evidence you would require. So when the Holy Spirit, who speaks through the Word, gets hold of you, evidence is at hand.

## **John 3**

<sup>33</sup> He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true.

The Word of God is...

## **Ephesians 6**

<sup>17</sup> ...the sword of the Spirit,

## **Hebrews 4**

<sup>12</sup> ...sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the di-

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<sup>138</sup> Eugen Sandow (1867-1925) was a German bodybuilder and showman from Prussia.

viding asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Can you not tell the difference between a sharp knife and a blunt one? When the woman of Samaria left Jesus at the well, and went to call her neighbors, she said,

### **John 4**

<sup>29</sup> Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?

So when the Spirit lays bare your own heart to you, you will not ask for anybody to be sponsor for Him.

I do not believe that infidels who have written with the avowed intention of overthrowing the Bible have really done so much injury to souls as have some of its zealous but unwise defenders. The attempts to “prove that the Bible is inspired” have sown more real doubt than anybody can think. They have made people believe that the Bible needed defending, when it does not. It is its own evidence.

No infidel was ever yet converted by homilies about the Bible, nor will one ever be converted by any such thing. There is only one way to cure infidelity, and that is to...

### **2 Timothy 4**

<sup>2</sup> Preach the Word.

If one says that he does not believe it, there is nothing to do but to give him some more. If he absolutely refuses to hear it, he shuts himself off from the only source of proof of the inspiration of the Bible.

What is the authority that the Bible is inspired? It is God himself, who speaks in it as clearly as when He thundered from the top of Sinai. Can you tell when it thunders? The same voice speaks in the Bible. Hear, and you will know.

### **John 7 [RV]**

<sup>17</sup> If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

## 40. How to Study the Bible

Present Truth, April 11, 1901

Originally published: Present Truth, March 23, 1893, “Studying the Bible”

I have read the article in this week's *Present Truth* on the Inspiration of the Bible,<sup>139</sup> and believe that the authority is to be found only in the word itself. But my difficulty is that I do not know how to study the Bible, and I shall be very glad if you can give me some helpful suggestions.

**F**EW people know how really to study the Bible. And this is not always because they do not know how to study at all, for very often those who are good students otherwise, are poor students of the Bible, even though they want to understand it. In *Proverbs* 2:1-5 we are told to study the Bible so as to understand it. Let us read the passage:

### **Proverbs 2**

<sup>1</sup> My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you;

<sup>2</sup> So that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding;

<sup>3</sup> Yea, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;

<sup>4</sup> If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;

<sup>5</sup> Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

### **Digging for Hid Treasure**

When a man is convinced that there is rich silver or gold ore in a certain place, what does he do? He goes right there and digs in that very place. But how do people generally do with the Bible? Why, as soon as they light upon a portion where there is special treasure,—and that means a place where there is special difficulty,—they immediately go off to some other place to dig.

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<sup>139</sup> See the previous article, “[Inspiration of the Bible](#).”

If they went to some other part of the Bible, it would not be so bad, for there is treasure everywhere in the Bible, and whoever finds it in one place will be better able to find it in another; but they generally go to a library and begin to dig among the commentators, or they ask their pastor or some friend what he thinks it means.

It is as though a man should find indications of gold in a certain place, and should straightway go off a hundred miles and begin digging. People are not so foolish as that in temporal matters.

Another point: When a man is digging for silver or gold, he carefully examines every portion of the soil where he is digging. Whoever has seen men washing out gold knows that every particle of the soil is carefully examined. No matter what the style of mining, everything is in some way closely scrutinized.

### **Consider What the Word Says**

Here then we have the simple directions for studying the Bible. First go to the Bible itself, and to the particular passage which you wish to understand, and you give the most careful and patient attention to every sentence and every word. Let your mind dwell upon every word and every clause, noting its relation to what precedes and what follows, until you know for a certainty just what it says.

Do not sit down to commit the passage to memory so that you can repeat it parrot-like. That is not study. But question the text, asking a question and letting the words of the text give the answer, until you cannot possibly think of it without thinking its very words.

When the student knows what the text says, then what? Here is the instruction:

#### **2 Timothy 2 [RV]**

<sup>7</sup> Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give you understanding in all things.

How will He give us the understanding? By our considering what He says. That is, while we are diligently considering the text, the understanding of the text will come from the text itself. From what other place should we expect it to come?

### **Proverbs 2**

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

The meaning of what the Lord says is in just the very words that He says.

### **Do Not Be Impatient**

How long must one consider the words before he can understand it? That depends upon several things. We must be prepared to consider them for ten years, if need be, without getting impatient. We must have such confidence that wisdom and knowledge do come from the very words of the Lord that we shall be assured that they are really there, and that they are nowhere else.

But much depends on the spirit in which we approach the study. The Spirit of God is the source whence the Bible comes; the Spirit is the life and power and wisdom of the Word. When we come with hearts submissive to the Spirit, we shall not have to wait so long as we otherwise would.

Remember that the righteousness of God is revealed to faith, and not to intellect. That does not put any discount upon intellect, but it simply exalts faith. God has given man talents of intellect, and expects him to use them, but not without faith. A very feeble intellect with faith will understand the Bible far more readily, and more perfectly, than a giant intellect without faith.

At the same time that one particular passage is being thus studied, do not neglect the reading and studying of other parts of the Bible. The Bible is a unit; one Spirit and one truth is in it all; and every part is thus directly connected with every other part. If the particular passage under special consideration is in the middle of a chapter, the student will find it necessary to extend his careful

study back to the beginning of the chapter, and even to the beginning of the book; for no book in the Bible, unless it be *Proverbs* or *Psalms*, is made up of detached thoughts. A line of thought runs through each, and every text should be considered in its full connection. Then when it is used in the study of any special subject, it will not be misapplied.

When the mind thus gets accustomed to dwelling upon the Scriptures, it is wonderful how light will come. Almost anything may serve to cause the light to shine forth from the Word. While reading some other portion of the Bible, while listening to a discourse, in conversation even upon some other subject,—in short, in a thousand different ways,—the mind may be directed to the text that has been studied, and the light will shine forth.

No one can tell in what way the Spirit will work, and what means it will use to lead the soul into the truth; only let it be remembered that in any case it is the Spirit that guides, and that the knowledge gained comes from the Word itself, and not from any other source.

### **Proverbs 2**

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

## 41. The Return of the Jews

Present Truth, April 18, 1901<sup>140</sup>

Included in: *The Everlasting Covenant* (1900), Ch. 35, “The Promises Rest,” which in turn was taken from an earlier article, “The Promises to Israel. The Promised Rest,” in Present Truth, January 28, 1897

Several questions have been received with reference to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, one correspondent asking how the prophecies of the *Ezekiel* and *Isaiah* can be fulfilled if the Jews do not return to Jerusalem, and reign over the whole earth.

### An Everlasting Possession

**C**ANAAN is a land which God gave to Abraham and to his seed for an everlasting possession:

#### Genesis 17

<sup>7</sup> And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you.

<sup>8</sup> And I will give unto you, and to your seed after you, the land wherein you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

It was to be an everlasting possession for both Abraham and his seed. But Abraham himself had not so much as a foot-breadth of the land in his actual possession,<sup>141</sup> and none of his seed had it either, for even the righteous ones among them (and only the righteous are Abraham seed)...

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<sup>140</sup> From “Back Page,” *Present Truth*, April 18, 1901: “The article in the *Editor’s Corner* this week, on the Restoration of Israel [The Return of the Jews], we commend to the careful study of all our readers. This subject will be referred to again when we come to the study of the Fifth Commandment, and consider ‘the land which the Lord your God gives you.’ The present article will be found an excellent preparation for the better understanding of that clause.” **PP Editor’s note:** The “study on the Fifth Commandment” that Waggoner refers to is included in the book, *The Law of Life*.

<sup>141</sup> *Acts* 7:5.

## **Hebrews 11** [also vs. 39]

<sup>13</sup> ...all died in faith, not having received a promise.

Therefore the possession of the land involved the resurrection of the dead at the coming of Christ to restore all things. By the resurrection of Christ,

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup> God...has begotten us again unto a lively hope,...

<sup>4</sup> To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you.

## **A World-Wide Kingdom**

But the possession of the land of Canaan meant nothing less than the possession of the whole world, as we learn by comparing *Genesis* 17:7-8, 11, and *Romans* 4:1-13. That is to say, that which sealed to Abraham his right to the possession of the land of Canaan, was the seal of his right to the whole world.

In giving to him and his seed the land of Canaan, God gave to them the whole world. Not of course...

### **Galatians 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...this present evil world,

—for,

### **1 John 2**

<sup>17</sup> The world passes away;

—and Christ gave himself for us that He might deliver us from it and its destruction; but:

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>13</sup> We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

It was not the temporal possession of a few thousand square miles of land tainted by the curse, that God promised Abraham and to his seed, but the eternal possession of the entire earth freed from every vestige of the curse. The promise is...



## **Romans 4**

<sup>16</sup> ...sure to all the seed,

–only through the faith of Christ. Christ is the seed, and we are heirs through Him. It is...

## **Hebrews 2**

<sup>5</sup> ...the world to come...

–that is put in subjection to Him; and that is what He gives us.

Even though it were true that the little territory of Canaan constituted the whole of the promised inheritance, still it would be true that the Israelites never had it; for the promise which God confirmed was to give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan for *an everlasting possession*, that is, Abraham must have it for an everlasting possession, and his seed must also have it for an everlasting possession.

But they all died, and in time even the country itself passed into the hands of other people. No temporal dwelling in Palestine could possibly fulfill the promise. The promise still remains to be fulfilled to Abraham and to all his seed. The inheritance is the land of Canaan; but the possession of the land of Canaan means the possession of the whole earth, not in its present state, but restored as in the days of the Eden.

## **The New Earth**

It is evident that the children of Israel did not enjoy the rest and the inheritance, even while in Palestine, for although...

## **Psalms 78**

<sup>55</sup> He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents,

<sup>56</sup> Yet they tempted and provoked the most High God, and kept not His testimonies:

<sup>57</sup> But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

<sup>58</sup> For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images,

<sup>59</sup> [So that] God...greatly abhorred Israel.

## **A Heavenly Country**

Remember that it was a heavenly country that Abraham looked for. Nevertheless, the promise of God to give him and his seed (including us, if we are Christ's, *Galatians* 3:16, 29) the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, will be fulfilled to the very letter.

When the Lord comes for His people to take them to himself, to the place which He has prepared for them,<sup>142</sup> the righteous that will be raised incorruptible, and the righteous living ones will likewise be changed to immortality, and both together will be caught up...

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The place to which they will be taken is the free Jerusalem above,

### **Galatians 4**

<sup>26</sup> ...which is the mother of us all;

—for that is where Christ now is, and where He is preparing a place for us. That the heavenly Jerusalem is the place where Christ is now...

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>24</sup> ...in the presence of God for us,

—is evident from *Hebrews* 12, where we are told that those who believe are now come to mount Zion, unto...

### **Hebrews 12**

<sup>22</sup> ...the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,

<sup>23</sup> ...to God the Judge of all,...

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<sup>142</sup> See *John* 14:3.

<sup>24</sup> And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.

## A Heavenly City

This city, the New Jerusalem, the city which God has prepared for those of whom He is not ashamed, because they seek a heavenly country,<sup>143</sup> is the capital of His dominions. It is the...

### Hebrews 11

<sup>10</sup> ...city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God,

—for which Abraham looked. In the twenty-first chapter of *Revelation* we find a description of those foundations, where we also find that the city will not always remain in heaven, but will descend to this earth with the saints to have reigned in it with Christ for a thousand years after the resurrection.<sup>144</sup>

## The City Brought Down

But to what spot on this earth will the city descend? Speaking of the time of the destruction of the wicked, the prophet Zechariah says:

### Zechariah 14 [RV]

<sup>3</sup> Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle.

<sup>4</sup> And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

<sup>8</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea; in summer and in winter shall it be.

<sup>9</sup> And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the Lord be One, and His name One.

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<sup>143</sup> *Hebrews* 11:16.

<sup>144</sup> *Revelation* 20.

Thus we see that when God brings back the captivity of His people, He brings them to the very spot of earth that He promised to Abraham for an everlasting possession—the land of Canaan. But the possession of that land is the possession of the whole earth, not for a few years, but for eternity.

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>4</sup> There shall be no more death.

It was this glorious inheritance that the children of Israel had in their grasp when they crossed the Jordan, and which they faithlessly allowed to slip. If they had been faithful, a very short time would have sufficed to make the name and the saving power of God known in every part of the earth, and then the end would have come.

But they failed, and so the time was lengthened, until our day; but the same hope has been the one thing ever before the people of God. So we may look forward to the possession of the land of Canaan with as much earnestness as did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, yea, and David also, and all the prophets, and with the same confident hope.

### **Restoration of Israel**

With these few outlines well fixed in the mind, the reading of the prophecies both of the Old and the New Testament will be a delight, for we shall be spared much confusion and many seeming contradictions will be seen to be plain.

When we read of a restoration of Jerusalem, so that it will be the joy and praise of the whole earth, we shall know that the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, to take the place of the old. If a city on this earth is burnt entirely to the ground, and men build a new city on the same site, the city is said to be rebuilt, and it is called, by the same name. So will Jerusalem, only the city is rebuilt in heaven, so that there is no interval between the destruction of the old and the appearance of the new. It is as though the

new city sprang at once from the ruins of the old, only infinitely more glorious.

So also when we read of the return of Israel to Jerusalem, we know that it is not the return of a few thousand mortals to a mass of ruins, but the coming of the innumerable, immortal host of the redeemed to the ever new city where their citizenship has long been recorded. Mortal men will not rebuild the city with brick and stone and mortar, but God himself will rebuild it with gold and pearls and with all manner of precious stones.

#### **Psalm 102**

<sup>16</sup> When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory.

He says to Jerusalem,

#### **Isaiah 54**

<sup>11</sup> O you afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay your stones with fair colors, and lay your foundations with sapphires.

<sup>12</sup> And I will make your windows of agates, and your gates of carbuncles, and all your borders of pleasant stones.

<sup>13</sup> And all your children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of your children.

These are the stones in which her children take pleasure.

#### **Psalm 102**

<sup>14</sup> For your servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.

Why will men nullify all these glorious promises, by reading them as though they taught merely the temporal possession of a ruined city on this old sin-cursed earth? It is because they limit the Gospel, not realizing that all the promises of God are in Christ, to be enjoyed by none except those who are in Christ, and in whom He dwells by faith. Would that God's professed people might speedily receive...

## **Ephesians 1**

<sup>17</sup> ...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God,

<sup>18</sup> That the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

—and that it is to be gained only by:

<sup>19</sup> The exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

<sup>20</sup> Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

## 42. Changed in a Moment

Present Truth, April 25, 1901

Some who have read the articles that recently appeared concerning death and the resurrection, have doubtless had in their minds a question that is frequently asked; and as the answer to it belongs with the matter already published, we give it here and now, without waiting for it to be formally put.

We are often asked, “How do you account for the statements of dying Christians, that they see Jesus coming, or standing with outstretched arms, to receive them? Is it all an illusion of the senses, or do they really see something which others cannot see? And if they do see the Lord, and expect to go at once to be with Him, would it not be a cruel disappointment to them to be obliged to lie in the grave for many years before entering heaven?”

**T**HIS question cannot be answered by a simple “yes” or “no.” While there can be no doubt but that people’s training and education often influence their imagination, and some may be deceived even in the hour of death as well as in their previous life, it is equally certain that there have been authentic cases of people actually seeing the Lord just as they were about to die.

We need cite no more than the case of Stephen, who, but a few moments before he was put to death, and when he knew that his death was the next thing, said,

### **Acts 7**

<sup>56</sup> I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

When Christ ascended on high, He sat down at the right hand of God, and is so represented in many places in the Scriptures; and when He has finished His work in the heavens, and has prepared a place for His people, He will stand up and come for them. It was in this position that Stephen saw Him. He was standing

not merely as if waiting to receive His faithful servant, but actually welcoming him to His arms; and yet Stephen did not ascend into the heavens, but is still in the dust of the earth.

Is Stephen then disappointed? or will he be disappointed at the coming of the Lord at the last day? By no means. He certainly has not been suffering disappointment through all the centuries, for he has been unconscious.

### **Acts 7**

<sup>60</sup> He fell asleep,

—and they who sleep the sleep of death,

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...know not any thing.

Nor will he or any other saint who has died with the addition of Christ before his eyes ever know a moment's disappointment.

### **1 Thessalonians 4 [RV]**

<sup>15</sup> For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> Then we which are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

<sup>18</sup> Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

This is the truth with which mortals are to be comforted.

### **1 Corinthians 16**

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you of a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.



When Christ comes, it will be with all the glory of heaven. His glory will cover the heavens, and the light will be dazzling, above that of the sun.

### **Matthew 24**

<sup>27</sup> For as lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Now when there is a lightning flash everybody involuntarily closes his eyes for an instant. That is, it makes us blink. Even so will it be when Christ's glory bursts upon the world. The sudden blaze of light will cause every eye to blink involuntarily, and in that instant every righteous person will be changed from mortal to immortal.

Even so will it be with the dead in Christ. Time to the unconscious is as though it were not. There is no lapse of time to the dead. They close their eyes in death, and the next instant (to them) they open them in immortality. They are changed in the twinkling—the winking of their eye.

Stephen saw Christ standing to receive him to himself; he fell asleep, but he will awake when the last trump sounds, and he will still see Christ standing to receive him, and will hear the words, which to him will be the same as those spoken when he stood in the midst of the murderous mob:

### **Matthew 25**

<sup>34</sup> Come you blessed of my Father.

Although he has been asleep for nearly nineteen hundred years, it will all be included in that twinkling of an eye. He saw the Lord: he closed his eyes, he opens them as it were the next instant, and still sees the Lord; but meanwhile he has undergone a great change—the change from mortality to immortality.

Both dead and living undergo the same change. An age is compressed into the twinkling of an eye. The change from corruption to incorruption will be as great in the case of the living as in the case of those who have moldered in the grave for hundreds of

years, and the time will be to them just as long as to those that have been dead, and no longer.

There is no lack and disappointment to them that fear and trust the Lord.

## 43. The Punishment of the Wicked

Present Truth, May 2, 1901

I cannot believe in hell, at least not the hell I very often hear preached. I can fully understand hell as a place of remedial punishment, but so an everlasting punishment, or even a punishment that ends in annihilation, I cannot accept. If Christ has died for the world, the ransom has been paid, and all are out of condemnation.

“Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today and for ever.” *Hebrews* 13:8. Christ is the Saviour, and according to the foregoing text, is always the Saviour. Therefore if any soul in the future looks to Him, Christ must (I say it reverently) of necessity save him. Then Timothy [“not Timothy, but Paul writing to Timothy,” *Editor of Present Truth*] tells us of God “who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.” *1 Timothy* 4:10. This statement makes believing not necessary to salvation. It makes it necessary to a knowledge of it, I admit, but that is not the point.

To my mind all Scripture, and reason seem to point to a restoration of all things, that Christ may be all and in all. The only point I cannot explain is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Perhaps you can help me.

I CAN at least present some of the abundant testimony which the Scriptures give on this subject. It is most clear and explicit. In the first place, let me assure you that you are not specially required to believe in hell; you are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for an intelligent faith in Him explains everything that we need to know.

In the second place, we are to remember that the Scriptures are for the purpose of enlightening our understanding, of giving us understanding. When we cannot understand a thing, we are to find out what the Bible says, and believe it, and then we shall have understanding. It is the easiest thing in the world to understand, when we know and believe what the Bible says; and we

have no right or reason to understand anything else. In fact, there is no understanding aside from the Word of God; everything else is but imagination and speculation.

Now there is a grave error that you have fallen into, and it is not strange that you have, because it is almost universal, and that is in confounding punishment with chastisement. They are two very distinct things. Chastisement is remedial, but punishment is not. God chastens us now, but punishment is not being administered now, and never will be to those who profit by chastisement. Even the angels that kept not their first estate,

### **Jude**

<sup>6</sup> ...but left their own habitation,

—are not now being punished, but are...

<sup>6</sup> ...reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the Judgment of the great day.

And in like manner those who willfully and deliberately reject the mercy of God, have nothing left for them but...

### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>26</sup> ...a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

## **Chastisement not Punishment**

Read *Hebrews* 12:5-11. There we learn that chastisement is a proof that we are sons of God, and that He loves us. He chastens us for a short time, for our profit,

### **Hebrews 12**

<sup>10</sup> ...that we might be partakers of His holiness.

<sup>11</sup> Now no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

David said,

### **Psalm 119**

<sup>67</sup> Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept your Word.

<sup>71</sup> It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn your statutes.

But it is possible for people not to be “exercised” by chastisement; they will not profit by correction, and they despise and reject reproof. For them nothing but punishment remains.

### **Proverbs 1**

<sup>29</sup> For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

<sup>30</sup> They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof.

<sup>31</sup> Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

<sup>32</sup> For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

### **Proverbs 29**

<sup>1</sup> He that, being often reproved, hardens his neck; shall be cut off, and that without remedy.

Here we see that there is a marked difference between chastisement and punishment. From the very nature of the case chastisement is only for a season, while punishment is as necessarily everlasting. Read the facts:

### **Matthew 25**

<sup>46</sup> These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

### **2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>9</sup> Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;

<sup>10</sup> When He shall come to be glorified in His saints.

Now for the evidence that this punishment of the wicked must from the very nature of the case be everlasting. We have already seen that those who despise the chastisement of the Lord, shall...

### **Proverbs 1**

<sup>31</sup> ...eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

<sup>32</sup> For the turning away of the simple shall slay them.

From what do these foolish ones turn away? From God. They refuse to be subject to Him. They reject His life. They wish to live independently of Him, and will not acknowledge that He has any claims on them. They do not wish to be in His presence. But He fills all things, and Christ...

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>4</sup> ...who is, our life,

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>10</sup> ...[has] ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.

Now when these people who wish to live by themselves, away from God, are given their own choice, what must necessarily become of them? It is evident that they must go out of the universe, out of existence; for there will be no place that Christ will not fill. So,

### **Psalms 37**

<sup>10</sup> Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Cut off from God, the only source of life,—taken at last at their own word, that they do not wish to have anything to do with Him,—there is nothing left for the finally impenitent but death,—death with no hope of a resurrection, because the only salvation has been rejected.

## **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> The wages of sin is death,

—and it is the wages which the wicked work for and lay up for themselves.

## **Romans 2**

<sup>5</sup> But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasure up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

But this is not eternal torment, and torture to all eternity. To claim that men have in themselves a life which God himself cannot take away, and that the wicked will be kept in a place of torture, which will make them increase in wickedness, and thus increase their torment, is to deny the power of Christ's salvation. It is to deny that He is able to accomplish the purpose for which He ascended above all heavens, namely,

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>10</sup> ...that He might fill all things.

It is to say that there is a place that He will not fill.

## **Making an End of Sin**

On the other hand, to say that God will not punish the ungodly, that He will not extirpate sin from the universe, together with those who refuse to be separated from it, is equally to deny the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, who appeared...

## **Hebrews 9**

<sup>26</sup> ...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

It is to say that He cannot do that which He came to do. The death of Christ means the death of all who will not accept His sacrifice, just as surely as it means everlasting life to those who believe, insomuch as it shows the fate of the guilty. It shows how God regards sin. Sin is so odious in God's sight, that He would not spare even His own Son when sin rested upon Him.

Christ is indeed the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe, but this does not show that the reprobate will not be punished.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>18</sup> The free gift [has actually come] upon all men unto justification of life,

–but there are many who thrust it from them. Yea, all men are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, since...

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;

–but after that is done it still remains necessary for us to be...

### **Romans 5**

<sup>10</sup> ...saved by His life,

–which means the acceptance of His life in the place of ours. He gives all men life; but it is not enough that we take it and use it only to the extent that most people do; we must...

### **John 10**

<sup>10</sup> ...have it more abundantly.

The Judgment will show that God is clear, in that He has given His life to every man; but the fact that so many have rejected the precious gift will be their everlasting condemnation.

Jesus is able...

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> ...to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives;

–but when, as He himself says to some,

### **John 5**

<sup>40</sup> You will not come to me, that you might have life,



—such refuse the salvation that is provided for them. He saves none against their will, but like the most indulgent Father that He is, He allows every one to have just what he desires.

With these facts before you, it will not be necessary to say anything about the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, for you can see that it is perfectly in harmony with the rest of the Scriptures. It simply shows that everybody will find his true place at the last.

Before closing, let us recur for a moment to the first thoughts, namely, the distinction between chastisement and punishment. It is most highly dishonoring to God, to conceive of Him as watching only for faults in men, and to consider that every affliction is a punishment from Him. How often we hear one say,

“What have I done, that I should suffer in this way?”

They should rather say,

“What has the Lord for me to do, seeing He is subjecting me to this discipline?”

Job suffered greatly, yet God was not punishing him, but fitting him for a much greater and better work than he had previously done. God is revealed only in the cross; it is impossible to know God, except as we see Him in the cross; therefore He brings us to the cross, in order that we may become acquainted with Him, and find fullness of joy in His presence.

### **The Restoration of All Things**

There will be a restoration of all things to the original, Eden state, the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; but that will not be until the thorns and briers have been burned up.<sup>145</sup> Thorns never become fruits, neither do tares ever become wheat. When the distinction is clearly made, which will be in the harvest, when both kinds have fully developed, the final separation will be made.

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<sup>145</sup> See *Hebrews* 6:7-8; *Matthew* 13:37-43; *Malachi* 4:1-3.

## **Acts 2**

<sup>21</sup> Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;

—but those who now reject and despise the name of the Lord would continue to blaspheme it if they should have their probation lengthened through thousands of years; for God has no greater power by which to save men than that which is revealed in the Gospel. Therefore,

## **Isaiah 55**

<sup>6</sup> Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near:

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

## 44. The Marks of the Lord Jesus

Present Truth, May 9, 1901

At our morning lesson on the Sabbath, some discussion was caused as to Paul's meaning in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Galatians* and the 17<sup>th</sup> verse. We know it was the custom at that time to brand slaves with their owners' particular marks, and most of the class thought that Paul was so branded or pierced with a particular mark. I think Paul meant that his offerings in the flesh were the marks of the Lord Jesus, such as his receiving stripes, his bad eyesight, and many other sufferings that he endured in the body. I shall be glad if you will answer this question in the *Present Truth*.

**B**EFORE talking about the question itself, I wish to say a few words concerning discussing texts of Scripture, or any expression found in the Bible. Truth is never arrived at by discussion, but by meditation; it is revealed, not reasoned out.

### **Psalm 46**

<sup>10</sup> Be still, and know that I am God,

—says the Lord.

### **James 1**

<sup>19</sup> Swift to hear, slow to speak

—is the motto for Bible students, as well as for all others.

### **1 Peter 4**

<sup>11</sup> If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

Christ said,

### **John 3**

<sup>11</sup> We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.

Like Him, therefore, we too should speak only that which we know, and not that which we imagine, or that which is but passing thought. Jesus has said,

## **John 8**

<sup>31</sup> If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth.

Then there is no reason why we should not refrain from expressing any mere opinion about any portion of Scripture. Indeed, in view of what He has promised, it is a matter of presumption to do otherwise.

It is true enough that slaves, as well as cattle, have been branded with a particular mark, to show who laid claim to them; but the idea that the Lord Jesus uses a branding iron on the bodies of His followers is purely fanciful. We read that, in Christ, those who believe are...

## **Ephesians 1**

<sup>13</sup> ...sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

But we well know that the Spirit of God does not brand any figure on the bodies of believers. In *Revelation* 14:1 also we read of redeemed ones standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion,

## **Galatians 6**

<sup>17</sup> Having His Father's name written in their foreheads.

These texts may serve to help us in understanding *Galatians* 6:17. While there is no specific mark on the bodies of believers such as is placed on cattle, by which one can at a glance distinguish them from unbelievers, "the marks of the Lord Jesus" are undoubtedly distinguishing marks. They indicate to whom the one who has them belongs.

If we study the subject a little farther we shall see that these marks are the characteristic signs of the Lord's life, transforming the mind and soul of the believer, and manifesting itself even in the body.

The connection<sup>146</sup> shows that the “marks” of which the Apostle Paul speaks are the marks of the cross of Christ. He says,

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me,

—and this agrees with what he says in:

### **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>10</sup> Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

The Apostle Paul had the marks of the Lord Jesus, the marks of His cross, yet he had never hung on the cross. We also are to have the same marks, being crucified with Christ, yet it is not probable that any person in this age will be stretched on a cross of wood. The cross stands for the death of Christ, as indicated in *2 Corinthians* 4:10 already quoted, and we are to be...

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>10</sup> ...made conformable unto His death,

—every day of our lives. Only so can the life of Jesus be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Paul had suffered doubtless more than any other follower of Christ has ever suffered; and he certainly bore the scars of some of his beatings and stoning; but such scars do not necessarily mark one as belonging to the Lord Jesus, and therefore his words refer to more than those outward marks.

He was weak in body, but...

### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>10</sup> ...strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

God said to him,

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<sup>146</sup> *Galatians* 6:12, 14.

## **2 Corinthians 12**

<sup>9</sup> My strength is made perfect in weakness,

—and this led him to exclaim,

<sup>9</sup> ...Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities,  
that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

The life of Christ manifest in our mortal, sinful flesh is that which marks us as His. This is indicated by:

## **Galatians 6**

<sup>15</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Whether a man has the marks of a knife or an iron or a stone in his flesh, or not, is a matter of no importance; all depends on being a new creature.

Our bodies belong to the Lord Jesus. They are prepared for Him to dwell in,<sup>147</sup> and each one is to be offered as...

## **Romans 12**

<sup>1</sup> ...a living sacrifice.

This offering of ourselves,—soul, spirit, and body,—to the Lord Jesus means our crucifixion with Him; for it means the giving up of our own life of sin in exchange for His life of righteousness. In being crucified with Him we become new creatures, for, being buried with Him, we rise to walk in newness of life.<sup>148</sup>

This transformation, this passing from death to life, is by the renewing of the mind.<sup>149</sup> This is not the work of one single moment or hour, but the inward man is to be...

## **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>16</sup> ...renewed day by day.

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<sup>147</sup> *Hebrews* 10:5.

<sup>148</sup> *Romans* 6:3-4.

<sup>149</sup> *Romans* 12:2.

The mind that was in Christ is to be in us, and this is the mind of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the personal presence of Christ,—His life,—is to take possession of us, mortifying the deeds of the body, and using all its members as instruments of righteousness. Thus the body is to be brought completely under the control of the mind.

This involves, it should be remembered, a transformation of the body; for *Romans* 12:1-2, which exhorts us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, tells us that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This is our...

### **Romans 12**

<sup>1</sup> ...reasonable service.

Reason, and not passion and impulse, is to control the body. The renewed mind must be master, and the body must not be used in any way, or subjected to any treatment, for which a good reason—a Scripture reason—cannot be given.

When this is the case, the sentence, “I like it” will never be heard in defense of any practice, for that is no reason at all; but the individual will become enlightened, as to what is right, and will then allow the same Spirit which gives him this enlightenment to teach him to like everything that is good. Whoever recognizes that God has of right the control of his body will say from the heart,

### **Psalms 40**

<sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O God.

His mouth will be satisfied with “good things”<sup>150</sup> and he will not long for anything that is in any degree harmful.

Now when this transformation takes place, the results will be apparent. The life of Jesus will be manifested in the mortal body, in the renewal of youth.<sup>151</sup> Thus we see that...

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<sup>150</sup> *Psalms* 103:5.

<sup>151</sup> See *Psalms* 103:5; *Isaiah* 40:31.

## **Galatians 6**

<sup>17</sup> ...the marks of the Lord Jesus...

—are the evidences of the life of Christ. He cannot be hid, and if He be formed within, the hope of glory, even the world will be able to see to whom the one thus possessed belongs. This is the fullness of the kingdom of God,—for:

## **Luke 17**

<sup>21</sup> ...the kingdom of God is within you,

—and its manifestation will be the most striking sign of the soon coming of Christ.

One blessed lesson should be noted before we drop this question. The apostle says,

## **Galatians 6**

<sup>17</sup> From henceforth let no man [no individual, whether man or devil] trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

The marks of the Lord Jesus are His characteristics, as we have seen, and the life of Jesus is His name.<sup>152</sup> As men place their names on their property, in order that others may be warned not to interfere with it, so God does with His possession. This is our confidence. The Lord's slave is a free man, and whoever can say of the Lord,

## **Acts 27**

<sup>23</sup> ...whose I am, and whom I serve,

—can also say to all who have any designs against his liberty,

“Hands off, for I belong to the Lord Jesus!”

By the life of the Lamb we successfully resist the devil, and cause him to flee from us.<sup>153</sup> It is a glorious thing to be the prop-

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<sup>152</sup> See *Acts* 4:10, RV.

<sup>153</sup> *James* 4:7.



erty of the Lord; let us allow Him to stamp His image and super-  
scription more distinctly upon us.

## 45. Asleep in Jesus

Present Truth, May 16, 1901

In your issue of the 25<sup>th</sup><sup>154</sup> you have an article on “Death and the Resurrection,” for which I thank you much. One cannot deny these truths you state from the Word, and as a brother seeking for light, and a clear conception of this wonderful event, may I ask you to help me? I feel sure what I ask will be of much benefit to my fellow-readers who are seeking after the truth.

We know that the body lies in the grave until the resurrection, but where does the spirit dwell? *Matthew* 17:23: “And behold there appeared Moses and Elijah talking with Him,” and yet Moses and Elijah had been dead for a long period. When a child dies before it has reached the age to discern right from wrong, is it unconscious? Does it not grow and develop in the heavenly land? Does not John in the *Revelation* tell us of the great host before the throne of God, serving Him day and night in His temple? He says that these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

I know that these bodies will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, but I am at a loss to know about the departed spirits: does not the soul live on in perpetual consciousness and development, until through the resurrection power, soul and body are again united?

THE article on “Death and the Resurrection,”<sup>155</sup> to which you refer, was one of a series contained in Nos. 10-18 in which you will find the answers to most of your questions. We will, however, consider briefly the points that you mentioned.

Reference to *2 Kings* 2 will remind you that Elijah, so far from having “been dead for a long period,” was, like Enoch, translated without seeing death, and therefore his appearance with Christ

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<sup>154</sup> Actually the 14<sup>th</sup> of March.

<sup>155</sup> This is article 35 in this collection, “From Death to the Resurrection.”

upon the amount of transfiguration proves nothing concerning the state of the dead.

Moses died upon Mount Nebo, and the Lord buried him, but the place of his sepulchre was unknown. Nevertheless, we have in *Jude* 9 the proof of the resurrection of his body, which accounts for his appearance also on the mountain. We have the evidence of the Scriptures that the body of neither of these men was in the grave. Elijah did not pass through the tomb, and Moses was raised from the dead by Christ, in spite of the opposition of Satan who had the power of death, and who sought to retain his hold upon his body.

On the other hand, contrast with the statement concerning Moses that...

#### **Deuteronomy 34**

<sup>6</sup> ...no man knows of his sepulchre unto this day,

–the words of Peter concerning David,

#### **Acts 2**

<sup>29</sup> ...that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

This he said as proof of the fact that:

<sup>34</sup> David is not ascended into the heavens,

–thus showing that man has no conscious existence apart from his body. The sepulchre containing David's ashes, was considered by Peter, speaking when he was filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, sufficient evidence that David had no conscious existence elsewhere.

### **The Gate of Death and the Gate of Life**

The children to whom you refer are well represented by the babes that Herod slew in order to rid himself of the infant Christ.

## **Matthew 2 [RV]**

<sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

<sup>18</sup> A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
And she would not be comforted, because they are not.

If you turn to the prophecy in *Jeremiah* from which this is quoted, you will find the message of comfort that God sent to these mourning mothers:

## **Jeremiah 31**

<sup>16</sup> Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears: for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

This land of the enemy Satan, the adversary, is the grave, to which death is the gate of entrance. And the comfort that the Lord gives to mothers is, not that their little ones have already entered upon a higher and more glorious existence, but that they shall be brought back from the grave.

Christ, in His conflict with the enemy to recover His own, has “pressed the battle to the gate.”<sup>156</sup> He has passed through the gate of death, and secured the key to the enemy’s citadel. He has forced a way out of the enemy’s prison-house by...

## **Hebrews 7**

<sup>16</sup> ...the power of His endless life.

Through the gate of death man enters the enemy’s land; through the gate of life he is brought back again by Him who has...

## **Colossians 2**

<sup>15</sup> ...spoiled principalities and powers.

Having opened...

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<sup>156</sup> *Isaiah* 28:6.

## **Psalm 118**

<sup>20</sup> This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter,

## **Philippians 3**

<sup>10</sup> ...[by] the power of His resurrection,

—Christ will, when the last enemy death is destroyed, conduct through it, by the resurrection, all those whom He has rescued from the hand of Satan. Then, and not till then, will the children come, with all the redeemed, from “the land of the enemy.”

Moreover, if, as you suggest, the children were growing and developing in heaven, would not the resurrection of their infant bodies be somewhat incongruous?

John certainly does, in the book of *Revelation*, speak of the host of the redeemed whom he saw standing before the throne of God. But you must bear in mind in reading this book that things that John saw in vision on the Isle of Patmos, and which he was told to write, were most of them...

**Revelation 4 [RV] [also 1:19]**

<sup>1</sup> ...the things that must come to pass hereafter.

## **The Spirit in Man**

In order that you may the better comprehend the answer to your question about the dwelling-place of the departed spirits, we must consider for a moment the nature of the Spirit that animates man.

**Job 32 [RV]**

<sup>8</sup> There is a Spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.

The Spirit in man is the breath of God, as is evident from the account of man's creation:

**Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Man was formed from the dust of the ground, to be a dwelling-place for the Spirit of God.

### **1 Corinthians 6**

<sup>19</sup> What! know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?

In our mortal bodies dwells the eternal Spirit of Him,

### **1 Timothy 6**

<sup>16</sup> ...who only has immortality.

It is this that gives organization, individuality and understanding to the dust of which our bodies are composed. Man has not an immortal spirit of his own inhabiting his body; but he himself is the dwelling-place of the immortal Spirit of God. Therefore,

### **Job 34**

<sup>14</sup> ...if He gather unto himself His Spirit and His breath;

<sup>15</sup> All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

The experience of death and the resurrection is summed up in two verses:

### **Psalm 104 [RV, margin]**

<sup>29</sup> You gather in their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

<sup>30</sup> You send forth your Spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.

## **Our Everlasting Dwelling-Place**

In the sublime 90<sup>th</sup> *Psalm*, Moses the man of God, speaking of the subject that we are considering, comforts himself with the following assurance:

### **Psalm 90**

<sup>1</sup> Lord, You have been our dwelling-place in all generations.

<sup>3</sup> You turn man to dust, and say, Return [come again] you children of men.

<sup>4</sup> For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night.

“In all generations,” from the beginning, God has been our dwelling-place, for:

### **Acts 19**

<sup>18</sup> Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.

We existed in the Divine mind, and have our being in the thought of God, ages before we were brought into visible and conscious existence. All visible things in the universe are but the uttered thoughts of God, and...

### **Revelation 4 [RV]**

<sup>11</sup> ...because of His will they were created.

They were in Him, before they were created. Thus, “known unto God” only, we slept unconscious in the bosom of the Father, until, the fullness of time being come, He sent us forth and we awoke in this world, clothed with...

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>38</sup> ...a body, as it has pleased Him.

Of David we are told that he,

### **Acts 13**

<sup>36</sup> ...having served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption.

And thus it is with every child of God: having accomplished the will of God in this world, God gathers to himself His Spirit, the body given to him turns to dust, and again he sleeps in Jesus, as in the beginning. But for the Cross of Christ it would not have been so, for it is this that has hallowed death into sleep, and changed the grave into a bed.

Those who are merely sleeping have not ceased to be. This...

### **Luke 20**

<sup>38</sup> ...Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

<sup>39</sup> For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him.

These words were spoken by Jesus to prove to the Sadducees...

**Luke 20**

<sup>37</sup> ...that the dead are raised.

So long as God keeps us in mind, we dwell in Him and are safe, even though we have no separate, conscious existence. That which will finally blot out the wicked from the universe, will be the fact that God puts them from His mind, and they cease to be in His thought.

He who sent us forth into the flesh by His Spirit, giving us visible form and conscious life, will, when the time comes for those who sleep in Him to awaken, bring forth from the dust of the earth glorified, immortal bodies for His everlasting habitation. For,

**Psalm 90** [NASB & Coverdale]

<sup>3</sup> [He] turns man to dust, and says, Come again, you children of men.

And the space of time that intervenes between the turning into dust, and the return in response to His call, even though it be a thousand years, is in His sight...

<sup>4</sup> ...but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

What matter, then, though for a while we pass out of sight and consciousness, sleeping in Jesus, hidden in the bosom of God, “our dwelling-place in all generations”?



## 46. Meats Created To Be Received With Thanksgiving

Present Truth, May 30, 1901

Does not *1 Timothy* 4:1-5 show that the eating of flesh foods is not only permitted, but that it is the work of evil spirits, and a doctrine of devils, to command anyone “to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving,” since “every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused”?

**T**HIS question has often been asked, and will no doubt frequently be repeated; but it is very easy of explanation, and we shall take pleasure in answering it as often as it comes our way.

In the first place, let it be understood that no person on earth has the right or authority to command any other person or persons to abstain from meats which God has created to be received, or from those which He has not created to be received. No man on earth is of right master of any other man. Every man is answerable directly and solely to God, and God alone has the right to command man to do or to refrain from doing.

Therefore to the question if it is not the work of evil spirits, and a doctrine of devils, to command anyone to abstain from meats to be received with thanksgiving, the answer must be, yes. Nobody has the right to command anything contrary to God's will, nor even contrary to what He has permitted even though it be harmful.

### **Isaiah 33**

<sup>22</sup> The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King.

But although we have no authority to command, we have authority to teach, and to point out the commands of the Lord. Let

us therefore study the word together, to see what the will of the Lord is in this matter; and when we have discovered...

## **Romans 12**

<sup>2</sup> ...that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God,

—let no one say it is the teaching of devils to counsel men to follow it.

Let us repeat, what everybody can learn for himself by consulting a good dictionary that gives the etymology of words, that the word “meat” is generic, and not specific. That is, it means *food* in general, and has primarily no reference to a particular class of food. In common talk it is now usually understood to mean flesh meat, and the old use of “meat” to indicate food is almost obsolete; but in the Scriptures, which are translated into the English of three hundred years ago, it means food of any kind whatever, and when the flesh of animals is specially referred to, it is called “flesh.”

It is evident, therefore, that the word “meats” in *1 Timothy 4:3* does not define anything. In order to know what particular food is meant, we must take into consideration the relative sentence that qualifies it. What meats are they from which some command that we should abstain? Those “meats” which God has created to be received with thanksgiving.

This sends us back to creation, and to the record of that event we turn. The last thing created was man: and the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food;<sup>157</sup>

## **Genesis 1**

<sup>29</sup> And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, to you it shall be for meat.

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<sup>157</sup> *Genesis 2:8-9.*

<sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat; and it was so.

Here we have the original natural use of the word “meat,” and we see that it refers solely to the products of the ground: fruits, grains, and vegetables. The fruits and the grains—seeds—are the meats which God created to be received with thanksgiving. He did not create animals to be eaten either by man or by any other animals; but the green herbs themselves—coarse vegetables and grass—were created to be meat for the beasts and the birds and the creeping things.

Flesh is not in the list of “meats” created either for man or for beasts. Thus we see that, according to God’s plan for creation, the flesh of animals is not meat—food—at all. It has become meat—food—only in the process of degeneration and departure from God’s original plan.

I am not endeavoring to explain to you who are referred to in *1 Timothy* 4:1-6, as teaching doctrines of devils, and forbidding to marry, nor how it is that they command to abstain from meats which God created to be received with thanksgiving; I do not think that I could do it if I should try, and that is not what you have asked me to do.

All I am concerned with is to show that those who teach that the produce of the earth—the fruits and the grains—are the best food for man, do not come into the list. They do not “command” anybody to abstain from flesh meats, although the flesh of animals was not “created to be received with thanksgiving.” In the creation, flesh was not given even to the beasts, and much less to man. So even though some over-zealous person should command to abstain from flesh, he would not thereby put himself into the list of those against whom the Spirit expressly warns us.

“But God permitted man to kill and eat animals!”

He certainly did, and therefore no one would have any right to command anybody not to do so, even though he were authorized to give commands. But please bear in mind that we are not obliged to do everything that God permits. He permitted Balaam to go at the request of Balak to curse Israel, and even plainly told him to go; yet we have only to recall the beginning of the narrative to learn that Balaam ought not to have gone on the errand. He was determined to do it, however, and God gave His consent.

God did not design that Israel should ever have any other king than himself; but when they insisted on having a king, like the heathen round them, He permitted them to have one, and He himself selected their king for them. The subsequent history of Israel shows, however, that it would have been far better if they had adhered to God's plan for them.

Moses, acting under the instruction of the Lord gave laws regulating polygamy and divorce,

### **Matthew 19**

<sup>8</sup> ...but from the beginning it was not so.

Thus Christ, "who is the Beginning,"<sup>158</sup> refers us back to the beginning for instruction as to what we ought to do.

Do not understand me to say that the eating of flesh is to be classed with polygamy, as a sin; I have referred to this merely to show that the fact that a thing is permitted does not prove that it is the best thing. Remember that the text speaks of meats which God "created to be received," and not to those which He afterwards permitted to be used.

### **1 Timothy 6**

<sup>17</sup> [God] gives us richly all things to enjoy,

—allowing us to have whatsoever our souls lust after; yet it is exhibiting much more gratitude, and a higher appreciation of His gifts, when we are satisfied with that which His Love provided for

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<sup>158</sup> *Colossians* 1:18.

us in the beginning. The nearer we come to the beginning, the nearer shall we be to God.

## 47. Complete Service

Present Truth, June 6, 1901

Please explain *Luke 9:59-62*.

### Luke 9

<sup>59</sup> And He said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

<sup>60</sup> Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go and preach the kingdom of God.

<sup>61</sup> And another also said, Lord, I will follow You; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home in my house.

<sup>62</sup> And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

**I** DARE say you think that this is almost heartless language, and that Jesus showed very little sympathy for human ties and human affection. How ready people are to misjudge the Lord! Always doubting, always questioning. In spite of His great goodness, of which the earth is full; in spite of His mercies reaching to the clouds,<sup>159</sup> new every morning,<sup>160</sup> and enduring for ever,<sup>161</sup> men meet every word of His they do not understand with a challenge. Now, as of old, He is misunderstood; and men are ready to believe any evil suggestion against Him.

I know that it is not so with you who are asking this question, but I am speaking of men in general. Let the Lord say anything that seems obscure, and many even of His disciples are ready to put the worst construction on it.

Here is where faith has an opportunity to manifest its power as a revealer of secrets. True faith in Christ will not only keep us loyal to Him, preventing as from cherishing the faintest shadow of a thought of distrust, but it will also open the way to an explanation of all difficulties.

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<sup>159</sup> *Psalm 36:5*.

<sup>160</sup> *Lamentations 3:22-23*.

<sup>161</sup> *Psalm 106:1*.

## Hebrews 11

<sup>3</sup> Through faith we understand.

Thus: we know that God is good, and that Christ is the embodiment of His goodness. The life of Jesus is an exhibition of Divine compassion. He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities,<sup>162</sup> and whenever on this earth He saw want or suffering, He was moved with compassion.<sup>163</sup> Therefore we know that He could not say or do anything that would tend in the slightest degree to wound the feelings of anybody. His mission was and is...

## Isaiah 61

<sup>1</sup> ...to bind up the brokenhearted.

We are accustomed to speak of human ties and human affections; but there is no real tie, no tender affection, that is not Divine.

## 1 John 4

<sup>7</sup> Love is of God.

It is He who instituted the family relation; and that which He has joined together He will not separate or treat lightly.<sup>164</sup> There is not in any person a single feeling of sorrow or sympathy for the suffering that is not a manifestation of the Divine compassion; no “natural affection” that is not the impulse from the heart of Him who is love.

Do not for a moment entertain the thought that He who at the grave of Lazarus wept in sympathy with the sorrow that He was in a moment to turn to joy, would say a word to wound the sensibilities of any mourner. You say,

“Nevertheless He did in this case; for the words, ‘Let the dead bury their dead,’ would not fail to wound the heart of any mourner.”

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<sup>162</sup> *Hebrews* 4:15.

<sup>163</sup> *Matthew* 9:36; 14:14.

<sup>164</sup> *Matthew* 19:6.

I say, no; He certainly did not; for the young man to whom He spoke was not a mourner. If the father had been lying dead at home, the son would not have been away. In Eastern countries, and especially in warm climates, burial takes place almost immediately after death. A dead body is not kept in the house for days, as with us. If the man's father had been dead, he would have been at home burying him.

The known custom of the people, together with the fact that Jesus could not say an unkind or rude thing, makes it plain that the man's request was to go home and remain until his father should die, and he could settle the affairs of the family. He knew the Gospel, else Jesus would not have called him and told him to go and preach it, and it was therefore not for him to entangle himself with the affairs of the world; the spiritually dead could attend to all that.

It is plain that if everybody who knows the Lord, and who is therefore called to preach the kingdom of God, should wait until he has settled up all worldly business, the Gospel would not be proclaimed. If the man waited until his father was dead, he would receive the property, and nothing is more natural than for a person to think that he could be much more free to preach the Gospel, if he had a good income assured to him, and ample provision were made to meet all his wants; but such is not usually the case. The preachers who have stirred the world with a message from God have invariably been poor in this world's goods. There was nothing to hide the fact of their absolute dependence on God; they had no uncertain riches in which to trust; and being obliged continually to recognize the direct hand of God in their support, they could with force teach others to have faith in God.

The lesson to be learned from the text as a whole is that God must have complete and undivided service. It is not an arbitrary demand on His part, but an absolute necessity.

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>24</sup> You cannot serve God and Mammon.



It is impossible for a man to plow if he is looking backward; the plow will not stay in the ground. Whoever would plow must look straight ahead at his work, paying no attention to what is behind him. So the man who puts his hand to the Gospel work, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God, because he is not doing the work of the kingdom.

Those disciples who followed Jesus to the last, and who laid down their lives for His sake, left all their possessions as soon as He called them. Peter and Andrew were casting a net into the sea when Jesus said,

**Matthew 4**

<sup>19</sup> Follow me,...

<sup>20</sup> And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him.

They did not say,

“Wait until we have finished this catch.”

They left their business to take care of itself, for they had a call which they could not resist. James and John, in the boat with their father, mending their nets, did not stay to complete the task, but...

**Matthew 4**

<sup>22</sup> They immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him.

It is such prompt, unquestioning service that Jesus loves. It is not that He would have any necessary thing neglected, or that He would have anybody insufficiently provided for; but He would have everybody prove and enjoy His blessed power to supply all need.

I have in my mind at this moment a young man who, called when far away from home to go to a far more distant land to proclaim the kingdom of God, did not return home to take leave of his friends, but went at once. Others have not stayed to dispose of property, but have left their affairs for somebody else to attend to,

while they gave themselves to the work to which God had called them. Such cases are not uncommon, and in no instance is the trust of such ones disappointed.

Do you say that it is “not business-like” to leave affairs unsettled? Well, the Lord knows fully as much about business as anybody, and we may be assured that no legitimate business would suffer if He had the complete management of it. All we need is to be sure of His call. If He has certainly called us to His work, then we may depend upon it that He himself will pick up any valuable thing which we have in our hands, and which we must drop in order to obey Him.

If He hasn’t yet given us a definite call to engage in the public proclamation of the Gospel, then we must not run; for God will have...

#### **1 Corinthians 14**

<sup>40</sup> ...all things...done decently and in order;

–but we must allow Him to be the judge of what is right and fitting.

#### **Proverbs 3**

<sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

For,

#### **2 Corinthians 9**

<sup>8</sup> God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

God looks at what a man is, and not at what he seems to be. What he seems to be is what men estimate him to be, and depends largely on the eyes of those who look at him; what he is, is the measure of the power and wisdom of God that is in him.

It is not position that gives authority, but authority that gives the real position. Many a humble, poor man, on earth, with never

an official title to his name, has occupied a position really higher and of greater authority than that of all the kings of the earth. Authority is the unfettered presence of God in the soul.

## 48. Freedom of Worship

Present Truth, June 13, 1901

In your issue of March 28, this statement is made: "There is no land on earth where people of all sorts of religion have more absolute freedom in the practice of their religion than in England."<sup>165</sup>

That was tenable, but I cannot endorse its present correctness, for although I believe no country in the world was more bigoted than Chile against all creeds, other than the Roman Catholic religion, yet for many years now, all creeds are free there. If Turks or others of the same persuasion come there, they can keep Friday as their sanctified day; so can Jews keep the seventh day, the true Sabbath according to the commandment of God; so also can professing Christians keep either the first or the seventh day as their Sabbath; but one day out of every seven must be kept, then they are free, without molestation!

THE *Present Truth* does not hold a brief for any country on earth; for the best government in the hands of man is imperfect, and no law made and executed by man can fail to work injustice to somebody. God alone is just, and He alone can govern so that every soul shall receive equal and exact justice, and every soul shall have absolute liberty.

Therefore it is to us a matter of very little concern whether England or Chile has the freer government. As a matter of fact, however, you have not made it appear that there is less freedom in England than formerly; for the Sunday laws to which you refer, are not something new, but have been on the statute books for centuries; and whereas they were once strictly enforced, now they are practically a dead letter. It is an extremely rare thing to hear of a prosecution in England for any Sunday labor, and when

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<sup>165</sup> The article is titled, "The Coronation Oath," and is included in the book, *The Great Falling Away*.

there is one, the “offender” is usually let off with the smallest possible fine, or a word of judicial advice.

The fact that the laws exist, although not enforced, does indeed constitute a menace for the future, since if some calamity should come, as there certainly will, and narrow-minded zealots should imagine that the laxness of Sunday observance is the cause of the evil, the machinery is all ready at hand, with which to carry on persuasion.

Still that would not make much difference, since everything depends upon the disposition of the people: if they are imbued with the spirit of liberty, they will not curtail any person’s freedom, even though all the means be within their grasp; and if they are filled with bigotry and demoniac frenzy, they can easily enact laws to suit their desires, or can even make it appear that their persecuting course is according to laws which forbid it. It is never difficult for people to find or make a “reason” for anything they are determined to do.

But all this is of secondary importance. The point in your letter which chiefly shows a misapprehension of the merits of the case is in those words:

One day out of every seven must be kept, then they are free.

Now this reveals the fact that Chile, no matter how greatly it has progressed, has not yet attained to a knowledge of what constitutes personal liberty. As long as a person is not left free not only to keep any day he wishes, but also to keep none at all, without molestation, there is no real freedom of worship in a country.

It is recognized as unjust to compel a man to observe the first day of the week, when he believes only in the seventh day; but it is equally unjust to compel a person to observe any day whatever, when he does not believe in the sacredness of any day.

The man who does not believe in God has the same right in this world that the man has who believes the whole truth, and should be left just as free to follow his lack of convictions as the other is to follow his convictions, and to abide by the consequences, God does not compel anybody to serve Him, or to profess to do so; and for men to stop in and do so is to exalt themselves above God.

Therefore those who seek to compel others to worship God are opposers of Him equally with those who deny His existence.

It should always be remembered that the sinner injures himself more than anybody else. If a man refuses to worship God, he himself is the loser; his refusal does not hinder anybody else from worshiping. And it does no good to the man, to try to compel him to worship; for the essence and sum of true religion is love, and love cannot be forced.

When God bears so long with transgressors, we can certainly afford to deal kindly with them. Surely God has no need of our championship, and as for that which concerns us,

#### **Matthew 7**

<sup>12</sup> Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

## 49. God's Creatures

Present Truth, June 13, 1901

Your answer to the question on *1 Timothy* 4:1-3, might seem correct if the text stopped there; but do not verses 4 and 5 put a different light on the subject? Can we call fruits, grains, and nuts “creatures”? If not, would it not seem that the writer of the epistle had in mind creatures (animals) slain for food? I should be very glad to have more light on this through your valuable paper.

FOR the benefit of any new readers, I will give a brief summary of the talk entitled, “Meats Created to be Received with Thanksgiving.”<sup>166</sup>

1. The word “meats” is not in itself specific, but signifies food, no matter of what kind. It is only in modern times that the word “meat” has been considered as synonymous with flesh. In the Bible it is almost, if not quite, invariably used to designate food in general; when animal food is referred to, it is called “flesh,” or “flesh meat,” to distinguish it from ordinary meat. In the ancient sacrifices, the “meat-offering” consisted of fine flour.<sup>167</sup>

2. The text refers us to creation, in that it speaks of “meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving.” So we turn to the account of creation, to find out what sort of meat it was that God created for the use of man, and we read:

### Genesis 1

<sup>26</sup> And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

This shows that fruits and seeds are the meats which God created to be received with thanksgiving. Even the beasts and the

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<sup>166</sup> See article 46, “Meats Created To Be Received With Thanksgiving.”

<sup>167</sup> *Leviticus* 2:1.

birds did not in the beginning have the flesh of other animals given them to eat; for we read further:

### **Genesis 1**

<sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat.

These two points are sufficient to clear away the misunderstanding concerning the meat. Now what about the word “creature”; does it necessarily mean a living thing—an animal? Not by any means. Take any English dictionary, and you will find the first definition to be, “anything created,” “a thing,” or some similar term. The Greek word rendered “creature” in the text is applied to anything created, or to the act of creation. It means anything established, and so it, or a kindred word, is rendered “ordinance” in *1 Peter* 2:13, and “building” in *Hebrews* 9:11.

### **1 Timothy 4**

<sup>4</sup> Every creature [created thing] of God is good, and nothing to be refused, it is to be received with thanksgiving;

<sup>5</sup> For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Of course this must be read in connection with what precedes, and understood as referring to every created thing that God designed for food. Everything that the Word of God has sanctified, i.e., set apart, for food, is to be received with thanksgiving. Asceticism does not enter into God’s plan for man.

If anyone should say that “every creature,” every created thing, as used in this text, must necessarily include animals, and that therefore they are to be received and eaten with thanksgiving, it is sufficient to remind him that the term “every creature” standing alone includes stones as well as animals; but no one would contend that God made stones to be eaten. Because stones were not made to be eaten, we know that they are excluded in the consideration of creatures—created things—set apart by the Word of God to be eaten with thanksgiving; and for the same reason we know that animals also are not included in this consideration.



## 50. The New Birth: A Spiritual Man

Present Truth, June 20, 1901

Please be so kind as to write something about Christ's words to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born anew [from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God." What is it to be born of the Spirit? How can a man be sure that he is no longer carnal, but spiritual?

**I**T CERTAINLY will not be expected that one short article will exhaust this great subject, or that it will at all explain how a man can be born again. The first birth is a mystery beyond the knowledge of the wisest man,<sup>168</sup> and it cannot be repeated that the new birth will be any less wonderful; but we may know the fact, just as truly so we may know when a child is born into the world; or when the invisible wind blows. Without any pretense of giving any systematic study of the new birth, I will here simply note a few features.

### Our Natural Inheritance

We well know that all we have by nature we inherit from our parents. Our dispositions, our various traits of character, even our features and our manner of walking and talking, are transmitted to us by birth. Sometimes a child has characteristics not found in either parent, but found in a remoter ancestor, but the fact remains the same—everything has been transmitted through the parents.

#### John 3

<sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh,

—and...

#### 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>50</sup> ...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption,

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<sup>168</sup> *Ecclesiastes* 11:5.

—for...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>8</sup> ...they that are in the flesh cannot please God,

—because...

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>19</sup> The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

<sup>20</sup> Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

<sup>21</sup> Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

It is not that God will not allow such ones to inherit His kingdom, but they cannot; they could not endure the atmosphere and surroundings. It would not be so difficult for a fish to live in the air, or a bird to live under water, as for a carnal man to live in the kingdom of the Spirit; his nature is not adapted to the conditions.

### **A New Nature**

Yet,

### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>6</sup> It remains that some must enter therein.

To this God has pledged himself by an oath, staking His own existence on the result. It follows, therefore, that all who enter therein must receive a new nature; and for this God has provided means that will produce the result as inevitably as the means provided for the first birth, and a great deal more surely, because there is no possibility of failure, since all depends on God, and human frailty is no factor in the product. Christ...

### **John 1**

<sup>11</sup> ...came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:

<sup>13</sup> Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup> [The] Divine power...

<sup>1</sup> ...of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,

<sup>3</sup> ...has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue:

<sup>4</sup> Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

God is, and of Him are all things.

## **Revelation 4 [RV]**

<sup>11</sup> Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for You did create all things, and because of your will they were, and were created.

## **Colossians 1 [RV]**

<sup>16</sup> In Christ were all things created,...

<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

The everlasting God has been...

## **Psalms 90**

<sup>1</sup> ...our dwelling place in all generations.

## **Job 33**

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

It is literally true that:

## **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

## **Establishing Connection with Eternal Realities**

From the scriptures quoted in the last two paragraphs, it will be seen that in order to be born again, from above, instead of from beneath, it is only necessary to believe and hold fast to things

that are, that is, to come consciously in touch with the eternal. Take the one truth:

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

This states our actual relation to God: we are in Him, in His bosom, just as truly as the unborn child is in the body of its mother. When the child is born, it has an independent existence, so far as its natural parents are concerned. They might die at once, and still it could live and flourish. This is because God lives, and He is the...

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>6</sup> ...one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.

We can never have an existence independent of Him. Down to old age and gray hairs, and even throughout eternity, we must be in Him, if we exist at all. He lives for us, even as He died for us. He lives, in order that we may live.

## **No Independent Existence**

Now this is a truth as regards all mankind; but it is necessary for us to realize it, in order for it to be at practical use to no.

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> We are His offspring,

—whether we believe in His existence or not; but it is only as we cease declaring our independence; and do not try to live by and for our own will, and to manage ourselves, and submit unreservedly to God, that we become in the fullest sense...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>17</sup> ...heirs of God.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>16</sup> Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

But, as shown in the parable of the prodigal son, as soon as we acknowledge ourselves to be His servants, wholly submissive to His will, He acknowledges us as His sons. Then a new relationship begins—new simply in that for the first time we know the reality of...

### **1 John 1**

<sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning.

## **The All-Pervading Spirit**

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>10</sup> [Christ] ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.

The Spirit of God brooded over the face of the abyss in the beginning, and brought order out of chaos; and the same Spirit still fills all space, and is the power of cohesion even in the heart of the earth.<sup>169</sup> When we acknowledge that in God we live, and move, and have our being; that He is our life; and that we do not belong to ourselves, and that as we did not bring ourselves into being, and have no power to continue our existence a single moment, we have no right to make any movement of our own will,—then we begin to know...

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>18</sup> ...the riches of the glory...

—of our inheritance. The same Spirit that knit us together when we were...

### **Psalms 139**

<sup>15</sup> ...curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth,

—will make and keep us new creatures.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

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<sup>169</sup> *Psalms* 139:7-10.

It is in death that the everlasting union between us and Christ is effected. Our lives are forfeited; we cannot render to God that which is His due. But we may anticipate the execution of the death penalty. Instead of waiting until our life is taken from us by force, we may voluntarily deliver it up, even as Christ did His.

This is no mere figure of speech; for to give up our lives, our own will and ways, involves often a greater struggle and greater pain than to consent to go to the gallows or the stake. As soon as we do that, God has unhindered and unlimited control. We have yielded up our lives to the law, and we are reconciled to God; because the sin-offering has been made and accepted.

## **The True Sin-Offering**

What is the true offering for sin?

### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>4</sup> It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.

<sup>5</sup> Wherefore when He came into the world, He said, Sacrifice and offering You would not, but a body have You prepared me:

<sup>6</sup> In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have had no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> Then said I, Lo, I come to do your will, O God.

A man may give his thousand sheep; but the sheep have not sinned, and even if they had, they are not the man himself, and so cannot take away his sin. He may even give his firstborn for his transgression; but even the fruit of his body is not his body; and his sins have been done in the body. Therefore nothing less than himself, his body, can be of any value in putting away his sin.

Will this do it? Certainly, because this body of mine, that body of yours, every body in the world, is Christ's own body. Each individual body was made for the Spirit of Christ to occupy.

### **1 Corinthians 6**

<sup>19</sup> What? know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?

<sup>20</sup> For you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Our bodies were formed for Christ to dwell in and do the will of God; and the proof that He can do it is given in that the Spirit of God took possession of the virgin Mary, doing to her according to His will, and in the body that was prepared Christ did the perfect will of God. What He has done, He can do, for He is...

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

When we offer ourselves to God, we are really offering the body of Christ, which is accepted; and we can say,

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Our knowledge of “the power that works in us”<sup>170</sup>—the everlasting power that works in every created thing,—and our trust in it, makes this a reality. If we believe the...

### **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...exceeding great and precious promises,

—the new birth is accomplished by the Lord himself; for by believing we receive Him who gives us...

### **John 1**

<sup>12</sup> ...power to become the sons of God,

—heirs,—partaking of His nature each moment, just as from our earthly parents we inherit their nature once for all.

## **Transformed by a New Mind**

Now we may better understand the following verses:

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<sup>170</sup> *Ephesians* 3:20.

## Romans 11

<sup>32</sup> For God has concluded [shut up] them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.

<sup>33</sup> O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God I how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

<sup>34</sup> For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counselor?

<sup>35</sup> Or who has first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

<sup>36</sup> For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

## Romans 12

<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

The mind is the measure of the man. It was the mind that was in Christ Jesus, that made Him an acceptable sacrifice.<sup>171</sup> The Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, became, flesh, and dwelt among us,<sup>172</sup> and therefore He has...

## John 17

<sup>2</sup> ...power over all flesh.

When we have in us the mind that was in Christ, which takes place as soon as we give the Word free course in us, it controls our flesh. Then we are no more in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The body of flesh exists, it is true, and is still sinful and corruptible; but the Spirit is sufficiently strong to control it, and do His own will in it and through it, keeping all its passions and evil desires perfectly in check. Thus the natural body is compelled to serve the Lord as completely as the spiritual body will.

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<sup>171</sup> *Philippians* 2:5-9.

<sup>172</sup> *John* 1:1, 14.



## Our Assurance

How then shall we know of a surety that we are born again?

### **Romans 8**

<sup>16</sup> The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

### **1 John 5**

<sup>10</sup> He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself,

—because believing on the Son, as we have seen,<sup>173</sup> is receiving Him into the soul.

The difference between the natural man and the spiritual man, then, is simply this: In the carnal man, the flesh controls the mind, while in the spiritual man the mind controls the flesh. It is impossible for any mind but that of God to control the flesh and its impulses. Our own minds, our will, are but the mind and will of the flesh, and are powerless.

The flesh would, and often does, make us believe that our desires are the will of God; our passions cloud our intellect; but we need not be deceived. If we are sincere in our submission to God, desiring that His will, and His only, shall be done in us, we shall...

### **Romans 12**

<sup>2</sup> ...prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

When the mind of God is our mind, God's Spirit using our brain as the instrument of His own thought,—the mind will surely control the body, and we shall have come...

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>13</sup> ...unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The next step in the transformation will be the changing of...

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<sup>173</sup> *John* 1:12.

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto himself.

This will be at the coming of the Lord. Then there will be no more inconvenience; but we shall have a body which will offer no resistance to the will of God. Now, however, are we sons; and God will demonstrate His mercy and His power, and vindicate His righteousness before all the universe, by demonstrating that He can work that which is good and well pleasing in His sight<sup>174</sup> in a corruptible body as well as in an incorruptible one.

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<sup>174</sup> *Hebrews 13:21.*

# 51. Pentecost and the Sabbath

Present Truth, July 4, 1901

On what day of the week did the Pentecost mentioned in the second chapter of *Acts* fall? It has been stated that, as a matter of fact, the Sabbath was the day on which the Spirit was poured out. Can you give me any proof of this?

I know there is a difficulty as to whether Thursday or Friday was the Passover day, Christ observing one day, and the Jews the other; but I thought the question was definitely settled by the resurrection, typified by the offering of first-fruits, on the sixteenth day of the first month. The fifty days were to be reckoned from this wave-offering, so that since that fall on Sunday, the fiftieth day would also fall on Sunday.

I know that the particular day of the week on which Pentecost fell is a matter of no consequence; but inasmuch as it has been twice stated in the paper this year, with some show of authority, that Pentecost came on the Sabbath, I would like to have a brief statement of any evidence that supports that position.

THIS is a question that frequently recurs, and therefore we may for once take time to go into it somewhat in detail. The first thing to be settled is the time from which the Jews began to count the fifty days, the last of which is called Pentecost, in the Greek. The twenty-third chapter of *Leviticus* contains the list of the yearly festivals, and there we find the principal part of our information. We read verses 5-7:

## **Leviticus 23**

<sup>5</sup> In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's Passover.

<sup>6</sup> And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.

<sup>7</sup> In the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no servile work therein.

The first day of unleavened bread, the fifteenth day of the first month, was therefore a yearly sabbath. These sabbath days, it must be understood, were a class by themselves, distinct from and...

### **Leviticus 23**

<sup>38</sup> ...beside the Sabbath of the Lord.

Notice the difference in the directions concerning them: Of the weekly Sabbath we read,

<sup>3</sup> Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; you shall do *no work* therein.

But of the Passover sabbath already referred to, and all the other annual sabbaths, we read,

<sup>7</sup> You shall do *no servile work* therein.

On these days the heavy labor was to cease, but of the real Sabbath it was said:

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>10</sup> ...in it you shall not do *any work*.

The Passover sabbath, the first day of unleavened bread, was the guide for reckoning the feast of weeks, as the Pentecost is frequently called in the Old Testament. We read further:

### **Leviticus 23**

<sup>10</sup> When you be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest:

<sup>11</sup> And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

It is evident from the connection that “the Sabbath” here referred to is the Passover sabbath, which was the fifteenth day of the first month, regardless of the day of the week. So then “the morrow after the Sabbath” would be the sixteenth day of the first month. This is corroborated by:

## Joshua 5

<sup>10</sup> And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

<sup>11</sup> And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the self-same day.

<sup>12</sup> And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Turn again to *Leviticus* 23:15-16, for the completion of the data:

## Leviticus 23

<sup>15</sup> And you shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall you complete:

<sup>16</sup> Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall you number fifty days.

Summing up the evidence we find this:

- a) The Passover was eaten in the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month;
- b) The next day, the first day of unleavened bread, was a sabbath;
- c) On the next day after this sabbath they were to bring a sheaf of corn as a wave-offering;

—and from this day, namely, from the sixteenth day of the month, they were to begin and number seven complete weeks; and the next day after the completion of the seventh week was the Pentecost.

Now we come to the particular Pentecost in question. That Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples at the regular time, there is no room for doubt, for we read that the disciples came to Him and asked Him,

## Mark 14

<sup>12</sup> Where will You that we go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?

—and they were told to go and say to a man whom they should meet,

<sup>14</sup> Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?

If Jesus had directed the disciples to prepare the Passover a day before the regularly appointed time, they would have wondered at it, and would certainly have made objection, or at least asked some question. Likewise the man to whom they went would have expressed surprise at the uncommon occurrence.

But it was the disciples themselves who introduced the matter; and they certainly would not have deviated from the regular custom. If a Jew were for some good reason prevented from eating the Passover at the regular time, he was allowed to celebrate it at the corresponding time in the second month, the month following; but for anybody to propose to eat it before the regular time would have been such an innovation as would have occasioned no end of controversy.

We must not suppose that it was necessary for Jesus to be sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the month, in order for it to be demonstrated that He is our Passover, or for Him to be raised on the day that the first-fruits were waved before the Lord, in order that He might be considered the first-fruits. His claims rest on himself, and not on a ceremonial ordinance. They were nothing, but He is everything. He observed those feasts with His disciples at the regularly appointed seasons, but the virtue of His sacrifice depended upon himself, and not on them.

Our way now is clear, for we know that Jesus was crucified on the day after they ate the Passover. Consequently the day of the crucifixion was the Passover sabbath, the first day of unleavened bread, and the day following the crucifixion was the day when

they began to count the fifty days to Pentecost. *Luke 23:64-66*, fixes the day of the crucifixion:

### **Luke 23**

<sup>64</sup> And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

<sup>65</sup> And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid.

<sup>66</sup> And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

The Sabbath that “drew on” as Jesus was taken from the cross and laid in the sepulchre was “the Sabbath day according to the commandment,” the seventh day of the week. The sixth day, Friday, is the preparation for the Sabbath; but that day was also a sabbath that year, being the first day of the Passover. The day following, therefore, namely, the weekly Sabbath, was “the morrow after the Sabbath,”—the Passover Sabbath,—and was the day when the fifty days began. It is easy to see that, beginning on Sabbath, the first seven days would end on Friday, and likewise each succeeding seven, up to the forty-ninth, so that the fiftieth day would that year be on the weekly Sabbath.<sup>175</sup>

That is the whole story. As you say, it makes no practical difference on what day of the week the Pentecost came, and so if anybody cannot see light in what is here set forth, and still thinks

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<sup>175</sup> **PP Editor’s Note:** Waggoner seems to be missing a small detail, which is throwing off his calculation. Thursday evening, when the disciples ate the Passover supper with Jesus, was actually the start of the Passover day. Since days in the Bible are calculated as “the evening and the morning,” and not from midnight to midnight, Thursday evening (after sunset) and Friday daytime, would constitute the first day of the Passover, equivalent to the “fourteenth day of the first month” (*Leviticus 23:5*). Christ died on the cross on this day, during the time of the evening sacrifice, before sunset. The next day was the start of the week of unleavened bread, and this would be counted from Friday evening to Saturday daytime, the time when Christ’s body rested in the tomb. And the day after that, would be “the morrow after the Sabbath,” which would stretch from Saturday evening to Sunday daytime. This would mark Sunday as “the morrow after the Sabbath,” and fifty days from this Sunday would be Pentecost, which would also be a Sunday.

that Pentecost came on Sunday, that will not in itself affect his character or his hope of salvation.

But let him not imagine that even if it could be proved beyond doubt that Pentecost came on Sunday, that would contribute one jot toward the sacredness of that day, or indicate that it should be observed. In the absence of the slightest hint of any commandment for Sunday observance, nothing that took place on it could make it a sacred day; and with the fourth commandment as explicit as it is, and the whole Bible agreeing thereto, no occurrences on the seventh day could add to or detract from its sacredness. It is, has been since creation, and will be throughout eternity, the holy Sabbath of the Lord, to be observed and delighted in by all mankind.

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## Eating the Passover

Present Truth, July 25, 1901

Please harmonize *John* 18:28, last clause, with the third column in "Editor's corner" of *Present Truth* No. 27.<sup>176</sup> Thanks for the truths already opened up.

THE article referred to in fixing the day at the Pentecost following the crucifixion, incidentally points out that the Friday, on which Jesus was crucified was the first day of the Passover week and consequently a ceremonial Sabbath, from the morrow after which the fifty days were reckoned, and that the evening before, the night that Jesus ate the Passover lamb, and was betrayed, was the regular time for that feast, the fourteenth day of the first month.

The verse referred to reads thus:

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<sup>176</sup> The questioner is referencing the previous article, "Pentecost and the Sabbath."



## John 18

<sup>28</sup> Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the hall of judgment; and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover.

This was in the morning following the betrayal of Jesus. There are two explanations which suggest themselves. One is, that the reference is to the whole Passover week, in which unleavened bread was to be eaten, and no leaven, that is, nothing of corruption was to be in the houses or about the persons of the Jews. The whole week is frequently spoken of as the Passover. The Pharisees who were eager for the death of Jesus, did not wish to be hindered from proceeding with the festival.

It is possible, however, that in their eager plotting to capture Jesus these Jews had not had time to partake of the Passover the night before. It was still early in the morning, and they had done a great deal that night.

The first suggestion seems the more plausible; but it is impossible to say with certainty which is correct, and this very fact shown us that the question is not a vital one.

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## Back Page

Present Truth, July 4, 1901

**W**E ARE very thankful to our friends for the interest which they have taken in the "Editor's Private Corner," and for their cooperation by sending in serious, intelligent questions.

As it is our purpose to make that department supply the place of face-to-face conversation, as far as possible, and to give reasons, instead of editorial dicta, it is evident that only a limited number of questions can be considered.

We hope, however, that none will be deterred on this ground from sending in their queries. Everything that we can answer with profit to the general reader will be considered in due time.

## 52. How God Hardened Pharaoh's Heart

Present Truth, July 11, 1901

Included in: *The Everlasting Covenant* (1900), ch. 16, "Preaching the Gospel in Egypt," which in turn was taken from an earlier article, "The Promises to Israel. Preaching the Gospel in Egypt," in *Present Truth*, September 3, 1896

In the seventh chapter of *Exodus*, third verse and part of the fourth, and in several places in the following chapters, we read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he would not let the Israelites go; and in the fourth verse of the fourteenth chapter it is recorded that God said: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, to follow after them." Why did God adopt a means of escape for the children of Israel, and then harden Pharaoh's heart while ten plagues were sent, and the firstborn slain, and finally harden his heart to follow them, to his destruction?

**T**HIS is a frequently recurring question, and the answer is found in the perception of the method, by which it was done. This we find in the narrative itself. In answering this question, we cannot do better than we have done in *The Everlasting Covenant*; so we will turn to that book and read a few pages together:

### Preaching to Pharaoh

It is a truth that:

#### Acts 10

<sup>34</sup> God is no respecter of persons:

<sup>35</sup> But in every nation he that fears Him, and works righteousness, is accepted with Him.

This was not a new truth in the days of Peter, but has ever been true, for God is always the same. The fact that men have usually been slow to perceive it, makes no difference with the fact. Man may fail to recognize the power of God, but that does not make Him any the less powerful; so the fact that the great mass of God's professed followers have usually failed to recognize that He is perfectly impartial, and have supposed that He loved them to the exclusion of other people, has not narrowed His character.

## **The Promise to Abraham Included the Egyptians**

The promise was to Abraham and his seed. But the promise and the blessing came to Abraham before he was circumcised,

### **Romans 4**

<sup>11</sup> ...that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Therefore the promise embraced even the Egyptians, as well as the Israelites, provided they believed. And it did not embrace unbelieving Israelites any more than it did unbelieving Egyptians. Abraham is the father of those who are circumcised, but only of those who...

### **Romans 4**

<sup>12</sup> ...are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, their uncircumcision is counted for circumcision.<sup>177</sup>

## **God's Longsuffering**

It should not be forgotten that God did not begin at once to send the plagues upon Pharaoh and his people. He did not propose to deliver the Israelites by killing their oppressors, but rather by converting them, if it were possible.

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>9</sup> [God is] not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

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<sup>177</sup> See *Romans* 2:25-29.

## **1 Timothy 2**

<sup>4</sup> [He] will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

## **Ezekiel 33**

<sup>11</sup> As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

All men are God's creatures, and His children, and His great heart of love embraces them all, without respect to race or nationality. Accordingly, at the first, the simple demand was made upon Pharaoh to let God's people go free. But he impudently and haughtily replied,

## **Exodus 5**

<sup>2</sup> Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go?

Then miracles were wrought before him. These were not at the first judgments, but simply manifestations of God's power. But the magicians of Pharaoh, the servants of Satan, counterfeited these miracles, and Pharaoh's heart became harder than before. Yet the careful reader will see that even in the miracles that were counterfeited by the magicians, the superior power of the Lord was manifested.

## **Pharaoh's Heart Hardened**

When mild measures failed to cause Pharaoh to acknowledge the power of God, judgments were sent. God, who knows the end from the beginning, had said that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened, and even that He himself would harden it; and so it was.

Yet it must not be supposed that God set about deliberately to harden Pharaoh's heart against his will, so that he could not have relented if he had wished. God sends strong delusion, that men should believe a lie, only upon those who have rejected the truth and who love a lie.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> See 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

Every one has just what he most desires. If any man wishes to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine; but to him who rejects truth, there is nothing left but darkness and deception.<sup>179</sup>

### **Hardened by Mercy**

It is well to note that it was the manifestation of the mercy of God that hardened Pharaoh's heart. The simple request of the Lord was scornfully denied. Then the plagues began to come, yet not immediately, but with interval enough to allow Pharaoh to think. But as long as the power of the magicians appeared to be as great as that exercised by Moses and Aaron, Pharaoh would not yield. Soon it became manifest that there was a power greater than that with his magicians. They brought frogs upon the land, but they could not drive them away.

#### **Exodus 8**

<sup>8</sup> Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.

He had already learned enough of the Lord to call Him by His name.

#### **Exodus 8**

<sup>12</sup> And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried unto the Lord because of the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh.

<sup>13</sup> And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

<sup>14</sup> And they gathered them together upon heaps; and the land stank.

<sup>15</sup> But *when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.*

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<sup>179</sup> See *John* 7:17.

## **Isaiah 26**

<sup>10</sup> Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

Thus it was with Pharaoh. The judgment of God caused his haughty purpose to weaken; but...

## **Exodus 8**

<sup>15</sup> ...when [he] saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart.

Again there came swarms of flies, at the command of the Lord, and Pharaoh said,

<sup>28</sup> I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away; entreat for me.

<sup>29</sup> And Moses said, Behold I go out from you, and I will entreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.

<sup>30</sup> And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord.

<sup>31</sup> And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, and from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one.

<sup>32</sup> And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

And so it went on throughout the plagues. All the steps in each case are not recorded, but we see that it was the long suffering and mercy of God that hardened Pharaoh's heart.

The same preaching that comforted the hearts of many in the days of Jesus, made others more bitter against Him. The raising of Lazarus from the dead fixed the determination in the hearts of the unbelieving Jews to kill Him. The Judgment will reveal the fact that every one who has in hardness of heart rejected the Lord, has done so in the face of the revelation of His mercy.

## God's Purpose With Pharaoh

### Exodus 9 [RV]

<sup>13</sup> And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

<sup>14</sup> For I will this time send all my plagues upon your heart, and upon your servants, and upon your people; that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.

<sup>15</sup> For now I had put forth my hand, and smitten you and your people with pestilence, and you had been cut off from the earth;

<sup>16</sup> But in very deed for this cause have I made you to stand, for to show you my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

The still more literal rendering of the Hebrew by Dr. Kalish, reads that:

<sup>15</sup> For now I might have stretched out my hand, and might have smitten you and your people with pestilence; and you would have been cut off from the earth.

<sup>16</sup> But only for this cause have I let you exist, in order to show you my power, and that my name may be acknowledged throughout all the earth.

A close comparison will show that this idea is expressed in the *Revised Version*, as quoted above, but not so clearly.

It is not the case, as is too often lightly supposed, that God brought Pharaoh into existence for the express purpose of wreaking His vengeance upon him. Such an idea is most dishonoring to the character of the Lord.

But the true idea is that God might have cut Pharaoh off at the very first, and so have delivered His people without any delay. That, however, would not have been in keeping with the Lord's invariable course, which is to give every man ample opportunity to repent. God had borne long with Pharaoh's stubbornness, and now proposed to send severer judgments; yet He gives him fair warning, that even yet he may turn from his wickedness.

God had kept Pharaoh alive, and had delayed to send His severest judgments upon him, in order that He might show unto him His power. But the power of God was being manifested at that time for the salvation of His people, and the power of God unto salvation is the Gospel. Therefore God was keeping Pharaoh alive, in spite of his stubbornness, to give him ample opportunity to learn the Gospel. That Gospel was as powerful to save Pharaoh as it was to save the Israelites.

The revised renderings have been used because they are clearer than those of the common version, and not because the same truth is not set forth in each. Take the common rendering,

### **Exodus 9**

<sup>16</sup> In very deed for this cause have I raised you up, for to show in you my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth,

—and grant that it refers to the bringing of Pharaoh to the throne. Even then it is far from showing that God raised him up for the purpose of plaguing and killing him. The text says that it was for the purpose of showing God's power, and causing His name to be known throughout all the earth. To infer that God can show His power and make known His name only by the destruction of men, is dishonoring to Him, and contrary to the Gospel.

### **1 Chronicles 16**

<sup>21</sup> His mercy endures for ever.

### **To Declare the Name of the Lord**

God's purpose was that His name should be declared throughout all the earth. This is what was done, for we read that forty years later the people of Canaan were terrified at the approach of the Israelites, because they remembered what God had done in delivering them from Egypt. But the purpose of God would have been accomplished just the same if Pharaoh had yielded to the wishes of the Lord.



Suppose that Pharaoh had acknowledged the Lord, and had accepted the Gospel that was preached to him: what would have been the result? He would have done as Moses did, and have exchanged the throne of Egypt for the reproach of Christ, and a place in the everlasting inheritance. And so he would have been a most powerful agent in declaring the name of the Lord throughout all the earth.

The very fact of the acceptance of the Gospel by a mighty king, would have made known the power of the Lord as effectually as did the plagues. And Pharaoh himself, from being a persecutor of God's people, might, like Paul, have become a preacher of the faith. Sad to say, he did not know the day of his visitation.

## 53. The Wine That the Lord Makes

Present Truth, July 18, 1901

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Can you tell me whether the water that Jesus turned into wine at the marriage feast was fermented and intoxicating, or not? Also whether all the water in the vessels was changed to wine, or only that which was actually used. I have heard that the Greek word for wine means to inflame, and that consequently wherever wine is mentioned it must be intoxicating.

THE word “wine,” as well as its equivalent in the Greek, is not specific. There are various kinds of wine, but nobody can tell the nature of the article referred to by the unqualified word “wine;” some qualifying word must be connected with it, in order for us to know whether the article referred to is good or bad, fermented or unfermented, unless there is something else in the text that indicates it, as, for instance, the effect that it produces. For, just as a tree is known by its fruit, so wine is known by the consequences of drinking it.

There is good water and bad water—water that is pure, and water that is stale and nauseous. Fresh water is good, but the same water that is good today will be unfit to drink if allowed to stand a few days. It is water, however, even after it has stood till it is teeming with disease germs; and its name, “water,” unqualified, does not convey any idea as to its character.

Just so it is with wine. When it is first pressed from the grapes it is pure, refreshing and wholesome; but after it has stood exposed to the air for a season it undergoes fermentation, or decay, and is then poisonous. It is still wine, however, although no longer good wine; and the term “wine,” if unqualified, does not tell us anything as to which kind it is.

## **Wine in the Cluster**

That the fresh, pure, unfermented juice of the grape is really wine, is seen from the following portions of Scripture:

### **Isaiah 65**

<sup>8</sup> As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

Here we see that not only the freshly expressed juice of the grape, but even the juice while it is yet in the cluster in the vine, is real wine. Again, in *Genesis* 40 we read in the dream of Pharaoh's butler:

### **Genesis 40**

<sup>9</sup> In my dream, behold a vine was before me;

<sup>10</sup> And in the vine were three branches; and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:

<sup>11</sup> And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

Thus we see that not only is the wine found in the cluster of ripe grapes, but it is such wine as in ancient time was thought to be a drink fit for a king; for Pharaoh's butler dreamed of what he had been used to doing.

## **The Lord Gives Only Good Things**

Now as to the wine that Jesus made for the guests at the marriage feast in Cana. It is true that the word has no qualifying adjective in the narrative of that event; but the circumstances unmistakably indicate its character.

In the first place, let us remember that only good things come from the hand of the Lord. He sends blessing, not a curse; and we have just read that the blessing is in the wine that is found in the cluster. On the other hand, we are told that they who drink the wine...

## Proverbs 23

<sup>31</sup> ...when it gives his color in the cup, when it moves itself aright,

—that is, when it is fermented, have woe, sorrow, contentions, and wounds without cause, and that such wine at the last,

<sup>32</sup> ...bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder.

It takes away a man's senses, so that he is like one...

<sup>34</sup> ...that lies down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lies upon the top of the mast.

Can anybody charge the Lord with preparing such a drink for men? Who that reverences the Saviour can for a moment entertain the thought that He would deliberately manufacture, and order to be given to the guests at a marriage feast, such wine as would tend to take away their senses, inflame all their passions, and set them in an uproar, and possibly cause them to fight?

### Fermented Wine Not a Natural Product

Still further: If it were true that on this occasion Jesus made fermented wine, it would furnish a most unnatural exception to God's work; for never in nature has such a thing as fermented wine been known. On the contrary, God takes the utmost pains to prevent the wine that He makes from fermenting. Let us study the case for a moment.

Examine a cluster of grapes. See how firm the skin is upon each grape, and how closely it is fastened to the stem. The skin of the grape, like that of other fruits, is its protection against decay or fermentation. As long as the skin remains unbroken, fermentation cannot possibly take place. Each grape is, in fact, a small bottle of unfermented wine, hermetically sealed so as to preserve it from fermentation.

While the grapes are in that condition they are good to eat—delicious and wholesome. But let us take another cluster. On this one there are some grapes that have been braised, so that the skin is broken, and some have been half-way pulled off the stem. What

is their condition? They have begun to decay; a little mould is seen in each wounded grape, and no one would eat them, not even the drinker of fermented wine, unless he had already drank so much of it as to lose his wits. Yet that which has begun on those wounded grapes is exactly what must take place in the expressed juice, in order that it may become fermented wine.

You say the grapes that have been broken are rotten. So they are, or at least they are beginning to rot, and nobody likes to eat rotten grapes; yet the very same people who reject the decayed grapes, will eagerly drink the grape juice when it has rotted still more. How inconsistent! If the grape is unhealthful when it is diseased because of a wound, how can it be healthful when the disease has progressed so far that it has produced death? The fresh juice is life-producing; the fermented juice produces death.

### **“Old Wine” That Is Better**

Can you not now see clearly that the first state of wine, as the Lord makes it, is always unfermented? And not only so, but that unless man interferes, and changes the Lord’s plan for the grape, the wine will always remain unfermented? God never makes fermented wine; that is always a product of the curse. Wine must stand some little time exposed to the air, before it becomes fermented wine.

Now we have the question answered as to the kind of wine that Jesus prepared for the wedding guests. Just as the sun ripens the sap that is stored up in the cluster, so Christ, the Light of the world, the Sun of righteousness, made the same change in the water that was in the waterpots; and it would be as forced and absurd to suppose that it was fermented, as to expect to find fermented wine in the grape cluster.

The wine was drawn out and at once carried to the governor of the feast. If any of it was left over, and allowed to stand exposed to the air for a time, it would undoubtedly ferment, just the same as any other wine that the Lord makes.

As to how much of the water became wine, we have no means of knowing. It is usually taken for granted that all the water in the six water pots was changed to wine. Whether it was or not, makes no practical difference. Only this thing is evident: that if the water became wine only as it was drawn out, we have the case for unfermented wine emphasized.

But whichever way it was, there certainly was no time for the wine to ferment before it was carried to the table; and it must be remembered that time is an essential element in the production of fermented wine. God makes wine—good wine; man allows and assists it to decay, and become a curse. Be sure that Jesus did not go out of His way to make an unnatural product.

Such wine as Jesus made on that wedding day in Cana is good enough to be drunk in heaven, and will be furnished to all the guests at...

### **Revelation 19**

<sup>9</sup> ...the marriage supper of the Lamb.

When Jesus passed the cup to His disciples on the night of the Passover,—a time when no leaven or ferment could be found in any Jewish house,—He said,

### **Matthew 26**

<sup>29</sup> I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

I hardly think there is anybody so irreverent as to suggest that the wine ("the fruit of the vine," mark you) on that occasion will be such as could by any possibility produce intoxication, that is, poisoning.

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## To Keep Wine from Fermenting

Present Truth, July 18, 1901

**J**UST after writing the article in the “Private Corner,” on unfermented wine, we noticed the following note in the *Church Family Newspaper*:

Your correspondent asserts that the Jews at the Feast of the Passover invariably use unfermented wine. If he could give all the particulars of the method by which the Jews prevent the fermentation of grape juice, it would be very interesting. It is described as “quite sweet,” which suggests that the juice has been “preserved” in some manner. Grape juice, unless treated in some such manner, naturally ferments. Unfermented grape juice is called “must,” not wine.

It is true that the unfermented juice of the grape is called “must,” but it is not true that it is not called wine. It is called wine in the Bible, as our article in this paper shows, and it is the only perfect wine. But the question is, how to keep it so, and as there are no doubt many who think that it is a difficult matter, if not impossible, we will tell how it is done. It is very simple.

- a) Select good grapes, and press them just enough to break the skins, but not to crush them. This can be done by spreading them out on a wooden tray, and passing a roller over them, which is kept from pressing on them too heavily, by the low sides of the tray.
- b) Take the grapes so broken, and put them over the fire in a saucepan, until they become merely heated through, but not until they boil. This is only in order that the juice can be pressed out more freely.
- c) Put the heated grape-pulp in a thin cloth bag, and press out all the juice, either with the hands, or by a press.
- d) Place the juice on the stove again, heat it just to the boiling point, but do not let it boil.
- e) Then while hot pour it as quickly as possible into the bottles that have previously been thoroughly cleaned and sterilized

in hot water. Fill the bottles full, so that there will be no air space below the cover, and seal them so tightly that no air can get in.

The result, if care has been taken, will be wine that will keep pure and unfermented for years. This is from personal experience.

It will be seen that nothing whatever is added to the juice. Most unfermented wine that is sold for communion wine, has some acid added to it to preserve it. This should not be done. Nothing should be put into it. Do not put even sugar in.

The grapes have all the sugar that is needed. The grape juice does not need sugar, any more than raisins do. The natural wine properly made from good grapes is so sweet that most people will want to dilute it with water when they drink it.

Such wine as this may be drunk as freely as the state of one's finances will allow, for nothing in the world is more wholesome. And no other wine should ever be used at communion.

It is in order that this sacred service may not be profaned by the use of wine that is intoxicating, that we devote the space to the subject that we have. It is very certain that if Christ were present at a communion table which had fermented wine, He would *not* take the cup and say, "This is my blood." Let us be careful never to bear false witness in this matter.



## 54. The Coming of Christ

Present Truth, July 25, 1901

Could you please explain to me *Mark 9:1*. I think God's Word speaks as much to us now as it did when Christ spoke to His disciples when on the earth. Some say Christ is to come three times: First, when He came as a Babe; Second, when a person becomes a child of God; Third, when Christ comes to gather His own to go and dwell with Him.

Does not Christ come into His kingdom only when He comes down in the New Jerusalem, to the possession of the new earth, after the millennium?

When so many different doctrines are being taught in so many different ways, It makes things so dark, and it is so hard to believe.

**L**ET Christ's own words answer your question. You know them well:

### **John 14**

<sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.

<sup>3</sup> I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Jesus was on the earth, among men, when He spoke these words to His disciples, and therefore they meant that He would literally come "again," *once more*, to this earth. The second coming of Christ is plainly mentioned in the Bible, as related to the first coming.

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>27</sup> As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment:

<sup>28</sup> So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear *the second time* without sin unto salvation.

These are the two comings spoken of in the Bible, and the Scriptures tell of no more. They do, indeed, speak of His abiding presence by His Representative, the Holy Spirit; but the two comings of Christ, spoken of in the Bible, refer to two visible bodily appearances, so visible that He can be seen by saint and sinner alike.

When a person becomes a child of God, he comes to the Lord, instead of Christ coming to him. Christ by His Spirit is present with men who know Him not, striving with them, endeavoring to bring them to a knowledge of himself. He does not hold himself aloof from man until they become Christians, and then come to them, for if He did they could never become Christians. On the contrary, He is near them:

#### **Acts 17**

<sup>27</sup> He is not far from every one of us,

<sup>28</sup> For in Him we live, and move, and have our being,

He is daily loading them with benefits, and when, like the prodigal son, they come to themselves, they come to Him. Then when He comes the second time He will take to himself and crown as kings all those who know Him, and who...

#### **2 Timothy 4**

<sup>8</sup> ...love His appearing.

Now as to the events connected with the second coming of Christ. There are very many. You know that the first advent of Christ was not confined to the night when He was born in Bethlehem. It covered the whole thirty-three years of His life on this earth as a Man among men. At His first coming He worked as a carpenter, He was tempted by Satan, He went about doing good, teaching and leading the multitudes, and He was mocked, rejected, and crucified, and then rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. All these things took place at His first coming.

In like manner the second advent of Christ will cover a period of time, but much longer than the first. Let me in a few words

show this from the Scriptures. First, let us read a text or two telling what things will occur when He comes again.

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

### **Psalm 50**

<sup>3</sup> Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.

<sup>4</sup> He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people:

<sup>5</sup> Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; for God is Judge himself.

### **2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>6</sup> It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

<sup>7</sup> And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>9</sup> Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;

<sup>10</sup> When He shall come to be glorified in His saints.

These texts tell us that at the second coming of Christ the righteous shall be taken to dwell with Him, and the wicked shall be destroyed; but they do not set forth the particulars. If we had nothing else, we might suppose that all would take place in a single day; but from other passages we learn the details of the second advent.

The texts quoted have spoken only of the resurrection of the righteous; but there is to be a resurrection of the dead,

### **Acts 24**

<sup>15</sup> ...both of the just and unjust.

Between these two resurrections a thousand years will intervene. Read:

### **Revelation 20**

<sup>4</sup> And I saw thrones, and they sat on them; and judgment was given unto them and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

<sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

From this we learn that, although the righteous will be taken to heaven, and the wicked will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ, there will be a full thousand years between the two events. So we know that the second advent will cover more than a thousand years.

During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection, the saints will be reigning in heaven with Christ, sitting in judgment upon the wicked, all of whom will be dead. The earth will be desolate, and inhabited only by Satan, and his host of evil angels. At the end of that time the wicked dead will be raised, and, led by Satan, will go up and surround...

### **Revelation 20**

<sup>9</sup> ...the beloved city,

—in which the saints are, who will have come down from heaven with it; and then fire from God will devour all the un-

godly, and purify the earth. Then the second coming will be complete.

### **Coming in His Kingdom**

No; Christ does not first come into His kingdom at the end of the thousand years. We know this from the fact that He has gone...

#### **Luke 19**

<sup>12</sup> ...to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return,

—and that when He appears it will be...

#### **Matthew 16**

<sup>28</sup> ...in His kingdom.

When He returns to gather His people, He will have received His kingdom.<sup>180</sup>

Moreover, when He comes and raises the righteous dead, changing the living also to immortality, taking them to himself, He places them on thrones of judgment, and they live and reign with Him in heaven a thousand years.<sup>181</sup> He will come sitting on the throne of His glory, and will say to the righteous,

#### **Matthew 25**

<sup>34</sup> Come, you blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

This shows that He will then be reigning in His kingdom.

You say that you thought the kingdom was this earth. You are right; this earth was prepared for man's dominion from the beginning; and the saints will be reigning over it during the thousand years that they are in heaven before the resurrection of the wicked. The earth will have been given to Christ for a possession, and He will be sharing it with His saints, else they could not sit on thrones of judgment, judging the men of this world. Is not that clear?

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<sup>180</sup> See *Luke* 19:11-15.

<sup>181</sup> *Revelation* 20:4, 6; *Matthew* 19:28.

The saints will be with Christ in the New Jerusalem, the capital of the earth. They will be in Eden, which is a part of the earth, having once been on it, and destined to be on it again, the spot where dominion was first given to man. On the very place where man first began to reign over this earth, the dominion over it will be restored.

### **A Word about Believing**

You say that it is difficult to believe, when so many different things are taught, and there are so many conflicting doctrines about the same thing. This should not be. Let me tell you something: Never believe or try to believe anything that you find it hard to believe. Why not? For various reasons, chiefly because each “belief” is not belief at all, and besides, that which is really hard to believe is not true.

Belief, true faith, is spontaneous. It comes from hearing God’s Word of truth. Truth, self-evident truth, is never hard to believe. It carries conviction with it, and compels belief. Error has no real foundation, and we should not try to believe it. In short, that which ought to be believed carries its own credentials with it; and that which does not bear the stamp of truth, that which is not a plain, “Thus says the Lord,” must not be believed.

It is true that people may, by parleying with truth, and rejecting it, get into a condition where they cannot possibly believe truth. That will be the condition of all who are lost; and therefore we ought to be careful never to trifle with our conscience. When truth comes to us, we should welcome it and accept it at once, no matter how contrary to our former ways and thoughts, and it will then be our shield and defense.

## 55. The God of the Living

Present Truth, August 8, 1901

Why is it said that God is not the “God of the dead, but of the living,” when just before He is declared to be “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”?<sup>182</sup> I believe the text, but should be glad to have it made more plain through the pages of *Present Truth*.

**H**ERE we must learn, as elsewhere, that the answer lies in the text itself. Of course other texts serve to make it plainer; but in every case the very text over which we stumble has within it the way out of the difficulty.

Plainly stated the case is this: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are dead; yet God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Strange it is, indeed; yet there is no contradiction, and it is not a puzzle, but the statement of a glorious truth.

The first thing to do in the case of any difficult text is to find what is the subject of discourse. Here we find that it is the resurrection of the dead. Jesus was teaching the people, and the priests and scribes had tried by trickery to entangle Him, so that they could accuse Him, and had failed.

### **Luke 20**

<sup>27</sup> Then certain of the Sadducees came to Him, which deny that there is any resurrection;

—and they presented a hypothetical case, which they thought would either force Jesus to deny the resurrection or else would bring Him in conflict with the teachings of Moses.

But Jesus was equal to the occasion. He convicted His opponents of ignorance of that which they professed to know, and

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<sup>182</sup> Luke 20:37-38; Matthew 22:32.

then proceeded to give positive Scripture proof of the resurrection of the dead, saying,

### **Luke 20**

<sup>37</sup> Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

<sup>38</sup> For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him.

When it is said that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and is not the God of the dead, but of the living, there is no denial of the fact that the patriarchs are dead. That we know, because the Scriptures plainly tell us that they died. But they will live again; their...

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>3</sup> ...life is hid with Christ in God,

—and is as secure and sure to them as if they were now in possession of it.

### **Romans 4**

<sup>17</sup> [God] quickens the dead, and calls those things that be not as though they were.

With Him the thing that is to be, is the same as that which now is; for He inhabits eternity, and the future is present to Him. God is “the living God,”<sup>183</sup> and He gives life to all. That which is extinct has no connection with Him.

There are people now on earth as there always have been, who do not claim Him as their God, and whom He does not acknowledge as His people. Those who know not God will at the last day be destroyed for ever, with no hope or possibility of a resurrection. It is plain that He will not then be their God; they will have nothing to do with Him, and hence they choose destruction.

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<sup>183</sup> *Deuteronomy* 5:26, and many more.



It is practically the same with the wicked who now lie in their graves: they will certainly be raised, but not to life, and it is as though they were already extinct. When they lived they were “without God in the world,”<sup>184</sup> and, dying the same way, it is evident that He is not their God.

But it is not so with the righteous. There is hope in their death.<sup>185</sup> They “sleep in Jesus,”<sup>186</sup> and their life is just as sure as is the life of Jesus; for He himself is their life. Therefore God, who is the God only of the living, calls himself their God.

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>16</sup> [He] is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared for them a city.

This is the ground of the Christian’s hope.

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>5</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

This is the power that has overcome, and still overcomes, the world.<sup>187</sup> The power of the resurrection of Jesus is the power of the Christian life—the secret of holiness. Being crucified with Him, we nevertheless live, because He lives. And just as the righteous who have been dead thousands of years, are alive in His thought, so that state of perfection which is designed for us is ours now in Christ. This is the secret of calling...

### **Romans 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...those things that be not as though they were.

It is the victory of faith.

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<sup>184</sup> *Ephesians* 2:12.

<sup>185</sup> *Proverbs* 14:32.

<sup>186</sup> *1 Thessalonians* 4:14.

<sup>187</sup> *1 John* 5:4.

## **Hebrews 11**

<sup>1</sup> Faith is the substance of things hoped for,

–and when we believe in the Lord with all our heart, the good thing longed for is ours. Heaven itself comes down to us, and imparting the power of its glory to us, lifts us up to its level, so that while still on earth, we...

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>6</sup> ...sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

## 56. The Scripture Records: Literal and Real

Present Truth, August 15, 1901

With reference to the International Sunday-school lesson for July 14,<sup>188</sup> do you wish us to understand by your exposition that it was a real serpent which appeared to Eve and conversed with her in the garden of Eden? I can hardly believe it to have been so.

If you think it was so, will you oblige me by stating what your reasons are for so thinking? I shall be very grateful if you can give me something to convince me, as I have some very grave doubts on the subject, and it has made me feel very miserable.

**N**O WONDER, for that is the natural effect of doubt. Nobody can ever feel any other way than miserable, if he cherishes doubt, for doubt is the most unsatisfactory condition in the world. It is also the most foolish and unreasonable thing. A thing is either true, or it is not; if it is true, it is to be believed; if it is not true, it is not to be believed, and that is the end of the matter. But to doubt—neither to believe nor really to disbelieve—is to be nowhere.

Yes; I most certainly wish all who read to understand that it was a veritable serpent that talked with Eve, just as truly as it was a real ass that spoke to Balaam, and reproved him.

### 2 Peter 2

<sup>16</sup> The dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet,

—and the serpent speaking also with man's voice, or, rather, with Satan's voice, beguiled Eve.

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<sup>188</sup> **PP Editor's Note:** This article is titled, "Beginning of Sin and Redemption," and was published in the July 4, 1901 *Present Truth*, and is included on our website in the collection, *Gospel Lessons in the Old Testament*.

Why do I believe that it was a real serpent? Because I believe the Bible, of the truthfulness of which I have ample evidence. How can we help believing it? I believe that it was real, because I believe that there was a real garden at Eden, and a real man and woman in it; that there was a real tree in the midst of the garden, from which they were forbidden to eat; and that the sin committed in the garden was the beginning of all the sin and sorrow that has cursed this earth. I believe that the serpent was real, for the same reason that I believe the curse to be real.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

## **2 Corinthians 2**

<sup>3</sup> I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Was the Apostle, writing by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, frightened at a shadow? for if it were no real serpent that beguiled Eve, then the whole story would be a myth.

Why should one doubt that the serpent was real, and still believe that the tree and the garden were real, and that the woman really ate and gave to her husband, and that they lost their purity and dominion? It is true that there are people who doubt all these things, and there are also people who doubt the entire Bible; but how anybody who professes to believe the Bible as a whole can single out as unreal a particular item, and that a leading one, in a narrative which he otherwise accepts, I cannot understand. The mystery of godliness is great; but the mystery of doubt—the mystery of iniquity—is more incomprehensible.

Why do I believe in the absolute truthfulness of the story of the deception by the serpent? Because, I believe the Gospel. You ask what that has to do with the Gospel. I will tell you in a few words.

The Gospel is the good news of salvation from sin, and the sin from which we are to be saved is the sin that came into the world

when the serpent beguiled Eve. Now the same book that tells of the fall, also makes known the way of redemption; but if I cannot implicitly believe one, I have no assurance of the other.

Do you not see that it is not a light matter whether we believe or not? All truth is one; all parts are woven together, each part with every other; break one thread, and the whole fabric is ruined.

But we will not talk of ruin, so far as the truth is concerned; for it endures for ever. We cannot affect it in the least by any doubt or unbelief; but our doubts have an influence on ourselves, in the same proportion that faith does. The ruin is to us, if we allow ourselves to doubt a single word of God; for if we doubt one thing, the whole will have no power in us.

I might well ask you, why do you doubt the story of the serpent? but I will not, for I know it is not good to talk doubt, or to talk over doubts, much less to seek to manufacture a foundation for them. The best thing to do with doubt is to bury it under the everlasting mountains of truth.

**Psalm 116** [2 Corinthians 4:13]

<sup>10</sup> I believed, therefore have I spoken,

—is a motto that we all do well to follow. Thank God, there is enough to believe to keep us employed throughout eternity.

## 57. Are the Ten Commandments Binding?

Present Truth, August 22, 1901

One said to me today, “The ten commandments have nothing to do with us now. We are not in the dispensation of the law, but of grace, so that the law is not binding on us; it is all done away with.”

I do not quite understand this doctrine. I read that Christ said He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it—to prove its righteousness. The Bible tells us Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, not the works of God.

**D**O NOT try to understand such doctrine, for it is of the devil. You read correctly, and will do well to hold fast the sound words of Christ.

The idea of dividing time,—especially as connected with God’s dealing with man,—into “dispensations” is a modern one, having no foundation in the Bible, and unknown to the men who were used by the Spirit to write it. It is a libel upon God, intimating that He is fickle and uncertain in His ways, dealing differently with men, according to varying moods.

But God does not change, and He has but one way of saving men. There can be no other way, because Christ is the way, and in Him all fullness dwells.

### **Acts 10**

<sup>49</sup> To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.

### **Acts 4**

<sup>12</sup> Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Jesus Christ’s...

### **Micah 5** [margin]

<sup>2</sup> ...goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity,

—and:

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> [He is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

These texts make it as certain as the Bible is true, that there is but one way of salvation from the beginning to the end of time, and that is Christ, who is...

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>13</sup> ...the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

But this is positively denied by those who say,

“We have nothing to do with the law now, nor it with us; for we are now under grace.”

That implies that when people did have something to do with the law, or it with them, there was no grace for them. For the idea in the minds of those who talk thus about the law is that it is opposed to Christ, and that those who are in Him must ignore the law—that they are really in duty bound to break it.

Now read what the Scriptures say:

### **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> The law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

<sup>21</sup> That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The grace of God in Christ never was manifested in more abundant measure than when the law was proclaimed from Mount Sinai. Again, Jesus says,

### **Psalms 40**

<sup>7</sup> Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me,

<sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart.

He also said,

### **John 15**

<sup>10</sup> I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

And the beloved disciple says,

### **1 John 2**

<sup>6</sup> He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.

Jesus fulfilled the law. What for? Was it that we might violate it? We were doing that already, for...

### **Romans 3**

<sup>23</sup> ...all have sinned,

—and,

### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> ...sin is the transgression of the law.

Surely no one in his senses can really think that Christ came and died, in order that men might be able to do that which they had all been doing all the time!

If someone says that the object of His coming was not that men might break the law, but that they might not be punished, the case is not altered; for if He did not come to save them from punishment by saving them from the transgression of the law, then it would be the case that He came to enable men to sin with impunity—that is to...

### **Ezekiel 13**

<sup>22</sup> ...strengthen the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.

This is horrible doctrine even to think of.

Christ fulfilled the law. Why?

### **Romans 8**

<sup>1</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.



## **Romans 8**

<sup>6</sup> To be carnally minded is death,

—and the reason is:

<sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

But does not the Bible say,

## **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> You are not under the law, but under grace?

It certainly does, and it immediately adds:

<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin (transgress the law), because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Those who are not under the law are the only ones who can and do keep it. The moment one breaks the law, he is under it; the law has its hand upon him, and holds him for punishment. But grace saves us from the punishment which the law indicts upon transgressors, by saving us from transgression. It takes away the carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God, and gives us in its place the mind of the Spirit, which is of the same nature as the law;

## **Romans 7**

<sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual.

It is legitimate to say, however, that the law is not “binding” on true Christians, but not in the sense that the objector said it to you. It is in full force today, as much as it ever was, and will be throughout eternity; but it does not *bind*, or coerce, the followers of Jesus. No; because, just as Jesus said,

## **Psalms 40**

<sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O my God; yea, your law is within my heart,

—so His follower will say,

## Psalm 119

<sup>97</sup> O how I love your law! it is my meditation all the day.

The man is blessed whose...

## Psalm 1

<sup>2</sup> ...delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law does he meditate day and night.

To such a man the law is not a “yoke of bondage.”<sup>189</sup> He does not feel it, because he has been transformed, and is one with it. He and the law coincide in every particular, so that there is no chafing against it. He is not under the law, but in it, yea, really above it, in that he sits with Christ in the heavenly places, where the law is administered. He unites with Christ in administering the law to himself, his part being to acquiesce; and he takes pleasure in seeing how powerful the law in Christ is to bring the body under, and to keep it in subjection.

The follower of Christ is not *bound*, that is, in bondage, in any way, because:

## Romans 8

<sup>2</sup> The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death.

The only man who feels that the law is *binding* on him is the man who is transgressing it, and he who is transgressing it, and he frequently denies that it is binding, that is, in force.

The Christian, on the contrary, who does not feel that the law binds him, because he gladly obeys it, feels the force of the law, as it is life in Christ, working in Him for righteousness, and delights to know that it is for ever established,<sup>190</sup> and thus ensures to him everlasting salvation.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Galatians 5:1.

<sup>190</sup> Psalm 119:89.

<sup>191</sup> Isaiah 45:17.

## 58. Going to Law

Present Truth, August 22, 1901

A man in business sells goods to another, and the one to whom they are sold will not pay for them, although able to do so; would the seller be acting contrary to Scripture if he sued for his money in the county court?

**Y**OUR question indicates that you desire to know what the Scripture says about going to law, and that its teaching is to be regarded as of final authority; therefore we have only to turn and read what is written. Jesus said:

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>38</sup> You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

<sup>39</sup> But I say unto you, That you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

<sup>40</sup> And if any man will sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also.

This one statement is sufficient to settle the question; for since we are forbidden to resist evil, it is most certain that we cannot be justified in ourselves being the aggressors in any case.

A hasty reading of the Scriptures often leads people to suppose that the old-time saying, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”<sup>192</sup> meant that any person could take his case into his own hands, and treat his adversary as he himself had been treated; but that is a great mistake. A reading of the passages in the Old Testament, where those words occur, plainly shows that they were part of the instructions for the judges.

In *Exodus* 21:22-24, we read that the offender in a case of assault...

### **Exodus 21**

<sup>22</sup> ...shall pay as the judges determine.

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<sup>192</sup> *Exodus* 21:24, *Leviticus* 24:20, *Deuteronomy* 19:21.

<sup>23</sup> And if any mischief follow, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Read also:

### **Deuteronomy 19**

<sup>16</sup> If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong;

<sup>17</sup> Then both the men between whom the controversy is shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges which shall be in those days;

<sup>18</sup> And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and has testified falsely against his brother;

<sup>19</sup> Then shall you do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother; so shall you put the evil away from among you.

<sup>20</sup> And those which remain shall hear and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.

<sup>21</sup> And your eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

These are a part of the laws that were given to the Israelites because of the hardness of their hearts; but they are not for the followers of Christ, who as such cannot be hard-hearted. Jesus cites them, and adds,

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>39</sup> But I say unto you, That you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

It may be thought “a hard saying;”<sup>193</sup> but all who are filled with the Spirit of Jesus will be able to hear it, and to act in harmony with it.

Do not get the idea that there was any injustice in the Old Testament regulations. If a man willfully injures another, he suffers no injustice if he is treated in the same manner; but the point is that the Christian is to leave the execution of justice to the Lord, to whom vengeance belongs. It may be that a man deserves pun-

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<sup>193</sup> *John* 6:60.

ishment; but we are not to punish him, nor to secure his punishment by the judges.

### **Romans 12**

<sup>19</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head.

All this is said with reference to bodily injury; but the instruction against prosecuting for physical violence would also prohibit suing for money, since no amount of money is to be compared in value with the body. The Saviour speaks, however, directly of property, saying,

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>40</sup> If any man will sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also.

That is, if he is about to sue you, to get your coat, let him have your cloak also, rather than go to law. Now when this instruction is given concerning defending one's property in court, it is manifest that the case is still stronger against taking the initiative to recover property.

There is practical wisdom in the Saviour's instructions, for in more than ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, both parties in a suit would fare better if they would settle their difficulties out of court. The papers recently reported a case in Milan, where, a man died leaving a fortune of £600,000. His will was disputed by the heirs, and the result of the litigation was that over £400,000 went to the lawyers in fees, leaving scarcely £200,000 to be divided among the heirs. It is evident that even on the ground of worldly policy, the suit was utter foolishness.

And so it usually is. It would be amusing, if it were not pitiful and disgusting, to see the petty childishness that is displayed in most of the cases that come up in the courts. The suit is entered in order to gratify the sense of vindictive spite. It is the same spirit

that leads the ruffian to fight. But all such spirit is utterly foreign to Christianity, and the Bible is everywhere against it.

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>14</sup> All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

### **Romans 13**

<sup>10</sup> Love works no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

But love...

### **1 Corinthians 13**

<sup>4</sup> ...suffers long, and is kind...

<sup>5</sup> ...[love] seeks not her own.

So it appears that going to law, whether it be to gratify spite or to recover property, is directly contrary to the Spirit of Christ.

We know very well that such teaching as this is foolishness to the carnal mind. The natural man will raise a thousand objections to it, and will see in it the loss of all one's goods. With that we have nothing to do.

We believe that God is able to protect His people, and we know that He cares for them; but even if one, by adhering to the Christian plan of peace, should lose all his goods, that would be no more than many men have joyfully suffered for the cause of Christ, and we applaud them—at a distance. God desires martyrs—witnesses—all the time, and not merely when some doctrinal difference is in question. We have nothing to do with the results of obeying the Gospel; our part is simply to trust and not be afraid.

The conclusion of the whole matter, therefore, is that no Christian can voluntarily go to law without acting directly contrary to the principles of his profession.

Christ absolutely refused to be made a ruler or a judge, or to have anything to do with the division of property;<sup>194</sup> and just to the extent that His followers depart from that position, do they deprive themselves of His power in the world.

If the truth be kept in mind, that the eternal world to come, and not “this present evil world,”<sup>195</sup> is our home, the case is very clear.

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<sup>194</sup> *Luke* 12:13-15.

<sup>195</sup> *Galatians* 1:4.

## 59. Christ's Coming and the Millennium

Present Truth, August 29, 1901

Bear with me while I point out what to me and many more seems utterly ridiculous, namely, your conclusion as to the meaning of the coming of Christ. For example, you state that for a thousand years the world will be given up to Satan and his followers, all the wicked dead to be raised again, after telling us at other times that the wicked have only natural life.

**I**F THE *Present Truth* had ever contained any such incoherent teaching as you attribute to it, “utterly ridiculous” would be a very mild term to apply to it; but the trouble arises from a too hasty reading of what was doubtless only a partial statement of the case.

Several times there have been passing allusions to certain events connected with the coming of the Lord and the end of the world, when the main topic was something else; and it is doubtless to this that the misunderstanding is due. I will therefore give a detailed, though necessarily brief, presentation of the Scripture statements on this subject, and you can judge for yourself.

In the first place we must accept the Scriptures as true, and as meaning just what they say. When Christ says,

### **John 14**

<sup>2</sup> ...I go to prepare a place for you.

<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself,

—we must believe that He will actually come again as really as He was here once. In like manner, when we read that the disciples saw Jesus taken up from the midst of them, and that they watched Him till a cloud received Him out of their sight, and that...



## **Acts 1**

<sup>10</sup> While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

<sup>11</sup> Which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven,

—we must believe that He will come personally and visibly in the clouds of heaven.

We have now before us the fact that He will come again, the reason why He will come, and something as to the manner of His coming; next we will learn something about what will take place when He comes.

## **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

And this:

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Now the case is clear as regards the righteous at the coming of the Lord: the dead are raised, and all, both living and dead, are changed to immortality, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, evermore to dwell with Him, and to follow Him whithersoever He goes.

But what about the wicked? Here is where you have fallen into error. You have assumed that the wicked dead will be raised at the

same time that the righteous are; but this is a great mistake. It is true that...

### **Acts 24**

<sup>15</sup> ...there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,

–but not all at the same time. In *Revelation* 19:11-21; 20:1-15 we have the whole story told, and I will ask you to read it just now. I might summarize it, but I wish you to see the connected account exactly as it stands in the Bible:

### **Revelation 19**

<sup>11</sup> And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war.

<sup>12</sup> His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He himself.

<sup>13</sup> And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

<sup>15</sup> And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

<sup>16</sup> And He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS.

<sup>17</sup> 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;

<sup>18</sup> That you 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.

<sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army.

<sup>20</sup> And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

<sup>21</sup> And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

## **Revelation 20**

<sup>1</sup> And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand,

<sup>2</sup> And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

<sup>3</sup> And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

<sup>4</sup> And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were be-headed for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

<sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

<sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

<sup>8</sup> And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

<sup>9</sup> And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

<sup>10</sup> And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beset and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

<sup>11</sup> And I saw a great white throne, and him that eat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

<sup>13</sup> And the sea, gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

<sup>14</sup> And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

<sup>15</sup> And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Please note carefully the order of events in the sacred narrative. First, we have Christ coming to earth with all the armies of heaven.<sup>196</sup> The wicked who have survived the seven last plagues will be consumed with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of His coming.<sup>197</sup>

But this does not bring to view the final destruction of the wicked, because all the fowls of the air are called together to feed on their flesh.<sup>198</sup>

At the same time the righteous dead are raised immortal, and the righteous living are in like manner changed by the same glory that destroys the wicked,

### **Revelation 20**

<sup>5</sup> This is the first resurrection.

From the foregoing scriptures it is evident that the earth will thus be divested of all its inhabitants, for the righteous being taken to heaven, and the wicked slain, there will be no men left. Even so says the prophet:

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<sup>196</sup> *Revelation* 19:11-15. Compare *2 Thessalonians* 1:7-9 and *Habakkuk* 3:3-16.

<sup>197</sup> See *2 Thessalonians* 2:8.

<sup>198</sup> *Revelation* 19:17-21.

## Jeremiah 4

<sup>19</sup> I cannot hold my peace, because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.<sup>199</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Destruction upon destruction is cried, for the whole land is spoiled; suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains as in a moment.

<sup>21</sup> How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

<sup>23</sup> I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void;<sup>200</sup> and the heavens, and they had no light.

<sup>24</sup> I behold the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

<sup>25</sup> I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

<sup>26</sup> I behold, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.

<sup>27</sup> For thus has the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

You have of course noted that the resurrection of the wicked does not take place until a thousand years after the resurrection of the righteous,<sup>201</sup> and during this thousand years the earth is in a chaotic state, as in the beginning. This is “the millennium,” for it is the only place where a thousand-year period is mentioned in the Bible.

Will there be no inhabitants on the desolate earth? Yes, Satan and his angels, but no man. This will constitute the binding of Satan; for to be confined to the earth, reduced to a bottomless pit, —“the deep” of *Genesis* 1:2,—with no people on whom to exercise his wiles, and nothing to do but to contemplate the ruin that his rule has caused, will be a most terrible bondage for his active, restless spirit. He will see the full development of his kingdom—a desolate prison.

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<sup>199</sup> Compare with the scriptures already quoted.

<sup>200</sup> Compare *Genesis* 1:2.

<sup>201</sup> See *Revelation* 20:4-6.

At the close of the thousand years of the earth's desolation, during which time the saints will be in heaven, sitting in judgment,<sup>202</sup> the wicked will be raised, and then will Satan be loosed from his bondage for a little season. He will go out to deceive them, making them believe that they can capture the holy city, the New Jerusalem, which in the meantime has come down from God out of heaven. Then will the final destruction of the wicked, together with Satan and his angels, take place, in the lake of fire which will cleanse and renew the earth.

## **2 Peter 3**

<sup>12</sup> The elements shall melt with fervent heat.

<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

## **Psalms 37**

<sup>9</sup> For evildoers shall be cutoff; but those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth.

<sup>10</sup> For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

<sup>11</sup> But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

This is the case in outline, as nearly in the language of Scripture as it can be given. It is not our opinion, but God's Word, and our only conclusion in the matter is that it is true.

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<sup>202</sup> Compare *Psalms* 149.

## 60. Christ Our Brother

Present Truth, September 5, 1901

Who is the “him” spoken of in *Hebrews* 2:13?

The reason why I ask this question is this: to me it seems, from the context, that “him” must refer to man. From a human standpoint at least, it seems exceedingly strange that God, Christ could put His trust in man,—and still that is just what it seems to me He did when He risked everything to save him.

I have asked several concerning this word, and nearly all, including our very best Bible students, or teachers, have thought that “him” has reference to the Father, in whom Christ put His trust when He took upon himself to save man. Now I do not doubt for a moment that Christ always trusted in the Father, but I fail to see the logic of Paul’s presenting that fact in such a connection, for he is not giving some Scripture evidences that Christ is not ashamed to call man His brother.

I would be very thankful for an answer to this question. If it is man, it is plain enough to me, and a most wonderful thought; while if it be God, I would be glad to have a word of explanation as to how that can be harmonized with the context.

**L**ET us first ascertain from the text and the context exactly what the writer says, and then we can take a little time to consider the reason why he says it, and the lesson that it contains for us.

The passage, as you well know, sets forth Christ’s oneness with man. The first chapter of *Hebrews* presents Christ as greater than the angels,—the effulgence of God, and having by birthright inheritance the name of God,—while the second chapter presents Him in man’s place,

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>17</sup> ...in all things...made like unto His brethren.

Man, crowned in the beginning with glory and honor, a king, has lost his crown of glory, and well-nigh, obliterated the Divine likeness from his soul. Still, however far he has wandered, the prodigal is the Father's son, having the same Source of life as Christ, the only-begotten Son. It is this that is stated, and supported by citations from Christ's words, in the following verses:

## Hebrews 2

<sup>11</sup> Both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of One: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

<sup>12</sup> Saying, I will declare your name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto You.

<sup>13</sup> And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God has given me.

Here are three distinct sayings of Christ. The first one is from *Psalm 22:22*. The last is from *Isaiah 8:18*. The second one we must find if we can. Note first the exact words.

<sup>13</sup> I will put my trust in [—whom?] in Him,

—not in them. If the brethren were referred to, we should expect it to read,

“I will put my trust in *them*,”

—but it is not so. He says,

<sup>13</sup> I will put my trust in Him,

—evidently in the One of whom are...

<sup>11</sup> Both He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified.

Let us now see if we can find any place where these words here quoted are used. Negatively, we may read

## John 2

<sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in His name, because they saw the miracles which He did.



<sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because He knew all men,

<sup>25</sup> And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.

Or, as in the *Revision*,

### **John 2 [RV]**

<sup>24</sup> Jesus did not trust himself unto them.

This seems quite conclusive. We may add to it the frequent warnings against putting trust in man. For instance:

### **Psalm 118**

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

<sup>8</sup> It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>3</sup> We are the circumcision [the true children of faith], which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

And so far is this carried, that it applies even to Christ's flesh; for the same apostle says:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>16</sup> Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.

Christ did not even trust in himself as man, for He said:

### **John 5**

<sup>30</sup> I can of my own self do nothing;

—and,

<sup>19</sup> Verily, verily I say, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what He sees the Father do.

These statements are sufficient on the one side; let us now look at the other side. Jesus did trust absolutely in God. Even His enemies admitted this. When He hung on the cross, they said:

## **Matthew 27**

<sup>43</sup> He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him.

It is significant that these words are an exact fulfillment of *Psalms* 22:7-8. That psalm is the expression of Christ's sufferings, and it is from it that we have the first of the sayings quoted in *Hebrews* 2:11-13. In it we find several plain statements to the effect that Christ put His trust in God. Thus:

### **Psalm 22**

<sup>9</sup> You are He that took me out of the womb; You did make me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts.

Read also:

### **Psalm 21**

<sup>7</sup> For the King trusts in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High He shall not be moved.

The 69<sup>th</sup> *Psalms*, which is manifestly the utterance of Christ, is a psalm of trust. Read also *Isaiah* 50:7-9, the words of Him who...

### **Isaiah 50**

<sup>6</sup> ...gave my back to the smiters, and my cheek to those that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be moved.

Here is a plain statement concerning Christ,

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>23</sup> Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judges righteously.

And lastly, as showing how absolutely He was in all things like unto His brethren, we read in *Hebrews* 5 that "in the days of His flesh" He prayed for deliverance...

## Hebrews 5

<sup>7</sup> ...with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him,

—just as the weakest one of us is constrained to do.

Now I know that you have been almost impatient while we have been reading these texts, because your real difficulty has not been touched. The fact that Christ trusted in God for everything here on earth, even for deliverance from the power of temptation, you know as well as I; your question is,

What reason is there for mentioning that fact in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of *Hebrews*, to show that He is not ashamed to call man His brother?

Why, that is just what most strikingly shows His relationship to us,—His oneness with humanity. If He had nothing in common with us, He might be ashamed to call us brethren; but “compassed with infirmity,”<sup>203</sup> compelled to trust God for deliverance just as we must,—His nature our nature,—He is our Brother; He is one with us in all things.

- We can go to Him with our confidences more freely than to any earthly friend, because we know that by painful experience He can sympathize with us better than anybody on earth.
- He will not despise us on account of our weakness, because He himself knows by experience how utterly helpless is humanity.
- Nothing of myself that I can reveal to Him will surprise Him, or cause Him to turn away in scorn; for He has struggled with all the besetments of our common human nature.

But He sinned not; and as surely as He is our Brother, His victory is our victory. Nothing can bring Him more lovingly and tenderly and helpfully near to us than these words of His,

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<sup>203</sup> *Hebrews* 5:2.

## **Hebrews 2**

<sup>13</sup> I will put my trust in Him.

In this He identifies himself absolutely with us, and that is our assurance of perfect victory.

## **1 John 4**

<sup>17</sup> As He is, so are we in this world,

—because as we are, so is He.

# 61. Prayers for the Dead

Present Truth, September 12, 1901

I should like to ask a question which has engaged my attention for some time. It is this. A friend of mine holds the idea of prayers for the dead, and says he believes that such prayers are of avail. He quotes the following verses in support of his belief: *1 Peter* 4:6; 3:18-22. I fail to see any dead meant here, other than those who are dead in sin. I have told him so, but cannot convince him, so I told him I would ask the Editor of *Present Truth* about it.

**W**ITHOUT stating any opinion about the matter, let us study it, and find the truth from the Bible itself. We will come at once to the very heart of the question, and consider the two texts to which you refer.

Every text of Scripture means exactly what it says, but all texts do not say what many people, by a too hasty reading of them with preconceived ideas, think that they say. It is best to take the texts in their order, so we will first read:

## **1 Peter 3**

<sup>18</sup> Christ also has once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

<sup>19</sup> By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

<sup>20</sup> Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

## **What Does the Text Say?**

Read it again, read it a dozen times, and you will see that it says not a word about praying for the dead. Let us analyze it, taking each clause separately, and find out exactly what the text does say.

- a) Christ once suffered for us, that He might bring us to God.

- b) He was put to death in the flesh.
- c) He was quickened [made alive] by the Spirit.
- d) By this same Spirit He went and preached to the spirits in prison.
- e) They were in prison—"kept under the law, shut up"<sup>204</sup> "when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."
- f) It was in the days of Noah, while the ark was building, that Christ, by the Spirit, preached to the wicked spirits before the flood. God's longsuffering waited one hundred and twenty years, while His Spirit was working with that sinful generation; yet He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."<sup>205</sup>

That is the sum of this text, so far as the present question is concerned; the instruction that we are to receive from it is this, that the preaching of the Gospel is by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. The public ministry began with these words:

### **Isaiah 61**

<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and *the opening of the prison* to them that are bound.

The captives in prison are the bondservants of sin,<sup>206</sup>

### **2 Peter 2**

<sup>19</sup> ...the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

## **Suffering and Living with Christ**

Now let us read the next text referred to, which is but a continuation of the first one. We will read enough to get the full connection:

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<sup>204</sup> See *Galatians* 3:22-23.

<sup>205</sup> *Genesis* 6:3.

<sup>206</sup> *John* 8:34.

## **1 Peter 4**

<sup>1</sup> Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin;

<sup>2</sup> That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

<sup>6</sup> For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

## **Hebrews 9**

<sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment:

<sup>28</sup> So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

## **John 5 [RV]**

<sup>24</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my Word, and believes Him that sent me, has eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Christ's sufferings in the flesh were for us. How much He suffered cannot be put into words, but it is certain that He suffered all that the wicked will have to suffer in punishment for their sins. This may be learned from *Psalms* 22:1, and especially from:

## **Isaiah 53**

<sup>5</sup> He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Now we are to be armed with the same mind, sharing His sufferings. Joined to Him in...

## **Philippians 3**

<sup>10</sup> ...the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death,

—we live with Him; we have thus passed out of death into life, and so we do not come into Judgment. We enter with Christ into the heavenly places, experiencing the powers of the world to come and to us it is the same as though the Judgment were already past.

It was to this end that the Gospel was preached to them that are dead. Note well that the text does not say that the Gospel was preached to them that *were* dead, nor that it *is preached* to them that are dead, but that *was preached* to them that *are dead*. The reference is clearly to the time spoken of in *1 Peter* 3:19-20. The preaching was in the days of Noah, to those who were the captives of sin.

The latter part of *1 Peter* 4:6 itself shows most plainly that the preaching of the Gospel to them that are dead was while they were still living. The Gospel was preached to them, in order...

#### **1 Peter 4**

<sup>6</sup> ...that they might be judged according to *men in the flesh*, but *live according to God in the Spirit*.

The Gospel was preached to them for the very same purpose that it is now preached to us,—that while still in the flesh they might pass out of death into life, and thus pass the Judgment, and henceforth live in the flesh as though their bodies were already made spiritual.

#### **Romans 8**

<sup>9</sup> You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Now we have before us exactly what the two texts say, and just what they mean. They say nothing whatever about preaching to dead men or about praying to or for them; and neither here nor anywhere else in the Bible is there the slightest hint of any such thing. The two texts referred to teach us a most precious lesson, however, as to the power of the Gospel when it is received into



the heart; and it is very sad indeed that so few who read them get this real, personal help and comfort from them.

We might leave the subject here, as the question is answered; but while we are about it we might as well see how utterly foreign to the Bible the thought or practice of praying for the dead is, and also what is involved in that teaching.

### **Prayers for the Dead and Purgatory**

Have you ever thought what inevitably follows the teaching of prayers for or preaching to the dead? it means, of course, that they are on probation, the same as the living, and it is, in fact, nothing but the doctrine of purgatory. This is plain enough; for if we were to pray for the dead it could be only for their deliverance from some sad state. So purgatory is part of the doctrine of prayers for the dead.

### **Prayers to the Dead**

Prayers for the dead leads also to prayers *to* them. Bear in mind that no intelligent Roman Catholic professes to pray to the dead as to God; the invocation of saints is the request for them to make supplication for us, just as we ask our friends here on earth to pray for us. We all know that...

#### **James 5 [RV]**

<sup>16</sup> ...The supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working,

—and we like to know that good people as praying for us. It is with the idea that the dead are able to do all that the living can do, that Roman Catholics pray to them, asking an interest in their prayers. Now if it were of any use to pray for the dead, it would just as certainly be profitable to ask some of them to pray for us; and so with prayers for the dead we have another Papal dogma.

### **Universal Salvation**

But this is not all: If it were true that the dead are on probation, in a condition where prayers can benefit them, then we must come

to the conclusion that there will be probation for sinners until every one is saved, and that no sinner will ever be destroyed. In short, probation after death means universalism; for if the preaching of the Gospel in life has not been sufficient to decide a man's destiny, there is no assurance that it would be more efficacious after death. If God must continue probation to the impenitent, after death, in order that they may "have a fair chance," then He must continue it indefinitely.

We need not pursue this line any further, but if we should, we should find all manner of contradictions and absurdities; for when the truth of the Bible is once departed from, there is an end to all consistency.

### **A Denial of the Atonement**

One other thing, however, must be mentioned, and that is that the idea so commonly misread into *1 Peter* 3:19, that between His crucifixion and His resurrection Christ went and preached to dead people, is subversive of the very foundation of the Gospel. The very statement of it is a denial of the death of Christ, a denial, in fact, that there is any such thing as death.

That false idea would make everything to be a sham. It would have it that Christ did not really die, but only appeared to, and thus leave the world without any propitiation for sin. But then it really denies that there is any difference between the dead and the living, and so that there is any such thing as death, and consequently no need of salvation. And finally, it directly contradicts the Bible, and so makes havoc of everything.

### **The State of the Dead**

What says the Bible?

#### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything...

<sup>6</sup> Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.

<sup>10</sup> Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither you go.

### **Psalm 146**

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom is no help.

<sup>4</sup> His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

### **Psalm 115**

<sup>17</sup> The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

Hezekiah, rescued from death, said to the Lord:

### **Isaiah 38**

<sup>17</sup> You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for You have put all my sins behind your back.

<sup>18</sup> For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You; they that go down into the pit [the grave] cannot hope for your truth.

<sup>19</sup> The living, the living, he shall praise You as I do this day.

Death is the opposite of life; but the idea that the dead are conscious and capable of being preached or prayed to, having the same thoughts and feelings that living people do, puts no difference between death and life, and makes nonsense of the distinction. Note, however, the marked contrast in the text last quoted.

That the dead are not alive, is shown by *Revelation 20:4-6*, where we read of the righteous dead that:

### **Revelation 20**

<sup>4</sup> ...they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

<sup>5</sup> ...This is the first resurrection...But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

So we see that the dead cease to live, and then live again, which is consistent and reasonable.

Much more might be cited from the Scriptures, but this is sufficient to show that the idea that the dead need our prayers, or are in a condition to be benefited by them, is pagan superstition, transmitted to this generation through the Papacy, and wholly destitute of any scriptural basis.

It is opposed to common sense, in that it makes the terms death and life meaningless, and it is opposed to the Gospel, in that it robs the sacrifice of Christ of its reality.

## 62. God's Promise and Its Fulfillment

Present Truth, September 19, 1901

If, as has been stated, Abraham and his seed have not yet entered the promised land, how does that harmonize with the statement in *Joshua* 30:43-45?

**I**T IS hardly correct to say that the children of Israel did not enter into the promised land, and that has not been stated in *Present Truth*. What has been said is this, that the promises to Abraham and to His seed have not yet been fulfilled.

This we shall now proceed to examine from the Scripture, and afterwards we will compare it with the text referred to in *Joshua*. We shall find, as we study the question, that it is not a matter of dogma, but that:

### **Romans 15**

<sup>4</sup> Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Most of the trouble over God's promises, as to their fulfillment, etc., arises from a misunderstanding of what He has promised. We must therefore begin at the beginning, and know exactly what God promised Abraham.

The first statement of the promise is this:

### **Genesis 12**

<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you:

<sup>2</sup> I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.

<sup>3</sup> And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you; and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.

This promise was the proclamation of the Gospel, and would be fulfilled only in Christ; for:

### **Galatians 3 [RV]**

<sup>8</sup> The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all the nations be blessed.

And the blessing promised to Abraham comes only through the cross of Christ; for we read that:

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>13</sup> Christ [was] made a curse for us [in hanging on the tree],

<sup>14</sup> That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Now the work of the Gospel is not yet complete, and many more souls are yet to be gathered out from among the Gentiles by the preaching of the cross; therefore it is evident that the complete object of the promise has not yet been met.

Again: when God made a covenant with Abraham, promising to give him the land of Canaan for an inheritance, He said:

### **Genesis 15**

<sup>13</sup> Know of a surety that your seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

<sup>14</sup> And also that nation whom they serve will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

<sup>15</sup> And you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.

<sup>16</sup> But in the fourth generation they shall come here again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

This plainly tells us that there could be no thought of inheriting the land until after four hundred years, during which time Abraham was to die and be buried. Now, even though the seed of Abraham had fully realized the promise at the end of four hundred years, it is evident that it could not have been realized by Abraham, except by his resurrection. But that did not take place, consequently the complete realization of the promise is, to Abraham and his seed, still a future event.

We know well that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not inherit the land of Canaan, for we read:

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went.

<sup>9</sup> By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

<sup>10</sup> For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

### **Strangers and Sojourners**

So we see that neither Abraham nor his seed (for Isaac and Jacob were his seed) inherited the land. They were strangers and sojourners in the land of promise; and many years afterward, when their descendants had been settled in Palestine for centuries, and the kingdom of Israel was at the height of its glory, David, the king, prayed thus before the vast assembly of his people:

### **1 Chronicles 29**

<sup>15</sup> We are strangers before You, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are few, and there is none abiding.

Still further: That the fullness of the promised inheritance has not yet been realized, is evident from the fact that the land promised embraced nothing less than the whole earth. This we know from the following:

### **Romans 4**

<sup>13</sup> For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Much more evidence might be cited, but this is sufficient. We might add, however, that the fact that “the fathers” died in faith, not having received the promise, is proof that in order to receive it they must have a resurrection. But the resurrection of the dead takes place only at the coming of Christ; hence it is then that we must yet expect the consummation.

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>39</sup> These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise;

<sup>40</sup> God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

For we must not forget that all believers are Abraham’s seed, and heirs of the promise to him. Consequently we have an equal interest with him in the promise. That promise was confirmed to him by an oath of God, not for his sake, but in order that...

### **Hebrews 6**

<sup>18</sup> ...we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.

Now we may read the text in the book of *Joshua*, which seems to you, as to so many others, to contradict what we have just been learning. It reads thus:

### **Joshua 21**

<sup>43</sup> And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

<sup>44</sup> And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.

<sup>45</sup> There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

## **Only Believe**

If we believe every word that we read in the Bible we shall have no difficulty, but the things which seem to be contradictions will be the sources of our richest comfort and blessing. We know that



all the promises to Abraham are open to us, and we also know that hundreds of years ago God gave to His people every good thing that He had promised, without a single exception. What then must be the conclusion? Simply this, that all “the power of the world to come”<sup>207</sup> is ours now to use, if we will, in our condition in...

### **Galatians 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...this present evil world.

Can you not see glorious comfort in the supposed contradiction? Read a little further in the book of *Joshua*.

### **Joshua 23**

<sup>1</sup> Along time after that the Lord had given Israel rest from all their enemies round about,...

<sup>2</sup> Joshua called for all Israel, and their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers,

—and rehearsed before them God’s wondrous dealings, reminding them of all the good that He had done to them, and then said:

<sup>4</sup> Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.

<sup>5</sup> And the Lord your God, He shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and you shall possess their land as the Lord your God has promised unto you.

<sup>6</sup> Be therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that you turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;

<sup>7</sup> That you come not among these nations, these that remain among you;...

<sup>8</sup> But cleave unto the Lord, your God, as you have done unto this day.

<sup>12</sup> Else if you do in anywise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you...

<sup>13</sup> Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be

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<sup>207</sup> *Ephesians* 1:21.

snares, and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

<sup>14</sup> And, behold, this day, I am going the way of all the earth; and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing has failed thereof.

## **Faith Appropriates**

From this we see that although God had given the people everything that He had promised, all depended upon whether or not they appropriated them. Not a man had been able to stand before them, and the Lord had given them the land, and rest from all their enemies, yet there was much of the land still occupied by their enemies, whom they were to dispossess. And their future depended on their faith and obedience; and we know that, not believing and not obeying, they did not make the victory their own, and were themselves eventually carried away from the land.

We are in just the same position that they were.

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>3</sup> [God] has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Someone says,

“Why then do we not experience all these blessings?”

The answer is,

“Because you do not lay hold of them and appropriate them.”

Christ has given us His own peace, and that means His victory over the world; but unless our faith makes it a reality to us, it is the same as though it were not done.

### **1 John 5 [RV]**

<sup>4</sup> This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

The world, the flesh, and the devil, all have been overcome, yet we have them all to fight with; we may keep the faith, and have continual victory and peace, or we may be in constant turmoil and at last lose everything. All depends on us.

### **A Finished Work**

God's work is a finished work, finished from the foundation of the world. He himself asks,

#### **Isaiah 5**

<sup>4</sup> What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?

When Christ hung on the cross, which abolishes sin and death and all the curse, and restores the new creation, He cried,

#### **John 19**

<sup>30</sup> It is finished.

God has done everything,—has wrought all good works for us,—and we have only to enter into the rest that He has given us. Are you not glad?

#### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>3</sup> We which have believed do enter into rest.

Let us do this, instead of standing outside, trembling, hesitating, doubting, wondering why God's Word does not harmonize with our unbelief.

## 63. What Is Man?

Present Truth, September 26, 1901

The other day a letter of mine was inserted in one of our local papers, denying the assertion of a socialist lecturer, that man is an animal; and now I see it again asserted in paragraph 6, article by J. H. Kellogg, M.D., July 18<sup>th</sup>. Will you kindly inform us in your next issue if you approve of this teaching generally believed by all sorts of unbelievers as well as medical men?

**W**E MUST pay no attention to what somebody else believes or does not believe, but simply ask,

“What is truth?”

Many people are frightened away from a truth, because it is believed by somebody who is reputed to be an unbeliever, and who may indeed be skeptical about many things. We must not refuse to eat, drink, breathe, and sleep, because infidels do those things. If a thing is wrong or untrue, it is so because it is not in harmony with God’s Word, and not because a wicked or unbelieving person does or believes it.

Let us therefore have a brief study of what the Scriptures teach about man, and that will be far better than to compare the beliefs of different classes of men. The weakness and the greatness of man are set forth in the following texts:

### **Genesis 1**

<sup>26</sup> God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.

## **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

## **Psalms 8**

<sup>3</sup> When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained;

<sup>4</sup> What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man, that You visit him?

<sup>5</sup> For You have made him a little lower than God [literal Hebrew], and have crowned him with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup> You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; You have put all things under his feet:

<sup>7</sup> All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

<sup>8</sup> The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the sea.

## **Psalms 31**

<sup>5</sup> Behold, You have made my days as a hand-breadth; and my age is as nothing before You; verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

## **Psalms 103**

<sup>14</sup> He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

<sup>15</sup> As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.

<sup>16</sup> For the wind passes over it, and it is gone.

## **Isaiah 40**

<sup>6</sup> All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field;

<sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades; because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people is grass.

## **Psalms 104**

<sup>24</sup> The earth is full of your riches.

<sup>25</sup> So to this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

<sup>27</sup> These wait all upon You; that You may give them their meat in due season.

<sup>28</sup> That You give them, they gather; You open your hand, they are filled with good.

<sup>29</sup> You hide your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

<sup>30</sup> You send forth your Spirit, they are created: and You renew the face of the earth.

## **Isaiah 2**

<sup>22</sup> Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

What then is man? He is “dust and ashes;” animated clay, made from the very same ground that all other living creatures on earth are made, and breathing the same breath that they breathe; yet made to have dominion over them all, because he alone of all living creatures is made in the image of God.

Man was made to share with God the dominion of the universe, yet he was not made to be God, and can never become God. His power is not inherent in himself, but God alone is his strength. The man who knows this, and who makes the Lord his trust, acknowledging that in comparison with God he is nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity, is elevated to a position of dominion and authority with God, and is in the place of God to all the creatures that were formed on this earth before he was; but, on the other hand,

## **Psalms 49**

<sup>20</sup> Man that is in honor and understands not, is like the beasts that perish.

Now what is an animal? It is a creature that has *anima*, or breath. The primary meaning of the Latin word *anima* is, “*that which blows, or breathes*.” It is a living creature having the breath of life, as distinguished from plants.

Man, therefore, is most certainly an animal, although designed to be far above all other animals—their lord and master; but when he loses sight of his high calling, by forgetting how frail he is, and his absolute dependence on God, he loses his dominion, and

comes at last to be on a level with other animals, and even below them.

There is a mistaken idea that “animal” and “brute” are the same. All brutes are animals, but all animals are not brutes. Do you not remember the description which John gives of God’s throne:

#### **Revelation 4**

<sup>6</sup> In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts, full of eyes, before and behind.

This is an unfortunate translation, it is true, for “living creatures” is far better; but it shows that we need not be afraid of applying the term “animal” to man, when it is used even of the beings that help to compose God’s throne.

Man is the crown of God’s creation, God created him, that he might be the highest and most perfect expression of Divine power. But God’s power is made perfect in weakness, and that shows that man is nothing of himself. Whatever is attributed to man, as inherent in him, is so much detracted from God.

So many people have a horror of the term “conditional immortality,” not recognizing that it simply means that man has no life except in Christ. Our boast is not in what are, but in what the Lord by His loving power can make of us.

#### **Psalms 113**

<sup>7</sup> He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill;

<sup>8</sup> That He may set him with princes, even the princes of His people.

## 64. The Heathen and the Gospel

Present Truth, October 3, 1901

A point has arisen in discussion with certain Christians, relating to the state of the heathen with reference to the Gospel. I venture to solicit your assistance in coming to a clear understanding on this point.

These people hold that the heathen are one and all raised again during, a thousand years' millennium, and then have the Gospel preached to them, under conditions which render it easy for all to hear and accept it. They advance in proof of this, the following considerations:

1. The Gospel according to John states that the Word was "the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world." This, according to their view, is manifestly not now being done, since [again their figures] 75% of the heathen die without ever hearing the Gospel.

2. Salvation is offered to all mankind on condition of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in no other way. How then does this offer include the heathen who have not yet heard His name, and have perished in their ignorance?

3. Finally, this preaching to the heathen, and the consequent salvation of many of them, must necessarily take place in the future, and if so, when but during the thousand year's reign of righteousness spoken of [?] in the Scriptures?

The point I ask your assistance on is not in connection with the doctrines which go under the name of the "Temporal Millennium," for it is evident to me that no such doctrine is taught anywhere in the Scriptures; but I wish you to point out if there be any definite scriptures indicating the Lord's dealings with the heathen who have not heard the name of Christ, and also how such texts as *John* 1:9; *John* 3:16 [where it gives the condition of not perishing]; *John* 12:32, etc., apply in the heathen world.



IF YOU have the *Present Truth* of August 29<sup>208</sup>, you will find in it a brief statement of the Scripture teaching concerning the Millennium, by which you can see the fallacy of the views you refer to.

The preaching of the Gospel will be finished before the beginning of the thousand years' reign of the saints with Christ, and there will be no people on earth during that period, to whom the Gospel could be preached; the saints will be reigning with Christ in heaven.

This has been treated of so lately in this "Corner" that it need not be discussed at length now, and we will devote all our time to the case of the heathen in this present age.

It is very strange that people professing to believe the Bible will read a Scripture statement, and at once say that it is not so. Instead of allowing the Bible to enlarge their understanding, they make their lack of understanding the measure of its meaning. The Bible says that the true Light lights every man that comes into the world; your friends say that 75% of the heathen have never heard the Gospel, and therefore it cannot be true now; whereas they ought to say that *John* 1:9 is sufficient proof that none die without having had the light of the Gospel.

Let us read *John* 1:9 carefully.

### **John 1**

<sup>9</sup> That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.

The *Revision* has it,

<sup>9</sup> ...which lights every man, coming into the world,

—and in the margin is the rendering still more literally given:

<sup>9</sup> That was the true Light, which lights every man *as he comes into the world*.

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<sup>208</sup> See article 59, "[Christ's Coming and the Millenium](#)."

The Word of life “was from the beginning,”<sup>209</sup> and its light shines into and upon every soul that is born into the world. By that Word we live, and its life is the light of men. The Gospel is life, and every living soul of mankind is an involuntary witness to its truth.

Many hundred years ago a heathen poet, who had never heard the name of Christ, seeing the truth that in God we live, and move, and have our being, said,

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> ...we are also His offspring.

Every person with reason can see that we do not give ourselves life; our very existence is proof of the existence of a being who...

<sup>25</sup> ...gives to all life and breath and all things.

But this is the whole of the Gospel—life from God. So we know that no heathen dies, nay, no heathen comes into the world, without seeing the Gospel.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>2</sup> For the Life was manifested, [even]...that eternal Life...

<sup>1</sup> ...which was from the beginning.

The life by which all men exist is the eternal life of Jesus, which is abundantly able to save every one and all who accept it as coming from God, and who in consequence acknowledge that they are not their own.

## **Without Excuse**

In *Romans* 1:16-20, the case of the heathen is set forth so clearly that we have only to read, in order to understand:

### **Romans 1**

<sup>16</sup> I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

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<sup>209</sup> 1 John 1:1.

<sup>17</sup> For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

<sup>19</sup> Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has shown it unto them.

<sup>20</sup> For the invisible things of Him from [since] the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

If, in the face of this, anybody says that the heathen have no chance to know the Gospel, he thereby declares himself an unbeliever. The text plainly says that the everlasting power and Divinity of God, even all that may be known of Him, are clearly seen in the things that He has made, including man himself. The true Light lights every man; the most of them cover it up, and do their best to extinguish it, and walk in the light like blind men; but that light whether acknowledged or not, leaves all “*without excuse*.”

All are “without excuse,” although the natural tendency of man is to excuse himself. Thus we read:

## **Romans 2**

<sup>14</sup> When the Gentiles [heathen], which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

<sup>15</sup> Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or also excusing one another.

Every soul has had sufficient light either to save or condemn him, according as he followed or neglected it. Whoever walks in the light that he has, will have more; but one who refuses to follow the light that he has, no matter how small it may be, would not profit by more if he had it. Whoever does not accept the Gospel in this life, would not accept it if a thousand millenniums were given him in which to hear it.

Take another text:

### **Romans 10**

<sup>11</sup> The Scripture says, Whosoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.

<sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.

<sup>13</sup> For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

<sup>14</sup> How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

<sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

<sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed Gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report?

<sup>17</sup> So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

<sup>18</sup> But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Here it is plainly stated that, although all have not believed the Gospel, all have heard it; for the heavens themselves have proclaimed it. God's wondrous works declare His name, for, like the Master Workman that He is, whose works are perfect, and not to be ashamed of, He has stamped His name upon every one of them. In the darkest heathen times,

### **Acts 14**

<sup>17</sup> He left not himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

This name which God's works declare, is the very name that Christ himself declares.

### **The Name of Jesus**

The name of Jesus is not merely the five letters composing it; it is not the mere sound of a word: it is what He is himself; it is His

life. His name is called Jesus,—Saviour,—because He saves. Wherever saving power is manifested, there is the name and person of Jesus. That power is everywhere, even in our own bodies, working to repair and to restore and to build up. The presence of the power that regenerates the soul, is shown by the restoration of the body after disease, or the renewal of strength day by day.

Whoever trusts the everlasting power that he sees working everywhere, in himself, yet not of himself, will be saved, even though he has not heard the sound of the name. Abraham, the father of all them that believe, is an instance of one brought out of heathen darkness into the marvelous light of God, by listening to and heeding the voice of God within him. That voice led him out of self into God. From knowing nothing of the name of God the Saviour, he came to be the intimate friend of God, a sharer of His secrets, all by heeding and following the light that all heathen have; and Abraham's case is placed on record, that we may know the possibilities before every heathen.

Christ has been lifted up, and He is drawing all, both in earth and heaven, unto himself. He is drawing by...

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>9</sup> ...the power that works in us,

—and in all creation. The power of the cross is the selfsame power that upholds the universe; its power is felt in every man; and if all would only believe the simple truths which their daily life, yea, every breath, brings to them, they would be saved.

### **Why Preach to the Heathen?**

Someone will say,

“If the heathen have the Gospel, why need we make such efforts to carry it to them?”

When presenting this truth, I have heard some say,

“If I believed that, I should never do anything more to help missions;”

—and yet those same people continued going to church, although they had heard the Gospel preached all their lives. Why continue preaching the Gospel in this country year after year for generations? Why continue preaching to a congregation of Christians? In order that they may...

## **2 Peter 3**

<sup>18</sup> ...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not mean to be understood as saying that the heathen by any means appreciate the light that they have. Neither do all professed Christians. The abominable practices of the heathen have blinded their minds so that they have little sense of spiritual things, and they need to be taught. The people of our own land have the same need also, although to a lesser degree. We cannot be blameless, if we possess good things, and are not willing to share with those who have less.

And this brings us to the grand lesson that we need to learn, namely, that:

God does not need  
Either man's work or His own gifts.

He has committed the preaching of the Gospel to us, not because He needs our help, but because we need the discipline. He is not dependent upon man for the revelation of himself. Far from it. It is He himself who does all the work, even when we are the most active in His service. He uses men only as His instruments. If we have light which we refuse to share with others, our loss will be greater than theirs.

But while God is not dependent upon man for the revelation of himself, it is also true that the highest and most complete revelation of himself must be made through man. In all the things that He has made His everlasting power and Divinity are seen; but it is in man, whom He made to be lord of the earth, that it must be revealed in fullest measure.

When Christ comes there must be a people on earth, in whom the life of Christ is perfectly represented. This will be the fullness of the Gospel. Now among this number must be some out of the very lowest and most depraved tribes of mankind, in order that it may be most clearly manifest to all that all the lost are without excuse, and that God may judge the world. It is necessary also, in order that God's marvelous power and love may be seen.

So while we will not relax, but rather redouble, our efforts to preach the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ to the heathen, we may be sure that God is just, and that when the coming of Christ which we thereby hasten, ends the preaching of the Gospel, everything will have been done for all mankind that possibly could have been done.

## 65. A Talk About the Judgment

Present Truth, October 10, 1901

1. Over whom will God's saints sit in judgment during the millennium?

### **1 Corinthians 6**

<sup>2</sup> Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

<sup>3</sup> Know you not that we shall judge angels?

### **Psalms 149**

<sup>4</sup> For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the meek with salvation.

<sup>5</sup> Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds.

<sup>6</sup> Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand;

<sup>7</sup> To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

<sup>8</sup> To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

<sup>9</sup> To execute upon them the judgment written; this honor have all His saints.

To the Son, God says:

### **Psalms 2**

<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I shall give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

And Christ in turn says to His people:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>26</sup> He that overcomes and keeps my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations;



<sup>27</sup> And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father.

**T**HE earth was given to man in the beginning, as his dominion; and...

### **Ecclesiastes 3**

<sup>14</sup> ...whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever;

—He never takes back a gift. But the earth was given to man in his perfect state, and when Adam sinned, he lost his crown of glory, and his dominion. Only righteousness can really rule. So Christ, the Just One, has won the kingdom back, and the earth is now the rightful inheritance of the saints:

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

When Christ comes in His kingdom, sitting on the throne of His glory, He will say to the righteous:

### **Matthew 25**

<sup>34</sup> Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

The kingdom prepared for God's people from the foundation of the earth, was the perfect, new earth; but now it is marred by the curse, and overrun with weeds and thorns; and the chief of these cumberers of the ground are the rebellious ones who will not have Christ to reign over them.

Therefore when the earth is given over to the saints, they have, with Christ, the work of clearing it from its defilement and fitting it for habitation by a perfect people. This is properly the work of man; for since the earth was given to man as his kingdom, it is but proper that he should pass judgment upon offenders. So Christ says:

## **John 5**

<sup>26</sup> As the Father has life in himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself;

<sup>27</sup> And has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.

As for the righteous themselves, they do not come into Judgment at all, since Christ has appeared in the presence of God for them. He says:

## **John 5**

<sup>24</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on Him that sent me, has eternal life, and comes not into Judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

The mere fact that they are counted worthy of the first resurrection, or of being changed to immortality if alive, at the coming of Christ, shows that Judgment is passed for them. So the coming of Christ to Judgment concerns only the wicked, and it is upon them that the saints will sit in Judgment during the thousand years.

2. Will the persons reigned over and judged during the millennium be dead or alive?

Let the Scriptures answer this also.

## **2 Thessalonians 2**

<sup>8</sup> Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

## **Psalms 50**

<sup>3</sup> Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him.

## **Psalms 97**

<sup>2</sup> A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.

## Jeremiah 4

<sup>20</sup> Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled;...

<sup>22</sup> For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

<sup>23</sup> I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form, and void (Compare *Genesis* 1:2); and the heavens, and they had no light.

<sup>24</sup> I beheld the mountains; and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

<sup>25</sup> I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

<sup>26</sup> I beheld and in, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down in the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.

<sup>27</sup> For thus has the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

<sup>28</sup> For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black; because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

This presents the earth as it was in the beginning, before any living thing was created—"the deep," an abyss, the bottomless pit, into which Satan is to be cast and shut up for a thousand years; for the Greek word rendered "bottomless pit" in *Revelation* 20:1, 3, is the same that appears in *Genesis* 1:2, in the *Greek Version*, the *Septuagint*. The wicked will be all dead during that thousand years; for:

## Jeremiah 25

<sup>32</sup> Thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

<sup>33</sup> And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

## Isaiah 24

<sup>17</sup> Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.

<sup>18</sup> And it shall come to pass, that he that flees from the noise of the fear, shall fall into the pit; and he that comes up out of the midst of the pit, shall be taken in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

<sup>19</sup> The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

<sup>20</sup> The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall and not rise again.

<sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high (compare *Ephesians* 6:12), and the kings of the earth that are upon the earth.

<sup>22</sup> And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit; and after many days shall they be visited.

“They shall be visited” at the close of the one thousand years; for then the second resurrection will take place,—the resurrection to the announcement and execution of Judgment. This resurrection will be necessary, in order that all who have ever lived upon the earth may be together at one time, when all the thoughts and actions of men, and all of God’s dealings with them, will be set forth, so that every one may confess that God is just, and on bended knees swear that all His ways have been right.

3. Where will these judges be enthroned, and where will the judged persons exist during the millennium?

The texts already cited show that the judged persons—the wicked—will have no existence during the millennium. Only Satan and his angels will inhabit the desolate earth during that time. Satan can then see to what he would have brought heaven itself, if he had been allowed to stay there. Then he will realize that his kingdom is a prison-house of death, and that his freedom is bondage. The picture of that time is presented to us in advance, in

order that we may see the inevitable result of Satan's rule, and throw off his yoke in time.

As to the judges, who live and reign with Christ a thousand years, they will be in heaven. There is where the New Jerusalem, the capital of the new earth is, so that they will actually have taken possession of their inheritance. The thousand years of Judgment will be the preliminary work of clearing their land of its encumbrances, and fitting it for habitation.

4. What will become of the earth on which we live, during the millennium?

This has already been answered. It will be desolate, "without form, and void."<sup>210</sup> It will be the bottomless pit, or the abyss, "the deep,"<sup>211</sup> as in the beginning. It will be awaiting the final act in the new creation.

5. Will the new earth (*Revelation* 21:1) be the present earth simply purified by the fires of judgment, as it was by the water at the deluge, or will the new heaven and the new earth be as new a creation as recorded in *Genesis* 1:1?

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>5</sup> He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new.

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>3</sup> And there shall be no more curse.

It was not so at the deluge. There was no purification of the earth—only the destruction of the wicked; the curse was more marked after the flood than it was before. But the fires of the last Judgment will make the earth absolutely pure, so that it will be a new creation, just as in the beginning. It will be "the first dominion"<sup>212</sup> restored.

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<sup>210</sup> *Jeremiah* 4:23.

<sup>211</sup> *Genesis* 1:2.

<sup>212</sup> *Micah* 4:8.

## 2 Peter 3

<sup>13</sup> We, according to His promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

6. "We shall reign on the earth." *Revelation* 5:10. How long? and when will that reign begin?"

## Daniel 2

<sup>44</sup> And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people.

## Daniel 7

<sup>18</sup> The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

<sup>27</sup> The kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

Christ makes His people kings and priests. All who are loosed from their sins in His blood are that now, the extent of their empire being their own bodies. God will not have in His universe, when restored to His sway, any lower rank than kings. All will be kings, and all will reign for ever and ever. The reign with Christ over the earth will begin at His coming; the first thousand years will be passed in heaven, in the New Jerusalem, and then the city will come down on the earth, where they will continue their reign to all eternity.

This is as far as we can carry this conversation this week. Next week, God willing, we will resume it, and answer the remaining questions before us on this subject. But we must not dismiss the subject, even for a week, without seeing the practical lesson for us in all this. It is suggested in these words:

## Isaiah 13

<sup>4</sup> He shall not fail, nor be discouraged until He have set judgment in the earth.

Also see *1 Corinthians* 6:2-3, already quoted. Sin is blindness and ignorance; it deceives the mind, and perverts and destroys the judgment. Christ's work is to restore that which was lost, and to establish judgment in the earth.

The only change that will take place in God's people at the coming of Christ, will be the changing of their bodies from mortal to immortal; their minds and characters will undergo no sudden change, but will go on developing and expanding day by day throughout eternity. Therefore we see that even in this life, and in these mortal bodies of ours, Christ will by His gracious Spirit develop such judgment as will be sufficient to decide upon everything that has occurred since the foundation of the world. God says,

### **Isaiah 52**

<sup>13</sup> My servant shall deal prudently,<sup>213</sup>

—and now is the time. What a glorious prospect! It is necessary for us to know what God designs for us, in order that we may plan for it, and yield ourselves to His working. But if such marvelous attainments in judgment are to be ours in only a little while, is it not time for us to cease all petty debate and strife, and the contemplation of everything that tends to degrade the mind?

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<sup>213</sup> Prudently: in a wise, judicious, discreet, or careful manner.

## 66. Righteous Judgment

Present Truth, October 17, 1901

### Matthew 19

<sup>27</sup> Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed You; what shall we have, therefore?

<sup>28</sup> And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That you which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Where will the apostles and the Israelites be when the former judge the latter? and will the judged be dead or alive?

THE text answers the question. It is “in the regeneration when the Son of man sits on the throne of His glory.” It is the time when all things are regenerated, made new.<sup>214</sup> And the people judged will of course be alive; for in that new earth state,

### Revelation 21

<sup>4</sup> There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

You evidently have a mistaken idea of the word “judging” in this place. To judge does not necessarily always mean to condemn, or to execute penalties. God is Judge to all eternity, but:

### Psalms 103

<sup>9</sup> He will not always chide.<sup>215</sup>

To judge a people means to be ruler, to guide their affairs, to assist them with the superior wisdom which one must have in order to occupy the place. There will be Government in the new earth, with God as supreme Judge or Ruler, and kings reigning under Him, not placed arbitrarily over others, but occupying the position which their nature entitles them to.

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<sup>214</sup> See *Revelation* 21:1, 5.

<sup>215</sup> Chide: to express disapproval of; scold; reproach.



We are too apt to get our ideas of Government from what exists on this earth. On the contrary, we should get it from the Lord. He is our Shepherd; but in the Bible a shepherd is a ruler. Thus in *Matthew 2:6*, we read that God says to Bethlehem,

### **Matthew 2**

<sup>6</sup> Out of you shall come a Governor that shall *rule* my people Israel,

—and the margin has “feed.” He who can render the people the greatest service will occupy the highest place in the kingdom of God, and all will see that it is just as it ought to be, and the only thing that could be.

### 2. Where and when will *Isaiah 65:17-25* be fulfilled?

Here again the text answers the question.

### **Isaiah 65**

<sup>17</sup> Behold, I create new heavens and the new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

<sup>18</sup> But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy,

—says the Lord. The verses referred to describe the state of things beginning with the destruction of sinners and the renewing of the earth, and reaching on indefinitely through eternity.

<sup>20</sup> There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that has not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.

If a sinner be a hundred years old at the time of execution of judgment upon the ungodly, he will be but a child in comparison with the saints who will then have spent a thousand years in the New Jerusalem; and he “shall be accursed,” for:

## **Ecclesiastes 6**

<sup>8</sup> If a man beget a hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.

The wicked have been destroyed, the saints...

## **Isaiah 65**

<sup>21</sup> ...shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

<sup>22</sup> They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of the tree are the days of my people, and my elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

### **3. Was Daniel an Israelite or a Christian?**

Both; for there is no difference; the two terms describe the same people. This question is answered by considering the meaning of the word “Israel.” It signifies a Prince of God, or one who prevails or overcomes.<sup>216</sup> Christ says:

## **Revelation 3**

<sup>21</sup> To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in His throne.

All Israelites, therefore, will sit with Christ in His throne; and none others will, for none but overcomers can share His kingdom.

Christ has overcome. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and has prevailed over all foes.<sup>217</sup> He has power as a prince with God and with men,<sup>218</sup>—even all power in heaven and earth.<sup>219</sup> Therefore His name is Israel, and by that name He is addressed in *Isaiah* 49:3. There can be no doubt but that this Scripture primarily refers to Christ, as we can see by reading it.

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<sup>216</sup> Read *Genesis* 32:24-28.

<sup>217</sup> *Revelation* 5:5.

<sup>218</sup> *Genesis* 32:28.

<sup>219</sup> *Matthew* 28:18.

## Isaiah 49

<sup>1</sup> Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, you people, from far; The Lord has called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother has He made mention of my name.

<sup>2</sup> And He has made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand has He hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in His quiver has He hid me;

<sup>3</sup> And said unto me, You are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

Since Christ himself is Israel, it is self-evident that every Christian is an Israelite, and every Israelite a Christian. All who are...

## Ephesians 2

<sup>20</sup> ...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

<sup>21</sup> In whom all the building, fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

<sup>19</sup> ...are no more strangers and foreigners,

<sup>12</sup> ...aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,

<sup>19</sup> ...but [are] fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

The children of God by faith in Christ Jesus are Israelites, members of the commonwealth of Israel. Daniel was “an Israelite indeed,”<sup>220</sup> a Christian, and his “people”<sup>221</sup> are all who are Christ’s.

4. Has reconciliation been made for iniquity?

Yes, verily;

## 1 Peter 3

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also has one suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

## Colossians 1

<sup>19</sup> For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;

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<sup>220</sup> *John* 1:47.

<sup>221</sup> *Daniel* 10:14; 12:1.

<sup>20</sup> And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

<sup>21</sup> And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled

<sup>22</sup> In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight.

### **Romans 5** [margin]

<sup>1</sup> Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

<sup>10</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

<sup>11</sup> And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Still more than this.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

<sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

5. Has everlasting righteousness been brought in?

Most assuredly; for Christ is our righteousness, and “His righteousness is everlasting.”<sup>222</sup>

### **Romans 3**

<sup>22</sup> The righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, [is] unto all and upon all them that believe.

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<sup>222</sup> *Psalm* 119:142.; 112:3, 9.

His righteousness is as enduring as He himself. Do you believe that God forgives sins? He says so.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanses from all of righteousness.

This He does by importing His own righteousness to take the place of our sins, which He remits, sends away, as far from us as the east is from the west.<sup>223</sup> Then just as we believe this, may we know that “it will last.”

The fear is often expressed that some new convert “will not hold out,” and many people are afraid to testify to the salvation which they have from God, lest it should not last, and they be put to shame for their boasting. Know, then, that:

### **Isaiah 26**

<sup>4</sup> ...in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength,

—and none that boast of His power will ever be put to shame.<sup>224</sup>

### **Isaiah 50**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

<sup>8</sup> And He is near that justifies me [makes me righteous].

By bringing in everlasting righteousness Christ has made an end of sins. He condemned, put to death, sin in the flesh, so that...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Both sin and death have been overcome, so that...

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<sup>223</sup> *Psalm 103:12.*

<sup>224</sup> *Joel 2:27.*

**Romans 8**

<sup>37</sup> In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

**1 John 5 [RV]**

<sup>4</sup> This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

God has done everything that possibly can be done for mankind. His work is finished, so that when we believe, and thus receive His work, we enter into rest—rest from sin, even while the battle continues to rage. Therefore,

**Isaiah 26**

<sup>4</sup> Trust in the Lord for ever.

## 67. The Sabbath and Christ

Present Truth, October 24, 1901

In *Colossians* 2:16-17 we read that we are not to let anyone judge us in respect to the Sabbath days “which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” If the Sabbath is a shadow, the body being Christ, does it not necessarily pass away with the coming of Christ, like all other shadows?

**I**T IS a great mistake to draw conclusions from a single sentence taken out of the body of the text without any consideration of the connection in which it stands. While it is true that the Bible in every place means just what it says, it is also true that in order to know just what it says in any place we must know what goes before it. You know well how that by taking a single sentence or part of a sentence out of a man’s speech he can be made to appear to say something directly contrary to what he means.

Now of all the people whom I have heard quote *Colossians* 2:16-17 against Sabbath-keeping and also against any instruction about healthful diet, I have never seen one who could give even an outline of the contents of the chapter, or who had tried to follow the line of the Apostle Paul’s argument. We have not time nor space now to go into the whole subject at length, but I think it will not be difficult to enable you to see at least what the text in question does not teach.

First of all, then, the Sabbath of the Lord,—the seventh day of the week,—is not a shadow of something to come, but a memorial of something already done.

### **Genesis 2**

<sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

<sup>9</sup> Six days shall you labor, and do all your work:

<sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work;...

<sup>11</sup> 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.

### **Psalm 111**

<sup>2</sup> The works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein,

—because it is in the works of His hands that His people rejoice and triumph.<sup>225</sup>

<sup>3</sup> His work is honorable and glorious; and His righteousness endures for ever.

<sup>4</sup> He has made His wonderful works to be remembered.

Or, more literally, as indicated by Young,

“He has made a memorial for His wonderful works,”

—and that memorial is the Sabbath. The Sabbath was before the Gospel, because it originated in Eden, before sin entered into the world. Hence it is impossible that it should be in any sense whatever a shadow or sign of something connected with the Gospel.

It is, indeed, the substance, to which the Gospel endeavors to bring us. There were sabbaths, not weekly, however, but yearly, connected with the Jewish round of service, and designed to illustrate some feature of the Gospel. These, of course, were...

### **Colossians 2**

<sup>17</sup> ...a shadow of things to come.

They would never have been given if it had not been for sin and unbelief; and of them we need not now speak particularly; but the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is something far different.

Though the Sabbath is not a shadow, it is a positive assurance of something to come. Thus: It originated in Eden, and is insepa-

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<sup>225</sup> *Psalm 92:4.*



rably connected with the earth in its new, perfect state. It is the seal which God set on His works, to show that they were finished and perfect. The earth is now very imperfect; yet:

### **Ecclesiastes 3**

<sup>14</sup> Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever;

—therefore it is certain that the present state of the earth must be only incidental and temporary, and that it must again become as new and perfect as in the beginning. The Sabbath is the assurance of this, for it brings Eden to us. The earth is now cursed, but one part of it, Eden, was not; and the Sabbath brings us its blessing. God blessed the Sabbath day in Eden, and whoever rightly understands it, and truly keeps it, has the blessing, the joy, the rest, and the power of the world to come, which is the world that was in the beginning.

### **Colossians 2**

<sup>17</sup> ...but the body is of Christ,

—for,

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>16</sup> In Him all things were created,

<sup>17</sup> ...and in Him all things consist.

The reality, the substance, of the Sabbath is found only in Christ. He who does not know the Lord as his personal Saviour, does not and cannot keep the Sabbath, though he most scrupulously refrains from labor on the seventh day of the week. The day is to him only a shadow, of no worth, except as through it he may in time come to a sense of what the Lord's rest really is. In that sense the seventh-day Sabbath may be only a shadow—an empty form; but the coming of Christ to the man will fill out the form and make it a perfect substance.

The Sabbath is a sign of a perfect creation. It not merely reminds us of the fact that it was God who created all things, but it shows us the power of creation; and its continuation to us shows us that God still lives as Creator. So as it is the assurance that

Eden will be restored to this earth, it reveals to us the power by which we now may be made new:

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>12</sup> ...meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Thus the Sabbath is inseparably connected with the cross of Christ, for:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new;

<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God.

As Christ was about to yield up His life on the cross, He cried,

### **John 19**

<sup>30</sup> It is finished,

—showing that in the cross are to be found the perfect works of God that...

### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>3</sup> ...were finished from the foundation of the world.

Instead of the cross putting an end to the Sabbath, it is only in the cross that we find it;

<sup>3</sup> For we which have believed do enter into rest.

Sabbath is rest. Sabbath-keeping is resting in God. Christ says,

### **Matthew 11**

<sup>28</sup> Come unto me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest unto your souls.

In Him we find perfect and everlasting rest—eternal Sabbath—keeping. Therefore,

## **Isaiah 66**

<sup>22</sup> As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.

<sup>23</sup> And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, says the Lord.

## 68. Calvary and the Judgment

Present Truth, October 31, 1901

How can God destroy the wicked and not destroy a part of himself?

**T**HIS question takes us to Calvary, where in Christ God gave himself for the world. To speak of God destroying himself is misleading, since God is indestructible; but if the question were put this way,

“How can sinners die, and God not die?”

—the answer would necessarily be, They cannot. There was no way possible for God to judge the wicked, and to cleanse the world of sin, but by the sacrifice of himself.

Christ was in the beginning with God, and was God.<sup>226</sup> He was the out-shining of the Father’s glory, and the very impress—character—of His substance.<sup>227</sup> He and the Father were so completely one, that in giving Christ God gave himself. This is shown in Paul’s exhortation to the elders of Ephesus:

### **Acts 20**

<sup>28</sup> Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.

We need not now go into a consideration of how and why it was that God must needs give His life; suffice it for the present that He did it, taking the guilt of the world upon themselves; for:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

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<sup>226</sup> *John* 1:1.

<sup>227</sup> *Hebrews* 1:3 RV.

And as He took the sins of the world upon himself, so He took upon himself the penalty for sin.

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>5</sup> He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.

On the cross Christ, and God in Christ, takes the punishment that is naturally due to sin, suffering all that any sinner, and all sinners together, can possibly suffer in being cut off for their sins.

### **1 Peter 3**

<sup>18</sup> Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>8</sup> He was cut off out of the land of the living,

—and that is the utmost penalty that can be visited upon any sinner.

In the cross we see the judgment and the execution of the penalty against sin:

### **Ezekiel 18**

<sup>20</sup> The soul that sins it shall die.

The cross brings salvation; but salvation is the destruction of sin; and the destruction of sin necessarily involves the destruction of those who will not allow sin to be separated from them. There was the same awful terror at Calvary when Christ offered up His life, that there will be at His second coming.<sup>228</sup>

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being;...For we are also His offspring.

God is still in Christ, bearing the sins of the world, and the cross is as real today as it was the day that Pilate gave judgment against Jesus of Nazareth. Not a soul suffers a pang that God does

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<sup>228</sup> Compare *Matthew* 27:50-52; *Luke* 23:44-45, 48, and *Revelation* 6:12-17.

not feel; for even the fall of a sparrow to the ground sends a vibration to His heart. So it will be until the last great day, when the consummation of the mystery of the cross will be seen. The anguish of Gethsemane and Calvary will be there, and God will be affected the same as before, yea, even as He now is; for it is no light thing for Him to cut off any of His members. In the statement that:

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>9</sup> [God] is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish,

—we have the truth set forth that He still suffers for sin; and some know that He will also suffer in the destruction of the wicked. The truth of this, made apparent to all the universe, is what will convince all that God is merciful in His justice, and that:

### **Psalms 92**

<sup>15</sup> ...there is no unrighteousness in Him.

At the Judgment all the world will see, and the wicked will experience, what God has suffered these six thousand years since sin came into the world.

But God has the power to lay down His life and to take it again. If He had not, the weight of sin upon Him would have crushed Him.

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>26</sup> He has...put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,

—demonstrating by the cross that although He bears it, He has no complicity whatever in it. The life that He gives is perfect and free from sin, and every one who takes it, having suffered with Christ in the flesh, has ceased from sin.

So when the wicked are destroyed, God will not be destroyed, because He himself has long since passed through the experience, in order that they might be saved from it. No new thing will then

be begun, but an end will be put to that which was begun from the foundation of the world.

This truth, that no sinner can be destroyed without causing God pain, and that He suffers all that all men suffer because of sin, is the assurance that in Him is perfect, free and full salvation for all.

## 69. Making Peace and Creating Evil

Present Truth, October 31, 1901

Please give an explanation of:

### **Isaiah 45**

<sup>7</sup> I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.

**T**HIS text has caused much trouble to many people; and this emphasizes the necessity of knowing that God is good and unchangeable, and that He cannot deny himself.

In the first place, let us refresh our minds with some statements concerning God's character.

### **Psalms 18**

<sup>30</sup> As for God, His way is perfect.

### **Deuteronomy 32**

<sup>4</sup> He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.

### **Psalms 92**

<sup>15</sup> The Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

### **Psalms 111**

<sup>2</sup> The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

<sup>3</sup> His work is honorable and glorious; and His righteousness endures for ever.

<sup>7</sup> The works of His hands are verity and judgment; all His commandments are sure.

<sup>8</sup> They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

These texts are sufficient to show us that God never does anything wrong, and that He cannot be the originator of anything that is wrong. He has no pleasure in wickedness,<sup>229</sup> and is...

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<sup>229</sup> *Psalms 5:5.*



## **Habakkuk 1**

<sup>13</sup> ...of purer eyes than to behold evil.

Therefore we know that the word “evil” in *Isaiah* 45:7, which God is said to create, does not mean sin; because what is said of God in one place in the Bible cannot be contradicted another place.

What then does it mean? Now that we know what it does not mean, we are driven to look a little more closely at the text itself, and also to examine the context.

In this case we find that the Lord is comforting His people with an account of the wonderful deliverance that He will work for them in the overthrow of Babylon. Cyrus was the visible agent in the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire, but he was merely God’s instrument. The angels of God led him into the city of Babylon just as surely as they led Joshua and his army into Jericho. So the evil—the judgment—that came upon that city and kingdom, was of God’s creation, and not of man’s. The word “evil” in this case undoubtedly is used in the sense of judgment, or calamity, as in the following instances:

### **Amos 3**

<sup>6</sup> Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people be not afraid? Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord has not done it?

The *Revision* has it,

“Shall evil befall a city, and the Lord has not done it?”

—which removes all possibility of misunderstanding.

### **Jeremiah 25**

<sup>32</sup> Thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

<sup>33</sup> And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth.

The text in question teaches us to look for and discern the hand of the Lord in the great changes that take place on the earth, and in great judgments and calamities. In all events God is working out His own purpose for the redemption of the world; and every judgment that befalls any people only signifies the near approach of the great Day of Judgment upon all the earth.

## 70. Constantine and Christianity

Present Truth, November 7, 1901

In a book called *Royal Readers*, the following appears relative to Constantine the Great:

“When going to fight one of his rivals, the vision of a cross appeared to him in the sky, with a Greek legend signifying, ‘In this conquer.’ He became a Christian after this, and always used the cross as his standard. He encouraged Sabbath observance, rebuilt Christian churches, and called the General Council of Nicaea (in Bithynia) in 325, when the Nicene creed was adopted. His murder of Crispus, his son, in a fit of jealousy, casts a stain on his memory,” etc.

This does not agree with the statements that appear in *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*. Will you help me to an understanding of the difficulty?

IT IS a matter of very small moment whether there is agreement between the statements in two books, or not; if we can ascertain the truth, it is all we want; so without entering into any comparison of authors we will go directly to the standard histories, and see what they say.

I might say, however, that the paragraph which you quote sounds like a passage from a child’s story book, but one who had heard some talk about Constantine, but had not read enough to have definite information. An author writing to give information would not speak of the alleged vision as taking place when Constantine was “going to fight one of his rivals,” but would have named Maxentius. But let us see what basis there is for the story of Constantine and the cross.

### Constantine and the Cross

The story rests on the sole authority of Eusebius, who wrote as the eulogist of Constantine, rather than as a historian. Moreover Eusebius does not tell of it as something that he himself knew, but says that Constantine told it to him “long afterwards.” I will

give the words of Eusebius, taken from his *Life of Constantine*, book 1, chapter 28:

While he was thus praying with fervent entreaty, a most marvelous sign appeared to him from heaven, the account of which it might have been hard to believe had it been related by any other person. But since the victorious emperor himself long afterwards declared it to the writer of this history, when he was honored with his acquaintance and society, and confirmed his statement by an oath, who would hesitate to accredit the relation, especially since the testimony of aftertime has established its truth? He said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eye the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, CONQUER BY THIS. At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his whole army also, which followed him on this expedition, and witnessed the miracle.

The story of Eusebius is sufficient in itself to stamp the whole thing as a fabrication. He says that the whole army “witnessed a miracle;” yet nobody ever knew anything about it until Constantine related it to him with an oath “long afterwards.” The story is utterly destitute of plausibility, but Eusebius had infantile credulity wherever Constantine was concerned.

Then after saying that it would have been “hard to believe” if it had been related by anyone else, he adds that “the testimony of aftertime has established its truth”! But how could “the testimony of aftertime” establish the truth of a thing which no one knew except by hearsay? A story does not become established by passing from mouth to mouth, although it is a sad fact, that many so-called Christian customs, and much that is called “Church history,” has no better foundation.

Dr. Murdock, the translator and editor of Mosheim’s *Ecclesiastical Commentaries*, says on this point:

I think, if there is any measure of truth in this famous vision (which I will not take upon me to deny) it all pertains to the

*dream*. But Constantine, long time afterwards, to procure for himself greater influence with the bishops, and to gain the reputation of being in high favor with God, *added from his invention* all the rest; and Eusebius recorded the whole just as *he* stated. Such frauds, in that age, were common among Christians; nor were they deemed unlawful.<sup>230</sup>

If Protestants accept the story of Constantine's vision of the cross, and the use he is said to have made of it, why do they not also make the same use of the cross the Catholics do? Why should they make so much of Constantine's Christianity, and his services to the church, when all that he did to build up "the Church" was to support Catholicism, as will presently appear?

But leaving this myth, let us have a few words about Constantine's relation to Catholicism.

### **Constantine's Relation to Catholicism**

Upon this point we need do no more than quote two of Constantine's own letters. The following is from a letter directing that the clergy should be exempt from political services, and shows incidentally the policy of the emperor:

"Greeting to you, our most esteemed Anulinus. Since it appears from many circumstances that when their religion is despised, and which is preserved the chief reverence for the celestial power, great dangers are brought upon public affairs; but that when legally adopted and observed it affords the most signal prosperity to the Roman name and remarkable felicity to all the affairs of men, through the Divine beneficence—it has seemed good to me, most esteemed Anulinus, that those men who give their services with due sanctity and constant observance of this law, to the worship of the Divine religion, should receive recompense for their labors. Wherefore it is my will that those within the province entrusted to you, in the Catholic Church, over which Cecilianus presides, who give their services to this holy religion, and who are commonly called clergymen, be entirely exempted from all public duties, that they may not by any error or

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<sup>230</sup> Century 4, Section 7, Note.

sacrilegious negligence be drawn away from the service due to the Deity, but may devote themselves without any hindrance to their own law. For it seems that when they show their greatest reverence to the Deity, the greatest benefits accrue to the State.”<sup>231</sup>

From another letter to those whom he styled “heretics,” we take the following:

“Forasmuch then as it is no longer possible to bear with your pernicious errors, we give warning by this present statute that none of you henceforth presume to assemble yourselves together, we have directed accordingly that you be deprived of all the houses in which you are accustomed to hold your assemblies; and our care in this respect extends so far as to forbid beholding of your superstitious and senseless meetings, not in public merely, but in any private house our place whatever. But those of you, therefore, who are desirous of embracing the true and pure religion, take the far better course of entering the Catholic Church in uniting with it in holy fellowship, whereby you will be able to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. In any case the illusions of your perverted understandings must entirely cease to mingle with and mar the felicity of our present times. . . . And in order that this remedy may be applied with effectual power, we have commanded, as before said, that you be positively deprived of every gathering point for your superstitious meetings, I mean all the houses of prayer, if such be worthy of the name, which belong to heretics, and that these be made over without delay to the Catholic Church; that any other places be confiscated to the public service, and no facility whatever be left for any future gathering.”<sup>232</sup>

That he was a zealous and consistent Catholic is shown by the fact that he not only proscribed Arius and his followers, but commanded that all his books should be burned, and ordered that whoever should be found secreting any of his writings should be put to death. Thus, by the way, it happens that nobody in the world knows what were the real teachings of Arius himself, since

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<sup>231</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius, book 10, chapter 7.

<sup>232</sup> *Life of Constantine*, book 3, chapter 64.

his views have come down to us only as manifestly distorted by his enemies.

### **Constantine, the State, and the Church**

The order of this heading should be strictly noted, for it accurately expresses the proper order of things as they existed in the mind of Constantine. All that he did for the church was solely with a view to its effect on the State, and he regarded himself as the State. The eminent church historian, Dr. Philip Schaff, says:

Constantine...was the first representative of the imposing idea of a Christian theocracy, or of that system of policy which assumes all subjects to be Christians, connects civil and religious rites, and regards Church and State as two arms of one and the same Divine Government on earth. . . .At the same time, however, Constantine stands also as the type of an indiscriminating and harmful conjunction of Christianity with politics, of the holy symbol of peace with the horrors of war, of the spiritual interests of the kingdom of heaven with the earthly interests of the State.<sup>233</sup>

Dr. Draper, in the *Intellectual Development of Europe* (chapter 10) also sums up the result of Constantine's policy:

The policy of Constantine the Great inevitably tended to the paganization of Christianity. An incorporation of its pure doctrines with decaying pagan ideas was the necessary consequence of the control that had been attained by unscrupulous politicians and placemen. The faith, thus contaminated gained a more general and ready popular acceptance, but at the cost of a new lease of life to these ideas. So thorough was the adulteration, that it was not until the Reformation, a period of more than a thousand years, that a separation of the true from the false could be accomplished.

And even then the separation was only begun; for the Reformation is not by any means yet complete. Time and space would fail us even to make reference to the mass of testimony to be found in

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<sup>233</sup> *Church History*, Third Period, Section 2.

the various histories concerning Constantine and his work; for it is a fact that he contributed more than any other one man, to the union of Church and state, that is, the union of Christianity with Paganism, which, when completed, constituted the Papacy.

Thus it was, as Schaff says, that...

He enjoined the civil observance of Sunday, though not as *Dies Domini*, but as *dies Solis*, in conformity to his worship of Apollo, and in company with an ordinance for the regular consulting of the haruspex,

—a piece of heathen jugglery. Remembering that none of the writers from whom we have quoted were prejudiced against Constantine, we will let Dr. Schaff sum up his character:

It must, with all regret, be conceded, that his progress in the knowledge of Christianity was not a program in the practice of its virtues. His love of display and his prodigality, his suspiciousness and his despotism, increased with his power. The very brightest period of his reign is stained with gross crimes, which even the spirit of the age and the policy of an absolute monarch cannot excuse. After having reached, upon the bloody path of victor, the goal of his ambition, the sole possession of the empire, yea, in the very year in which he summoned the great council of Nicea, he ordered the execution of his conquered rival and brother-in-law, Licinius, in breach of a solemn promise of mercy. Not satisfied with this, he caused soon afterwards, from political suspicion, the death of the young Licinius, his nephew, a boy of hardly eleven years. But the worst of all is the murder of his eldest son Crispus, in 326.

This is the man who regarded himself as a Bishop of bishops, and who “established” the Church. A sad day it was for the Church when his eye lighted upon it. And sad is it that even yet men have not learned that:

### **Psalm 118**

<sup>9</sup> It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.



However much “the Church” may boast of Constantine, Christians will make their boast in the Lord,<sup>234</sup> upon whose word and power alone Christianity rests.

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<sup>234</sup> *Psalm 34:2.*

## 71. Spiritism or Spiritualism

Present Truth, November 7, 1901

Some have told me that spiritism and spiritualism are two different things. I was under the impression that they both meant the same. I shall be very glad if you will tell me through the *Private Corner* which is correct.

**P**RACTICALLY, there is no difference, both words being used with reference to belief in communication with spirits of dead people.

It is true that the primary idea of the word “spiritualism,” is the state of being spiritual; but its most common use is to indicate dealings with spirits. Indeed, it is very rarely used to indicate a condition of spirituality, while it is used almost to the exclusion of “Spiritism,” as the name of a false religion.

For a man who repudiates professed dealings with the dead to declare himself a spiritualist would almost invariably be understood as meaning that he believed in communication with spirits.

Of course we understand that there is really no such thing as communication with the dead, but that it is the spirits of demons who deceive people with that notion.

## 72. Who Has Ascended to Heaven?

Present Truth, November 14, 1901

On page 675 of *Present Truth* (October 24), you speak of the translation of Enoch. How do you understand his translation, in connection with Christ's words in *John* 3:13; also the words of the apostle Peter in *Acts* 2:34? I shall be pleased to have some light on this.

LET us first have all the texts before us, so that we can take them in at one glance, and then we can study their agreement. *John* 3:13, together with the two preceding verses, reads thus:

### **John 3**

<sup>11</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and you receive not our witness.

<sup>12</sup> If I have told you earthly things, and you believed not, how shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

<sup>13</sup> And no man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, and even the Son of man which is in heaven.

*Acts* 2:34 is as follows:

### **Acts 2**

<sup>34</sup> For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he says himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand.

And here is what the Bible has to say of the translation of Enoch:

### **Genesis 5**

<sup>24</sup> And Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him.

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Now let us not forget that nobody who doubts can understand God's Word. It is by faith that we understand. The only way we can hope to arrive at a knowledge of the Bible, and of a solution of its difficulties, and its seeming contradictions is by steadfastly maintaining our confidence in it and in its Author.

We must know absolutely, first, last, and all the time, that the Bible is God's Word, and that, as God cannot lie, it cannot possibly contradict itself in any particular. The Scriptures do not require any "harmonizing"; they are absolutely in harmony—each verse with every other verse. Our part is simply to recognize this perfect concord.

If we attempt to harmonize two portions of Scripture, we make a sad muddle; because the very attempt shows our unbelief that they do agree. In plain words, every such attempt is a vain endeavor to make truth out of what one really believes to be incongruity.

The truth in this case is that Enoch was translated to heaven without seeing death, a thing that has happened to but one other man of whom we have any record,—Elijah. Most men, no matter how good, die and go into the grave to remain there until the resurrection, as is the case with David,

## **Acts 2**

<sup>29</sup> Who is not ascended into the heavens, but he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre remains until this day.

When the Lord comes, all the dead in Christ will be raised to immortality, and the living will be translated, as Enoch was, changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,<sup>235</sup> and caught up to...

## **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...ever be with the Lord.

The question, then, resolves itself into this:

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<sup>235</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.

“How are Christ’s words recorded in *John* 3:13 to be understood, in view of the record that Enoch was taken to be with God, whose throne is in heaven?”

The question answers itself, if we consider the words that Christ spoke in connection with those recorded in the thirteenth verse of the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of *John*. He was talking to Nicodemus about the new birth, that is, about sonship. His first words to the Jewish ruler were:

**John 3** [margin]

<sup>3</sup> Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ was born from above when He came into the world; but other men have to be born again, since their first birth is of the earth. And when they are born again, from above, as Jesus was, then their citizenship is in heaven, and they dwell and walk with God. Such can ascend to heaven, and as Enoch and Elijah did, and as all the saints will when the Lord comes at the last day.

Note the words of Christ:

**John 3**

<sup>13</sup> No man has ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.

Jesus was in heaven even while on the earth. Even so it must have been with Enoch; for he “walked with God.” He had been born from above, and when he talked with the men of his generation about heavenly things, he spoke that which he knew, and testified that which he had seen, just as Jesus Christ did.

So it may be and should be today. By His Holy Spirit,

**Romans 8**

<sup>15</sup> ...the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,  
—we are made to know...

## **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>10</sup> ...the deep things of God.

## **Psalm 25**

<sup>14</sup> The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His secret.

## **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>14</sup> But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

So the Christian may talk of solemn and joyous realities which he has seen with his Father, and to those who listen he may seem to be raving. He has been in communion with God in the heavens, and he speaks what he knows, and testifies what he is seen.

## **John 3**

<sup>32</sup> What he has seen and heard, that he testifies, and no man receives his testimony.

Only the Spirit of God can enable a man to discern heavenly things when they are spoken.

If all this seems too much to be true of man, remember that Christ spoke of himself in this connection, as He always did as the Son of man. He identified himself with men in order that men might for ever be identified with Him. By Him we have access to God, being made partakers of the Divine nature.

## **Hebrews 10**

<sup>19</sup> [We have] boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

—because in Christ we come down from heaven. By Him, and Him only we enter Heaven. Since we become sons of God by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, it is true that there is only “one new Man,” namely Christ Jesus, so that even when all the saints shall have been taken to heaven, it will still be true that no man has ascended to heaven but the Son of man.

And since all this is true of us, we can see that the redemption of our body for which we wait is a natural consequence of our birth from above, and we know that we shall soon be taken bodily to be ever with the Lord.

There shall we see His lovely face,  
And ever be in His embrace.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Samuel Stennett, *A Song of Praise to Christ* (“Come every pious heart”), 1782.

## 73. Foundation Principles

Present Truth, November 21, 1901

Do you regard the following fundamental principles as the right principles for our guidance through life? namely, on the spiritual side: faith and good works; and on the temporal: health, judgment, employment, self-dependence, self-defense, contentment, freedom.

THE question indicates a little confusion of thought, inasmuch as some of the things named are not principles at all, but results. For instance, health is not a principle to be followed, but a result to be gained by following right principles; and the same is true of some of the other items. But we may nevertheless profitably spend a few moments considering this list.

### Faith the Foundation

In the first place we have faith and good works. Now faith is not only a foundation principle, but it is the real foundation; for there is no true faith except “the faith of Jesus,”<sup>237</sup> which is His life. To exercise faith is to build upon a solid foundation. When we read that:

#### Romans 4

<sup>3</sup> Abraham believed God,

—we may read, without doing violence to the text,

“Abraham built upon God.”

And this idea is suggested in:

#### Isaiah 27

<sup>16</sup> Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believes shall not make haste.

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<sup>237</sup> *Revelation 14:12; Galatians 2:16.*



He that believes, that is, builds upon the sure foundation, will stand fast when “the overflowing scourge”<sup>238</sup> passes through. We can build upon faith, because it is substantial; it is...

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>1</sup> ...the *substance* of things hoped for.

He who has a foundation of faith, and who does not swerve from it, will build upon it a superstructure of good works. Good works are not the foundation principles, but the building that is erected thereon. They are not the root, but the fruit.

### **Faith That Works**

It is very commonly supposed that faith and works are coordinate terms, as though they were two branches of a tree. Indeed, we often hear faith and works likened to the two oars of a boat. But this is altogether a mistake. We are not saved by faith *and* works, but by the faith *that* works.

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>6</sup> In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace are you saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God:

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.

He who builds upon his good works will find that he has built upon quicksand.

### **Justified by Works**

Right here the question comes up:

“Does not the Apostle James say that ‘a man is justified by works, and not by faith only’?”

Yes; he does; and some, including Martin Luther, have supposed that James wrote in opposition to Paul. Indeed, it has been stated

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<sup>238</sup> *Isaiah* 28:15, 18.

by some that James wrote to correct Paul's strong statements concerning faith. But all such ideas are most unwarranted. There is not the slightest contradiction between Paul and James; but, as we shall presently see, James emphasizes the truths set forth by Paul. The 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of *James* is good to study, to learn the true relation of faith and works. Read verses 14-26.

## Works the Proof of Living Faith

### James 2

<sup>14</sup> What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

Or, as in the *Revision*,

“Can *that* faith save him?”

What faith? Why, the faith that he *says* he has. No; the faith that he says he has will not save him, because the truth is that he hasn't any.

### James 2 [RV]

<sup>17</sup> Faith, if it has not works, is dead by itself.

The apostle challenges the man who *says* that he has faith, but has not works.

<sup>18</sup> Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

The man who has no works has no means of showing that he has faith, while the man who has works can exhibit them as the fruit of faith. Good works cannot come except from faith; and faith, if it exists, must work.

A man may say, “I have wealth,” but he cannot exhibit a penny; can that wealth support him? There we have a parallel to the question in *James* 2:14. What profit is there in wealth which a man says he has, when he cannot give security for a penny? None whatever. That does not prove that wealth has no purchasing power; far from it. It simply shows that wealth which a man only

says he has, will not buy him a meal. A very little money that a man has, and says nothing about, is worth millions of pounds that a man boasts of, but which he doesn't possess.

### **James 2**

<sup>20</sup> Will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

### **The Working of Abraham's Faith**

To emphasize this statement, and to put the case in the strongest possible way, the question is asked,

<sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

But before anybody has a chance to exclaim,

“There! I told you so,”

—the apostle continues:

<sup>22</sup> See you how *faith wrought* with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

It was faith that wrought that work. The faith existed before the work, else the work could never have been born.

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>17</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.

Now note the conclusion of the matter about Abraham. James has admitted that he was justified by works, but shows that faith was at the bottom, performing the works; and then comes this:

### **James 2**

<sup>23</sup> And the Scripture was fulfilled, which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God.

So we see that the offering of Isaac on the altar—the works by which Abraham was justified,—was the fulfillment of the statement that Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness.

That was justification by faith. The works are absolutely essential, but they cannot exist without faith; and their appearance is the proof of faith.

## **The Spirit's Power Over the Flesh**

We have now considered the spiritual side of the case, and passing to the physical side, we find that it also is settled.

### **Romans 1**

<sup>17</sup> The just shall live by faith,

—and that covers the question of health. For the term “life” is not qualified. The just have to live their lives on this earth in the flesh, and that life is the life which they live by faith. The physical life of the just person is by faith.

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The life of Jesus is to be...

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>11</sup> ...made manifest in our mortal flesh.

The health, the readiness to every good work, so that His work was never interfered with by any physical ailment, as well as the goodness that was in the life of Christ, is to be manifest in our mortal flesh. When the secret of Christ's life is known to us, and the life is perfectly manifested in us, we shall know by experience that God forgives all our iniquities and heals all our diseases.<sup>239</sup>

## **Judgment**

### **Isaiah 52**

<sup>13</sup> Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,

—says the Lord.

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<sup>239</sup> *Psalm* 103:3.

## **Philippians 1**

<sup>6</sup> Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

So the Apostle Paul prays for those in whom God has begun a good work, confident that God will make it perfect (note that it is not we who build on good works, but God who works in us), and asks that their...

<sup>9</sup> ...love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,

<sup>10</sup> That [we] may approve things that are excellent,

–or, be able to try the things that differ. Christ is the one who sets judgment in the earth.<sup>240</sup> The wisdom of this world is foolishness.

## **1 Corinthians 8**

<sup>2</sup> If any man think that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.

We have nothing except that which comes from God; and the Holy Spirit is given to us,

## **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>12</sup> ...that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God;

–therefore it follows that without the Holy Spirit we cannot really know anything.

## **Colossians 2**

<sup>3</sup> In [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,

–and:

## **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>30</sup> [He] is made unto us wisdom, [as well as] righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

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<sup>240</sup> *Isaiah 42:4.*

Again, since nothing is real that is not true, one who does not know the truth does not really *know* anything; and Christ is the truth.<sup>241</sup> Apart from Him, therefore, there is only speculation, theory. There may be a knowledge of certain facts, but no perfect knowledge of *the truth* concerning the origin and relation of the phenomena observed. Men without Christ are therefore, even at their best, aptly described as...

## **2 Timothy 3**

<sup>7</sup> ...ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Good judgment, therefore, is not a fundamental principle, but the result of receiving Christ fully into the life.

## **Job 28**

<sup>28</sup> The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

## **Proverbs 2**

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

<sup>7</sup> He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous; He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

<sup>8</sup> He keeps the path of judgment, and preserves the way of His saints.

<sup>9</sup> Then shall you understand righteousness and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

## **Self-Dependence**

What has been said about judgment will apply equally here.

## **Proverbs 28**

<sup>26</sup> He that trusts in his own heart is a fool.

There is, indeed, a Christian independence which passes among men for self-reliance; but it is only trust in God. The man who distrusts himself, and depends wholly on God, can be the boldest,

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<sup>241</sup> *John* 14:6.

and the most unmoved by the opinions of others; but the worst folly any man can commit in this world is to depend on himself.

What folly for a man who did not bring himself into the world, and who cannot create a single thing necessary to sustain his existence for a moment, and who has no power over his own breath, to talk about depending on himself! Depend on himself! What for?

### **Isaiah 2**

<sup>22</sup> Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

### **Isaiah 50**

<sup>10</sup> Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His Servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

<sup>11</sup> Behold, all you that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled. This shall you have of my hand; you shall lie down in sorrow.

## **Self-Defense**

In a man is nothing<sup>242</sup> (and the Lord says that all men together are less than nothing<sup>243</sup>) how can he depend upon, or support, himself? And when a man has no power to support himself, how can he defend himself? The thing is impossible. Self-defense is self-destruction. Hear the words of the Lord:

### **Job 40**

<sup>9</sup> Have you an arm like God? or can you thunder with a voice like Him?

<sup>10</sup> Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency; and array yourself with glory and beauty.

<sup>11</sup> Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.

<sup>13</sup> Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

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<sup>242</sup> *Galatians 6:3.*

<sup>243</sup> *Isaiah 40:17.*

<sup>14</sup> Then will I also confess unto you that your own right hand can save you.

Self-defense has no place whatever in the kingdom of God.

### **Romans 12**

<sup>19</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> Wherefore, if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head.

<sup>21</sup> Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Jesus said,

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>38</sup> You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

<sup>39</sup> But I say unto you, That you resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

He carried out His own instruction; for:

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth.

### **1 Peter 2 [margin]**

<sup>23</sup> When He was reviled, [He] reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed His cause to Him that judges righteously.

And He declared that all they that take the sword, even though it were in defense of Him, should perish with the sword.<sup>244</sup> Therefore,

### **Isaiah 26**

<sup>4</sup> Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

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<sup>244</sup> *Matthew 26:52.*



## **Psalm 20**

<sup>1</sup> The name of the God of Jacob defend you.

## **Psalm 2**

<sup>12</sup> Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

## **Psalm 79**

<sup>9</sup> Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name;  
and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for your name's sake.

This leaves us no room to doubt that God will deliver us, and cleanses us from sin, since it shows us that He himself is personally interested in the matter. He does it, not for our sakes, but to clear His own name. With what boldness, then, we may come to the throne of grace for mercy and help.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> *Hebrews 4:16.*

## 74. Women in the Church

Present Truth, November 28, 1901

Will you please explain what is meant by the following:  
“Let your women keep silence in the churches;...for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” *1 Corinthians* 14:34-35.

**I**F YOU read the whole of the Epistle to the *Corinthians* you will find that the church was in a disorderly condition, given to much unseemly conduct, and even cherishing open sin.

Corinth was a populous, luxurious, and licentious city, and the Christian church there had some in it who had been the very worst characters,<sup>246</sup> and all of them had been heathen; and it appears that many of their loose heathen customs still clung to them. As a consequence they were making the most solemn Christian ordinances take the form of heathen orgies.<sup>247</sup>

Now it is well known that among the heathen lewdness was elevated to the level of religious virtue, and prostitutes occupied a high rank in their ceremonies; therefore when we take into consideration the condition of the Corinthian church, it is not difficult to gather something, at least, of what the apostle meant to guard against by his injunction and statement.

Suppose we compare the Scripture referred to with:

### **1 Timothy 2**

<sup>11</sup> Let the women learn in silence with all subjection.

<sup>12</sup> But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

We must keep to the plan of allowing Scripture to explain itself, and therefore the words in *1 Corinthians* 14:34-35 must be read in harmony with this. The woman is not to usurp authority over the man. This is the Divine order, and it is as valid today as ever.

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<sup>246</sup> See *1 Corinthians* 6:9-11.

<sup>247</sup> See *1 Corinthians* 11:20-22.

But, still allowing the apostle to be his own interpreter, we may be sure that in no place does he mean that a woman's voice is never, under any circumstances, to be heard in the church. Thus in *1 Corinthians* 11:5, we read:

### **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>5</sup> Every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head.

Now if he meant that a woman ought never to pray or prophesy, he would have said at once that every woman who prays or prophesies disgraces herself and dishonors God; but he does not. If a woman were never to take any part whatever in church service, it would be folly to say that if she does so with her head uncovered she dishonors her head. Whether her head were covered are not, would make no difference.

Women followed Christ, together with His other disciples, and ministered unto Him.<sup>248</sup> These women remained with the twelve after the resurrection of Jesus, before Pentecost, and joined with them in prayer and supplication.<sup>249</sup> When Paul was on his way to Jerusalem,

### **Acts 21**

<sup>8</sup> [He] entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode with him.

<sup>9</sup> And the same man had seven daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

And finally, writing to the church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul addressed one of the members in particular, thus:

### **Philippians 4**

<sup>3</sup> I entreat you, also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

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<sup>248</sup> *Luke* 8:1-3.

<sup>249</sup> *Acts* 1:13-14.

There has been a great deal of irreverent and almost blasphemous comment upon the words of Paul to the Corinthians in Timothy concerning women; and some have taken the occasion to discredit his writings as being far behind the times. With such conduct a Christian can have no sympathy. Nor should we presume to interpret the Scripture by the customs of today.

We must not by any means take it for granted that the Apostle Paul's teaching in this matter is obsolete. There is certainly something in it for us; and it certainly means the same, and has as much application now as when it was written. A woman has no more right to usurp authority over a man now than nineteen hundred years ago, or to do anything that is a shame.

But when the Spirit of God opens a woman's mouth, and speaks through her, and she is subject to the Spirit, we may be sure that there will be nothing unseemly, but that everything will be done...

#### **1 Corinthians 14**

<sup>40</sup> ...decently and in order.

## 75. Baptized for the Dead

Present Truth, November 28, 1901

There are people going about teaching that a living person may be baptized for the dead, even though they (the dead) be unbelievers; and they quote *1 Corinthians* 15:29 as their authority. For the benefit of a few readers who are troubled, I shall be glad if you will explain this verse in the Corner as soon as you can.

YOU doubtless mean that the dead for whom some are baptized are unbelievers; for dead people can be neither believers nor unbelievers, since...

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not anything.

But this is only incidental to our subject.

The teaching to which you refer is no new thing; there are many who have supposed that they could be baptized for dead friends who had died in unbelief, and that their baptism would be counted by the Lord the same as though the dead friends had been baptized. Some have therefore been baptized many times, according to the number of friends they wish to save by proxy.

It is easy to see that if this notion were correct there need not be a soul lost, no matter how little belief there might be in the world, if there were only a few willing to undergo baptism an indefinite number of times. It will also be perceived that this teaching is simply the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory under another form. The teaching in question is wholly fanciful, having no shadow of a warrant in Scripture, will also be apparent to anybody who gives it any real thought.

Our only course is to study the text in its connection. The 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of *1 Corinthians* is wholly devoted to the resurrection. The Apostle is combating the idea, advanced by some, that there

is no resurrection, and he shows that there is, by the fact that Christ is risen from the dead, and...

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>20</sup> ...become the firstfruits of them that slept.

<sup>21</sup> For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

<sup>23</sup> But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.

Then he proceeds to tell that Christ must reign until all His enemies are put under His feet, when all things will be subject to God the Father; and then comes the question,

<sup>29</sup> Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

A short study of baptism will make this perfectly plain. One or two texts will be sufficient. Read:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>3</sup> Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

Baptism has reference solely to Christ in the person baptized. Only those who believe are to be baptized, and nobody can believe for another. It is evident from the text just quoted that "the dead" for whom we are baptized is Jesus Christ; and the virtue of being baptized in His name, and even into Him, is that He is not dead, but risen from the dead. And here we have the identical argument set forth in *1 Corinthians 15:28*. We are "baptized for the dead,"—Christ,—because:

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> ...He ever lives,

—and,

### **Romans 6**

<sup>5</sup> If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

If Christ were not risen, baptism would be a farce, and Christianity a sham, and there would be no salvation from sin; but His life is proof against sin, and victorious over the grave, and therefore it is sure salvation from sin and death to all who are hidden in it. When one has once died with Christ, and has risen with Him from the dead, he need no longer fear death; he is “immune;” and having passed through death, and been saved from it, he is also free from sin, its cause.

It will readily be seen that the whole virtue of baptism lies in the self-existent power of Christ,—that He could lay down His life, and take it up again. No person who did not possess this power could impart the slightest virtue to any who might be baptized in his name; neither could any living mortal impart any virtue to any other man, living or dead, by being baptized; since no one has any life to spare. Indeed no man possesses any life of his own, but all that he has is only lent to him.

But Christ has enough life to supply the universe, and still have as much left; therefore “whosoever will”<sup>250</sup> may be buried in His life, and find eternity of life in righteousness.

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<sup>250</sup> *Revelation 22:17.*

## 76. Mercy and Sacrifice

Present Truth, December 5, 1901

Does not the text, “But go and learn what that means, I will have mercy and not sacrifice” (*Matthew* 9:13), teach that the love and mercy of God are free gifts—that salvation is by the grace of God alone, without the deeds of the law, and is it not therefore a repudiation of the popular doctrine that God requires a sacrifice before He can forgive sin?

The above passage, and many others, seem to me subversive of the teaching which blends righteousness by law with free grace. In the Psalms and the Prophets we learn that God never required or desired sacrifices. I am anxious to know how such passages may be harmonized with the precepts of the Mosaic law concerning sacrifices.

**H**ERE as elsewhere we have our difficulty half settled if we hold fast the truth that God cannot lie,<sup>251</sup> and cannot deny himself,<sup>252</sup> and that therefore there cannot possibly be any contradiction or lack of harmony in the Scriptures which He has given by His Spirit.

You are on the right track, and we have only to follow up the thought that you have already suggested. Suppose we first collate a number of passages that speak of sacrifices. To begin with we will take the original of the text which you quoted:

### **Hosea 6**

<sup>6</sup> I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than a burnt-offerings.

When Saul thought to atone for direct transgression by making a great sacrifice to God, the prophet Samuel said to him:

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<sup>251</sup> *Titus* 1:2.

<sup>252</sup> *2 Timothy* 2:13.



## **1 Samuel 15**

<sup>22</sup> Has the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and hearken than the fat of rams.

In *Jeremiah* 7:22-23 we read:

### **Jeremiah 7**

<sup>22</sup> I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices:

<sup>23</sup> But this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.

Nothing could be more plain and striking than this:

### **Micah 6**

<sup>6</sup> Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

<sup>7</sup> Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

<sup>8</sup> He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

The following text makes the contrast between the form and the reality still more apparent, and shows that sacrifices without righteousness were an abomination to God, while righteousness was always acceptable, even if there were no sacrifice. Addressing those who had gone into idolatry, combining corrupt heathen practices, and God said:

### **Amos 5**

<sup>21</sup> I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

<sup>22</sup> Yea, though you offer me your burnt offerings and meat offerings, I will not except them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

<sup>23</sup> Take away from me the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of your viols.

<sup>24</sup> But let judgment rolled down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

There is only one sacrifice, and that is the one which God has provided—Jesus Christ. God does not require a sacrifice from men, but makes one for him. The idea that man can make a sacrifice that will atone for any sin is the very essence of heathenism. It comes from the assumption that man is capable of saving himself; for if man could make a sacrifice, that would atone for his sin, he would be his own saviour; and if man were capable of saving himself he would be a god himself, owing no allegiance to any other.

The folly of the idea that men can do anything whatever to atone for sin is set forth in *Micah* 6:6-7, already quoted. I have sinned; shall I now offer a thousand sheep for my sin? That would do no good, for the sin is in me, and the death of all the sheep in the world cannot remove it. Even if we should go on the supposition that sin can be atoned for by payment, I am no better off, for all the sheep that ever lived are not worth as much as one human being.

Shall I then give my firstborn for my transgression—the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? If I did this, I should be ordering something fully as valuable as myself, and which I value more highly than my own life; but still my sin would remain, because it is I who have committed it, and it is my own soul that is defiled. A sacrifice, to be of any service, must be one that will remove my sin, yea, more, remove my sinful life, and put a righteous life in its place. In short, since I have sinned, I myself must die.

But while my death in sin would blot out the sins, it would also blot me out of existence. God knows this, so He gives himself.

## **John 1**

<sup>1</sup> ...the Word was God,

<sup>4</sup> [And] in Him was life, and the life was the light of men,

<sup>9</sup> ...the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.

This Light is unquenchable,—the Life is eternal.<sup>253</sup> It is the life of God who fills all things, that is offered in the sinner, and when that sacrifice is accepted the sinner ceases to live his own life, and has the new, resurrection life of Jesus instead. So he gives himself to God, in Christ, and the offering is acceptable because it is sufficient.

It is self-evident that a sacrifice offered by a sinner is only mockery. It is really an insult to God, since it is an assumption that the sinner is independent of God, and able to save himself. Only the sacrifices of righteousness can be acceptable. Thus we read:

## **Psalm 4**

<sup>5</sup> Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

And again:

## **Psalm 51**

<sup>16</sup> You desire not sacrifice, else would I give it: You delight not in burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

<sup>18</sup> Do good in your good pleasure unto Zion: build the walls of Jerusalem.

<sup>19</sup> Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness.

## **Hebrews 11**

<sup>4</sup> By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.

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<sup>253</sup> *John* 10:28.

Abel's offering was brought in faith; but that means that it was brought in righteousness, for faith makes men righteous. The moment a man has faith he becomes righteous, and then everything he does, provided he keeps the faith, must be acceptable. The question then arises,

“What is the use of offering a sacrifice, if one is already righteous?”

This is really the question that you ask. Well, it is doubtful if anybody fully grasps the significance of the sacrifices; but one thing we may know, and that is that the offering, if it was a real offering to God, was a token of the man's acceptance of the offering that God had made. It was a confession of faith.

There were many things in the ancient Jewish worship, which would never have been given them, but for their unbelief, but we may be sure that no service was ever asked of them with the expectation that it had any virtue in itself.

When Abraham was going up the mountain to offer the sacrifice that God had appointed, Isaac said to him,

### **Genesis 22**

<sup>7</sup> Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

And Abraham replied,

<sup>8</sup> My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

That is what God has always done.

### **Acts 17**

<sup>25</sup> He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

### **Psalms 24**

<sup>1</sup> The earth is His, and the fullness thereof,

### **Psalms 50**

<sup>10</sup> ...and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

We also are His, for He has made us.<sup>254</sup> Every true sacrifice is a recognition and acknowledgment of this. When we offer to God not only all that we have, but ourselves, we confess that all things come from Him,<sup>255</sup> and that it is only by virtue of His sacrifice that we live.

In Him alone we have righteousness and strength; for He is our life and our strength<sup>256</sup>; and though we have nothing, and are nothing,<sup>257</sup> yet, having Him, we have all things, and are meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> *Psalm* 100:3.

<sup>255</sup> *1 Chronicles* 29:14.

<sup>256</sup> *Psalm* 27:1; *Habakkuk* 3:19.

<sup>257</sup> *Romans* 5:6.

<sup>258</sup> *Colossians* 1:12.

## 77. Shall Children Be Christened?

Present Truth, December 12, 1901

Will you be kind enough to give me a Scriptural reason why I should have my infant christened?

I can find nothing in my Bible authorizing the ceremony, or even bearing on it; and I cannot see what good it is for the minister to sprinkle the child, and say some words to it, which it is not old enough to understand; therefore my child, which is ten months old, has not been christened. Will you kindly give me your opinion on the matter, and say if you think it necessary?

**I**T IS impossible to give a Scriptural reason for a thing of which the Scripture does not speak; and since the Scripture says nothing whatever about the christening of infants, there is no reason for doing it, and every reason for not doing it.

We have no more right to add to God's words than we have to detract from them. To do, in matters specially connected with salvation, what God has not commanded, shows unbelief of the Bible, and disregard for it, just as much as to refuse to do what He has plainly commanded; for in either case God's Word is set aside as inferior to man's tradition or fancy.

Coming to the root of the matter, our question ought really to be,

"Is it possible to christen an infant?"

—instead of,

"Shall we do it?"

This is evident when we think of the meaning of the word, "christen." The word is simply the original form of "Christian," and means, "to make a Christian." To christen a child means therefore to Christianize it, to make it a Christian. Nothing more

or less than this is the meaning of the word; and when we know this, it is easy to see the error of the common ceremony.

It is self-evident that an infant a few days, or weeks, or even months old, knows nothing of what is being done to it in the christening ceremony. Much less can it understand anything of its supposed significance. It has no voice or will in the matter, except that a vigorous protest against being disturbed is not infrequent. The question, then, is this:

“Is it possible to make any person a Christian without his knowledge or consent?”

The answer must evidently be, “No.” If it be said that it is possible to make one a Christian without his knowledge, then Christianity is reduced to a mere empty form or name, and the ceremony by which it is supposed to be done is merely a charm or a bit of magic.

Now it is plain that those who believe in the christening of infants do really believe that it is possible to make Christians of them when they are but a few days old; and it is further evident that those who think so, attribute supernatural power, a magic charm, to the ceremony, (called baptism) by which the change is supposed to be affected.

Some will refer to circumcision as a warrant for the christening of infants. But circumcision did not in any sense corresponded to baptism; and, moreover, if it were true that christening corresponds to circumcision, then the ceremony ought to be restricted to male children.

### **Infant Baptism and Infant Communion**

There is another thing to be considered, which is now usually ignored. It is this: It is a fact that baptism is the sign of Christianity. It is the badge of discipleship. It is the outward act by which one shows one's acceptance of Christ. Whoever is really baptized is really Christian,—a member of Christ's body, the church.

## 1 Corinthians 12

<sup>13</sup> For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink in the one Spirit.

Therefore when a child is christened it is to be considered a member of the church. If it is not so considered, then it is admitted that the christening ceremony was a farce. But every member of Christ's body has not merely the right, but the obligation, to feed upon His body,—to partake of the Lord's Supper. If infants are to be baptized, then they must not be kept away from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. If their baptism be valid, then whoever keeps them from the communion is guilty of sin.

This view was taken by some of the early "Fathers," and is still held in the East. But this again makes the Lord's Supper, like baptism, only a fetish, a charm, and not a matter of intelligent faith.

### God's Grace not Dependent on Man

The common thought concerning the so-called baptism of infants is that stated by Cyprian, in his argument against delaying the ceremony. His words are:

We all rather judge that the mercy and grace of God is not to be refused to any one born of man. For as the Lord says in His Gospel, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them;" as far as we can we must strive that, if possible, no soul be lost.<sup>259</sup>

Now this in itself is perfectly correct; but when it is produced as a reason for baptizing children, it is all wrong, since it not only attributes magic charm to the ceremony, but it makes the grace and mercy of God wholly dependent upon the zeal or negligence of men. It is a monstrous doctrine, and horrible beyond expression, and a libel on God's goodness, that the salvation of an innocent baby should depend solely on whether or not a formula has been recited over it.

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<sup>259</sup> *Epistle 58.*



## **The Extent of Redemption**

But there is no need for fear in respect to children.

### **Psalms 145**

<sup>9</sup> The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works;

—and,

### **1 Chronicles 16**

<sup>34</sup> His mercy endures for ever.

A few texts will show in what relation infants stand to God's salvation; and the evil of so-called christening, or infant baptism, lies in this, that it obscures the simple, fundamental truths of the Gospel. We will allow the Scriptures to tell their own story.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>18</sup> As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

### **1 John 2**

<sup>2</sup> He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

### **John 1**

<sup>29</sup> Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away [literally, bears] the sin of the world.

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>6</sup> The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

The Son,

### **Hebrews 1**

<sup>3</sup> ...when He had by himself purged our sins [“made purification of sins” RV], sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

These texts, and many more to the same intent, show that the death of Jesus has made reconciliation for all the sins of the world. We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, who tasted death for every man—every being. By His death and life of righteousness the free gift of God's grace comes upon all men.

Do you say that this means universal salvation? It would, most certainly, if nobody rejected the grace of God; but the most of mankind will not accept Christ, nor acknowledge their need of and dependence upon God. The way of salvation is so broad and free that a man must by some means or other refuse to be saved, in order to be lost. Christ said,

### **John 12**

<sup>32</sup> I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

He has been lifted up, and He is drawing; and all but the stubborn will be saved.

Infants have no personal sins of which to repent, and are saved by virtue of the life of God poured out in Christ for all the race. As soon as people come to years of understanding and accountability, they must personally accept the Lord Jesus by faith, and show their faith in Him, not because God has arbitrarily decreed it, but because only so can they be kept from sin. Men can live only by faith<sup>260</sup>; but the tender infant on its mother's breast is the perfect picture of faith and trust. It is the farthest possible from rejecting God's grace. It shows us how we should be related to the living Word. Of this Christ bears witness, through David, when He says to the Father:

### **Psalm 22**

<sup>9</sup> You did make me trust when I was upon my mother's breast.

One thing more should be noted. The question will rise,

“Ought not parents to dedicate their children to the Lord?”

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<sup>260</sup> *Romans 1:17.*

Most certainly they should; but they should do it before the children are born, or before they are even conceived. If this be the case, as with Samuel and John the Baptist, they may be filled with the Spirit from birth; not so that they will never need to be baptized, but so that as they grow in wisdom and stature they will come to the Lord as naturally as the flower turns to the sunlight.

## 78. Not Under the Law

Present Truth, December 19, 1901

Originally published: Present Truth, August 22, 1895

Reprinted: Australasian Signs of the Times, March 28, 1904

What you say concerning the Sabbath, as a law to be observed by Christians, is not scriptural; for we are not under the law, but under grace.

**T**HIS is but a sample of numerous communications that come to us, or of statements which we frequently hear. So general is the idea that we are not to keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, because the apostle says,

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> You are not under law, but under grace,

—that it deserves special attention.

One strange thing is that we never hear that text applied to any other than the fourth commandment. But the fourth commandment is only a part of the law; and if the fact that we are not under the law absolves us from keeping the Sabbath, then it just as surely frees us from obedience to the other nine precepts of the law.

### **Practical Examples**

Suppose therefore we make the application. The eighth commandment says,

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>15</sup> You shall not steal.

But when the thief is reproved for his dishonest practices, and is told that he should live by labor, and not by fraud, he may retort,

“Your argument is not scriptural, for we are not under the law, but under grace.”

The violent man whose hand is against every man, when told that hatred and violence are murder, and that the commandment says,

**Exodus 20**

<sup>13</sup> You shall not kill,

–has as good a right to use the text to justify himself, as the man who uses it against the Sabbath.

“We are not under the law, but under grace,”

–he will say, as he makes an assault upon his neighbor.

Our friend sees a man who is going to the house of the woman whose...

**Proverbs 5**

<sup>5</sup> ...steps take hold on hell,

–and he admonishes him to turn back, quoting to him the commandment,

**Exodus 20**

<sup>14</sup> You shall not commit adultery.

But this man has heard our friends say that it is unscriptural to keep the fourth commandment, because we “are not under the law, but under grace,” and so he says,

“Have you forgotten your text so soon? Don’t you know that we are not under the law, but under grace? Instead of reproving me, you had better come along with me, for surely so conscientious a man as you are does not want to be in opposition to Scripture.”

What can our friend reply? Nothing whatever that will have any effect upon that man, unless he says,

“I was mistaken; I made an unwarranted use of those words.”

Let us hope that he would do so.

## No Other Gods Before Me

Our friend goes as a missionary to China. He teaches the heathen that the Bible is the Word of God, and to be obeyed, and an honest-minded heathen who has read the Bible for himself begins to keep the seventh-day Sabbath,

### Luke 23

<sup>56</sup> ...according to the commandment.

Our friend is shocked, and says,

“That is not at all right; you must not keep the Sabbath; we are not under the law, but under grace.”

The poor Chinaman does not see it clearly; but since it is much more convenient not to keep the Sabbath than to keep it, he allows custom and convenience to make up for the obscurity, and yields to his new teacher.

But the next day our missionary friend is shocked to find his new convert making obeisance to a hideous idol, and burning some strange smelling stuff before it. He exclaims,

“What! Have you forgotten that the great God who created all things has said, ‘You shall have no other gods before me,’ ‘You shall not make unto you any graven image...you shall not bow down yourself to them’?”

And the simple-minded man will reply,

“Me no forget; me ‘member your teaching velly well; not under law, under grace.”

By what arguments will our friend make it plain to him that while the expression, “not under the law, but under grace,” takes away the obligation to keep the fourth commandment, it does not in the least diminish our obligation to keep all the others?

We have not drawn a fanciful picture. Many hundred years ago the same argument was used that we have put into the mouth of our friend. Read the reproof which the Lord gave to Israel of old:

## **Jeremiah 7**

<sup>8</sup> Behold, you trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

<sup>9</sup> Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom you know not;

<sup>10</sup> And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

## **Only Applied to One Commandment?**

As a matter of fact the words, “not under the law, but under grace,” are not now used, at least not to any great extent, to justify disobedience to any other commandment than the fourth. And why not? There is but one reason, and that is, that in this country it would be unpopular to do so.

This would be a severe accusation if it were not for the fact that those who make use of the excuse do not know what they are doing. They may say, and with truth, that they do not wish to steal, and murder, and commit adultery; that such things are abhorrent to them.

Quite so; but that only proves that it is not the commandment of God that restrains them, but the impulse given them by their training and by public opinion. If it were popular to do those things, and they had been brought up to do them, they would plead the same excuse for them that they now do for not keeping the Sabbath.

## **Grace and Sin are Opposed**

Let us consider what the Scripture really does say, and thus we shall know what it means. The text reads thus:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

<sup>13</sup> Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive

from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.

<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Note these obvious facts:

### **UNDER GRACE = OBEDIENT TO THE LAW**

Those who are not under the law are those over whom sin has no dominion. But:

#### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> ...sin is the transgression of the law.

Therefore, those who are not under the law are the ones who are not transgressing the law, but who are keeping it.

### **SINNERS ARE UNDER THE LAW**

It is not stated, as a universal fact, that all men are not under the law, but under grace. The words,

#### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> You are not under law, but under grace,

—are addressed to those who have been...

<sup>3</sup> ...baptized into Jesus Christ,

<sup>5</sup> ...in the likeness of His death,

—and have been made...

<sup>13</sup> ...alive from the dead,

<sup>5</sup> ...in the likeness of His resurrection.

It is therefore not at all true of the transgressors of the law that they are “not under the law, but under grace.” Such persons are still under the law. But,

#### **Titus 2**

<sup>11</sup> The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.



Its object is to save men from sin—from the transgression of the law. Those to accept this grace are brought out from under the law, to walk in it without fault before God. For:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>3</sup> God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Let us take heed not to trust in vain words<sup>261</sup> that do not profit, but in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose delight it was to do the will of God, for God's law was in His heart.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> **Ephesians 5** <sup>5</sup> For this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. <sup>6</sup> Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. <sup>7</sup> Be not therefore partakers with them.

<sup>262</sup> *Psalm 40:8.*

## 79. What is a Martyr? Are There Any Now?

Present Truth, December 19, 1901

Will you please tell me what a martyr is? Is one making a martyr of himself when he gives up any thing from principle, for the sake of Christ?

**O**UR word “martyr” is simply the Greek word meaning witness. A martyr therefore is one who bears testimony. Whenever in the New Testament we find the word “witness,” as in:

### **Acts 1**

<sup>8</sup> You shall be witnesses,

—and in *Revelation* 3:14, where Jesus is called:

### **Revelation 3**

<sup>14</sup> ...the faithful and true witness,

—the Greek word is martyr. These two instances are sufficient to show the real meaning of the word “martyr.” Whoever is loyal to truth, both in word and in deed, is a martyr, whether he suffers for the truth’s sake or not. A man may be a witness for the Lord without undergoing any physical pain whatever; but since...

### **2 Timothy 3**

<sup>12</sup> All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,

—martyrdom, that is, witnessing, has come to be inseparably associated with the idea of suffering persecution, torture, and even death. But nobody can “make a martyr of himself.” Jesus said,

### **Acts 1 [RV]**

<sup>8</sup> You shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses [or, “martyrs”].

It is the Spirit of God that makes men martyrs. That is to say, only the Spirit of God can so transform a man that he will be faithful to God and his truth under all circumstances, even

though his faithfulness leads to persecution, loss of possessions and friends, and even to death.

The common expression,

“He is making a martyr of himself,”

—or the advice,

“Don’t make a martyr of yourself,”

—meaning that one is willfully denying himself something in order to show his independence, or to gain sympathy, comes from a mistaken idea. Martyrdom is not penance. A real martyr never poses, and never asks for pity or sympathy, because he does not feel that he needs any. He never whines or complains of his lot, but joyfully meets whatever comes. He rejoices to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ, and he finds in that suffering and reproach more than compensation for all he has given up.

Yes; there are martyrs now, but the world knows little of them. The history of the martyrs has never been written, except in heaven. There ought to be, and will be, martyrs as long as God has truth that can thrill the hearts of men. A true martyr is one of the most glorious sights that men or angels can look upon.

It is a too common idea that the way of the Christian ought now to be so easy that it will be impossible for him to undergo any hardship by walking in it. Yet among the greater portion of mankind, as for instance, the inhabitants of India and China, for a man to become a Christian means the loss of property and position, separation from his friends, bitter persecution, and exposure to the possibility of death. And people in Europe, who think that they ought not to be expected to suffer the slightest inconvenience for Christ’s sake, will actually give money to help make Christians in those countries. Why should a higher type of Christianity be expected in Asia than in Europe?

The truth is that the world is just as much opposed to the truth of Christ as it was in the days of Pontius Pilate. It has never been

converted, and never will be. Whoever, therefore, truly accepts Christ, must expect to suffer with Him; and whoever does not esteem it a privilege and a joy to give up everything, including life itself, for His sake, is not worthy of life either here or hereafter.

Oh, to side with truth is noble,  
When we share her wretched crust,  
Ere her cause bring fame and profit,  
And 'tis prosperous to be just;  
Then it is the brave man chooses,  
While the coward stands aside,  
Doubting, in his abject spirit,  
Till his Lord is crucified,  
And the multitude make virtue,  
Of the faith they had denied.

—Lowell.

## 80. Sunday the First Day of the Week

Present Truth, January 2, 1902

Reprinted: Australasian Signs of the Times, July 18, 1904

Can you kindly inform me what Bible authority we have for calling Sunday the first day of the week?

THE terms of your question should be inverted; for it is not Sunday that is called the first day of the week, but the first day of the week that is called Sunday. The number was before the name. Then when the question is inverted, and it is asked what Bible authority we have for calling the first day of the week Sunday, the reply must be that we have none; for the names of all the days of the week are of heathen origin.

It must be known to every reader of the Bible that from the beginning the days of the week were known only by number, as first, second, third, etc. Only one was named, and that was the seventh. Its name was Sabbath, and of course it is so still. See the first chapter of *Genesis*, and *Exodus* 20:8-11. Yet, in reality “Sabbath” is not the name, but only the description of the seventh day. The word “Sabbath” simply tells what the day is—a rest; for Sabbath is the Hebrew word for rest.

As might be expected, there is in the entire Bible no change in the titles of the days from those given in the beginning. They are always, with the exception of the seventh day as already noted, known only by number; and these titles they still retain. No matter what other names men may call them, no act of man can change what God is done. Whatever God has called a thing, that is the name of it.

The question, then, which is really to be settled is this:

“Have the days of the week come to us with the name designation that they had from the beginning, without change?”

In other words,

“Are the days now known as the first and the seventh the same ones that God so designated at the creation?”

It is easy to show that the answer to these questions must be, “Yes.” God himself keeps the record, and He can make no mistake. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt took place about twenty-five hundred years after the creation; and at that time God made it very plain which day was the seventh,<sup>263</sup> so that there could not possibly be any mistake, even supposing that the people had previously lost the reckoning. For forty years God was their time-keeper, marking the seventh day each week by wonderful miracles. Of course when they knew the seventh day, there was no trouble about the others.

And God continued to be the time-keeper when the children of Israel came to Canaan. When they forgot Him, and began to break the Sabbath, becoming like the heathen, He reproved them again and again by His prophets; and at last they were carried into captivity, solely because they had not kept the Sabbath.<sup>264</sup>

From the time of the Babylonian captivity, the Jews never again went into idolatry, but, as far as outward acts were concerned, were most zealous worshipers of Jehovah, and very punctilious concerning the Sabbath.

Then Christ came, and testified both by word and deed that the day which the Jews were keeping was the true Sabbath of the Lord. Soon after His ascension, the Jews were scattered over all the earth, yet there has never arisen any doubt as to which day is the Sabbath. If a company of Jews from every nation were to meet in London, they would all be keeping the same day of the week—the seventh day.

Having the seventh day so firmly established, it is easy enough to determine all the other days in the week. One has only to be able to count seven, either forward or backwards. There are but

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<sup>263</sup> *Exodus* 16:23-30.

<sup>264</sup> See *Jeremiah* 17 and *2 Chronicles* 36.

seven days a week, and when the seventh is reached, the count begins with the first again, the next day. The day that follows immediately after the Bible Sabbath is the first day of the week<sup>265</sup> and is now known as Sunday.

Or, to state it another way. The resurrection of Jesus took place on...

**Mark 16**

<sup>2</sup> ...the first day of the week,

<sup>1</sup> ...when the Sabbath was past.

The day was by the heathen dedicated to the sun, and was known among the Romans as *Dies Solis*,—day of the sun, or, the sun's day, from which comes our word Sunday.

So we see that there cannot possibly be any question that the day called Sunday is the first day of the week. This is established by indisputable Bible testimony, which at the same time shows that it is not, and cannot be, the Sabbath day.

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<sup>265</sup> See *Matthew* 28:1.

## 81. When Was the Sabbath Changed

Present Truth, January 2, 1902

The following questions, “When did they change the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first day? Why did they do so?” were sent to the New York *Tribune*, by a reader of that journal.

The brief answer which follows was given in that journal, and is very clear and explicit. We reprint it in hope that it may help others who have similar queries, and stimulate them to further investigation.

The only question that remains to be answered is, “How can men who know these things pacify their consciences in observing the human institution instead of the Divine?”

THE first observance of Sunday that history records was in the fourth century, when Constantine issued an edict (not requiring its religious observance, but simply abstinence from work) reading:

Let all the judges and people of the town rest and all the various trades be suspended on the venerable day of the sun.

At the time of the issue of this edict, Constantine was a sun-worshiper; he refused to unite with the church until on his death-bed (337).

At the church council in 538 the religious observance of Sunday was recommended, but very little attention was paid to it.

In 780 Aleuin, an English prelate, became the spiritual adviser of Charlemagne, when for the first time it was formally declared that the fourth commandment covered the first day of the week; but this declaration was observed by comparatively few, and for eight centuries thereafter Sunday was observed far more as a day of sport and festivity than as a religious one.

The English parliament sat on Sundays, and English courts were held on that day, down to the reign of Elizabeth.



In 1593 Dr. Nicholas Bound, of Suffolk County, England, published a work called *The True Doctrine of the Sabbath*, in which he maintained, not that Sunday was divinely appointed as a Sabbath, but that the obligation to observe a Sabbath was divine. It was as late as at the opening of the seventeenth century when the Puritans in England began the practice of calling Sunday the Sabbath.

There never were, and are not now, any satisfactory reasons given for the calling and observing of Sunday as the Sabbath day. Bishop Potter says:

Their [the Puritans] warrant for what they did [with reference to Sunday as a Sabbath], whether we look for it in the pages of the New Testament or in the traditions of Catholic Christendom, was neither substantial nor sufficient.

## 82. Baptism and Regeneration

Present Truth, January 9, 1902

I am a reader of your beloved *Present Truth* for some years now, and am always interested in its pages. I have just been reading in No. 50 about the christening of infants.<sup>266</sup>

I think some passages of Scripture are very hard to understand. Our blessed Saviour said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Again He said, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

Surely those two passages are as significant as any other part of the Bible; and yet I would not like to say that infants who are apt to die before they are baptized are lost.

And suppose a man leading a reckless life turns to Christ at the last without baptism or sacrament it is hard to say whether he is saved or not; and if an infant or grown-up person can be received into God's kingdom without these two sacraments, why were they ordained?

I do not wish to argue on the subject, as I am not a learned man. I know Christ says, "Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out;" and yet we cannot go to Him but by the means He has provided, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

I have been taught that I am born in sin, and that Christ cleanses that sin through baptism; and that seems to make out that a child cannot go to heaven without baptism, since sin cannot enter there.

I am only stating just what I have read in the Bible. I should like a little more light on the subject. The words of Christ in this matter must be of the greatest importance: "You must be born again." The thief on the cross was promised company with Christ in Paradise, and I don't think he ever was baptized; and that makes the Bible harder to understand.

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<sup>266</sup> See article 77, "[Shall Children Be Christened?](#)"

I CAN see that you are in real perplexity, earnestly seeking for light, and it is a pleasure to talk with you, especially since the Word of God sheds such clear light on the question. First, however, let me say that the one for whose special benefit the article on the christening of infants was written, was abundantly satisfied, and has expressed his hearty appreciation of the help afforded. Now to the subject.

It is true that there are some passages of Scripture that are hard to understand; but we are far on the way to a solution of all difficulties when we have once and forever settled it in our own minds, beyond the possibility of a shadow of doubt, that the Bible is perfectly consistent throughout, containing nothing like contradiction. Then when we find an obscure passage, we shall know that it is not in the slightest degree contrary to some other that is perfectly clear.

Further: we must be careful to distinguish between what we “have been taught” and what the Bible actually says; for often the two things are widely different. Take, for example, your statement:

“I have been taught that I am born in sin, and that Christ cleanses that sin through baptism; and that seems to make out that a child cannot go to heaven without baptism.”

Here we have a blending of Divine and human teaching, without distinction between the two. It is true that all are born in sin; but the Scripture does not teach that sin is cleansed by the act of baptism, nor that it is impossible to come to Christ except by baptism and the Lord’s Supper. In fact, these are but the emblems by which we show that we have already come to Him.

### **What is Baptism?**

This is the question first to be settled. So to begin with, we may say that it is not the putting of a few drops of water upon a person, or even the pouring of a basinful upon him. No infant is ever baptized, at least not in this country. The word “baptize” is a pure

Greek word and its meaning is to dip, plunge, or immerse. The word has not lost its original meaning by being adopted into our language; for a Greek word has the same meaning whether pronounced by a Greek or an Englishman. To talk about baptizing a baby or a man by sprinkling a few drops of water upon him is as absurd as to say that a man is dead and buried when he is walking about with handful of earth on his head. This is a simple matter of the right use of words. If people insist on sprinkling infants or adults, they must seek some other authority for it than Christ's commandment concerning baptism.

When we understand what baptism really means, there can be no further thought of the baptism of infants, or of calling sprinkling baptism. So let us read some statements from the Bible.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

<sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

<sup>3</sup> Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Can you not see that this applies to those who have been living a life of sin, and who consciously come to Christ for salvation from sin, that they may not live any longer therein: and that therefore it can by no means apply to infants? The same apostle who wrote this, said of the Jewish ceremonies that they could never make the comers thereunto perfect, and that if they could do so, they would not be offered year by year,

## **Hebrews 10**

<sup>2</sup> ...because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sin.

Now an infant has no conscience of sin, neither is it living in sin. It needs no exhortation not to continue in sin, nor to...

## **Romans 6**

<sup>2</sup> ...live any longer therein,

—for it is as completely dead to sin as it is possible for anybody to be. Indeed, it has never yet been alive to sin. Therefore baptism would be for it wholly a work of supererogation.

## **Baptism that Saves**

Speaking of how Noah and his family were brought safely through water by the ark, the Apostle Peter says:

### **1 Peter 3**

<sup>21</sup> The like figure whereunto even baptism does now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here it is said that true baptism saves us; yet we know that we are not saved by any human act or agency whatever, but solely by the blood of Christ.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>8</sup> By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.

This is perfectly consistent, because we are baptized into Christ's death, thus putting on Christ; and...

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>13</sup> By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.

Bear in mind that we are to be baptized...

### **Matthew 28 [RV]**

<sup>19</sup> ...into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,

–that is into Christ himself. A person is technically baptized whenever he is plunged into water; but a man may be buried in water every day of his life without ever having been baptized into Christ. Baptism is not a magic charm, but...

### **Peter 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...the answer of a good conscience,

–and this, by the way, no infant can have, since it has no conscience at all. But the point before us is that it is baptism into Christ that saves, and this can be done only by the Spirit. The visible act of burial in the water is simply the public profession of faith in the efficacy of Christ's life to save from sin, and the sign that we accept it.

In the prophets we read of a fountain opened...

### **Zechariah 12**

<sup>1</sup> ...for sin and for uncleanness.

This fountain is the pierced side of Christ, whence flowed out, and are still flowing, blood and water.<sup>267</sup>

### **1 John 5 [RV]**

<sup>8</sup> There are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three agree in one.

All are expressions of the one Spirit; for each one is life, and...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>10</sup> ...the Spirit is life.

There is water that is invisible, as Jesus indicated to the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well<sup>268</sup>; and this "living water" is the Holy

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<sup>267</sup> *John* 19:34.

<sup>268</sup> *John* 4:10, 13-14.

Spirit.<sup>269</sup> Water that we can see can cleanse the outside of the body; but only the...

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>1</sup> ...pure river of water of life...

–can cleanse the heart and conscience. Let us read another text or two.

### **Titus 3 [RV]**

<sup>4</sup> When the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man appeared,

<sup>5</sup> Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,

<sup>6</sup> Which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Again:

### **Ephesians 5 [RV]**

<sup>25</sup> ...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it;

<sup>26</sup> That He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word.

Here the living Word is presented as the water that cleanses, as in:

### **John 15**

<sup>3</sup> Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you,

–and the text in *Ephesians* is correctly rendered in the Norwegian, as “a water bath in the Word.” Baptism, immersion in water that we see, is but the sign that we accept Christ, and are baptized into Him, completely swallowed up in His life, to live and walk in the Spirit.

Now can you not see that salvation does not in any way whatever depend on any human act, either that we do for ourselves, or

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<sup>269</sup> *John* 7:37-39.

that others do for us; but that it depends wholly on the perfect life and work of Christ? God, for His own sake, and without our aid, creates us, and re-creates us. Our part is but to consent, to yield, to cease resistance; but the tender infant, that has never resisted the grace and goodness of God, has nothing to yield. It is already passive and submissive. It is reconciled to God by the death of Christ, who, by the shedding of His blood,

### **Hebrews 1 [RV]**

<sup>3</sup> ...made purification of sins,

—even the sins of the whole world. Whether the child will acknowledge God when it comes to an age when it can understand, is another matter; but he must do so for himself, for no person can accept Christ for another, any more than one can eat and breathe for another.

So we need be in no doubt about the thief on the cross, or about infants who die unbaptized, or about repentant sinners who die without an opportunity for a public confession of their faith. Neither need we be puzzled over the words of Scripture, that one must be born of water and the Spirit. There are in the Gospel no “sacraments,” in the sense that any act or ceremony can sanctify anybody; that term is ecclesiastical, and not from the Bible.

This does not by any means depreciate the importance of baptism or the Lord’s Supper; they have their place, but it is not to usurp that of the finished life and work of Christ. And to hold that some act of man is necessary in order to convey to any soul the fullness of the blessings of that life, is idolatry, and not Christianity.

### **Dedicating Children to the Lord**

Another friend comes to us in quite a different strain. There is not space for the whole letter, but the following extract from it contains the substance of the whole:



“I disagree with the whole of your article on infant baptism. You say that infants should be dedicated; why should they be dedicated? or what benefit do they receive by being dedicated? If they receive no benefit by being dedicated, the whole ceremony is vain, and pure mockery in the sight of God. And if they do receive benefit, they must be regenerated by the Spirit, because there are no half-measures with God. The child has either been regenerated, or the whole service has not been accepted by God, and therefore is vain.”

We have already considered the question sufficiently for the present. So we have only to say that our friend is laboring under the mistaken idea that the article in question advocated a ceremony of dedication.

A more careful reading would show the impossibility of this, since we said that the child ought to be dedicated to God before it is born. That means that the prospective parents should themselves be so wholly dedicated to God that they will wish nothing else for their offspring than that it shall be a child of God, and will so conduct themselves both before and after its birth that this may be the case.

The prospective parents simply recognize that children are the gift of God, and belong to Him, and therefore they covenant with God to bring their child up...

### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>4</sup> ...in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

This is the whole of the matter, and so nothing further need be said about the impossibility of regeneration being effected by any outward form or ceremony.

### **Christ's Death Not Forced, But Voluntary**

Jesus said:

#### **John 10**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

<sup>18</sup> No man takes it from me, but I lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

It was as impossible that anybody should forcibly take Christ's life as it was for the grave to hold Him. His was a willing sacrifice. Likewise when we are crucified with Him, not to remain dead, but to live with Him, it must be wholly voluntary. In being baptized into Christ, we are crucified with Him, being baptized into His death, that we may have His life; and baptism in water is the sign of this. Therefore baptism must be wholly a voluntary act, or else it misrepresents the offering of Christ.

Apply this now to the case of an infant. It is very evident that it is impossible really to baptize an infant, that is, to bury it completely in water, without strangling it, and the act might cause its death. The babe does not know enough to close its mouth and hold its breath. Consequently if it were to be baptized, the one who performed the ceremony would have to put his hand over both its nose and its mouth, and hold them shut. That is, he would have to go through the form of choking it to death before burying it; and this without the consent of the child, and in spite its vigorous protest. What a caricature of the death of Christ! This serves to show again how utterly contrary to the Gospel it is to assume to baptize infants.

In the baptism of true believers, in which case alone there can be true baptism, there is the perfect likeness of voluntary death. The candidate voluntarily suspends the action of breathing, and with closed eyes and mouth commits himself absolutely into the hands of the administrator. Like a dead man, he does not breathe, and like a dead man he makes no effort to assist in his own burial. The most timid woman feels no fear of the water, and makes no struggle; because perfect faith works by love, and perfect love casts out fear. She knows that the life that is to sustain her through her whole life, and even over death, is amply able to keep her safely in this experience so new to her.

No more beautiful, solemn, or joyful sight can be witnessed than the burial of an intelligent believer into Christ by baptism; and the beholders, as well as the candidates, must involuntarily recall the words of Scripture,

**Revelation 14**

<sup>13</sup> Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.

## 83. The New Jerusalem, the Earth, and Our Salvation

Present Truth, January 16, 1902

I wish you would explain about the New Jerusalem. A friend says that there is no Bible authority to show that the Holy City will rest upon the earth, and that the texts concerning it are spiritual, and not literal. While he admits that the Holy City will come down, he says that we are not told that it will rest on the earth.

### Trifling with God's Word

**W**HAT difference does it make what the Bible says, if it does not mean what it says? If the texts concerning the relation of the New Jerusalem are not to be taken literally, what evidence have we that the texts which mention the city as existing at all, are to be so taken? If the Bible does not mean what it says, that the New Jerusalem will be on this earth, how can we know that there is, or is to be, any New Jerusalem whatever?

Further: if some or all of the statements in the Bible are to be taken in a "spiritual sense," whatever that may mean, and are not to be considered as literal, who is to decide what they mean? If the Bible does not mean what it says, then everybody is free to attach whatever meaning to it he pleases, and one person has as good a right to his opinions as any other person has.

But in that case the Bible might as well not exist; for what each man believes is, not the words of the Book, but his own notions; the Bible then serves merely as a peg on which to hang human opinions, and any other book would do as well. Or, if it be admitted that there should be some definite standard for agreement, then the only resort is a Pope whose utterances shall be regarded as infallible and final. In either case the Bible becomes of secondary importance.

It is strange how many who repudiate the Papacy will nevertheless follow it in every essential particular. They differ from the most zealous Roman Catholic only in this, that they follow another pope, or several of them, instead of the one who lives in the Vatican. The Bible may speak in the plainest terms; but if some friend speaks otherwise, they either ignore the Bible completely, or else are thrown into confusion, and say,

“Well, we don’t know what to believe.”

In this the people have no intention of setting the Bible aside. They think that they believe the Bible. If told that they have no confidence in it, they would be surprised and shocked; yet that is the case. Is this not self-evident? If I have a friend who daily tells me various things, but as soon as anybody casts a doubt upon his word, or tells me something contradictory, I am thrown into confusion, and do not know what to believe, would not my friend be justified in saying that I have no confidence in him? and would it not be a proof of great love and patience if he still continued my friend? If I do really have confidence in my friend, I shall believe his word, no matter what anybody else says; for I know that he is truthful, and that he does not tell a thing that he does not know.

Why can we not deal as fairly with God’s Word as with the words of our friends? Do you not see that when we doubt whether the Bible means what it says, we are either casting reflections upon God, or else we are indicating doubt that the Bible is His Word. If we assert that it is His Word, but still insist that it does not mean just what it says, then we virtually say that God has trifled with us, or else that He is not able to express himself in terms adapted to human understanding, and that He is dependent on some man or men to help Him.

But in this case we not only belittle God, but we elevate man above Him; for the person or persons who must interpret God’s meaning to us, if there were any such, must necessarily be able to understand God’s thought better than He does himself. In short, if the Bible does not mean what it says, then there is an end of ev-

everything, and every man is thrown upon his own strength and wisdom for salvation. Which shall it be—God’s Word or man’s word?

### **God’s Word All Spiritual**

Now before we come to the main question, a few words concerning the terms “spiritual” and “literal.” We must accept the Bible as being literally true, as meaning just what it says, or else throw it away entirely; that is, we must either believe it or not believe it. But, at the same time, if we really believe it to be God’s Word we must accept it as being wholly spiritual. Every expression in it is spiritual, because God is Spirit.

#### **Romans 7**

<sup>14</sup> We know that the law is spiritual.

Christ said,

#### **John 6**

<sup>63</sup> The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

So there is nothing in the Bible, not a single statement, that is not spiritual. But this does not mean that there is any such thing as a “spiritual sense” in which the Scriptures are to be understood. That is to make nonsense of the Word.

The language of the Bible is to be understood as a straightforward, simple, honest expression of truth. When God uses human language the words mean just the same that they mean when men use them. This is self-evident from the fact that the Bible came through men, who wrote just what they had experienced or seen and heard. The Bible is both literal and spiritual. It means just what it says; but it is spiritual in that it makes the believer spiritual, delivering him from the bondage of the flesh.

We can go still further, and say that the Holy City itself will be spiritual. Every inhabitant of the earth will also be spiritual. But they will all be very real. This is evident from the fact that people who truly believe are spiritual now. There are people whom we

meet day by day who are spiritual, yet no one would claim that they are not literal beings.

### **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>14</sup> The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

<sup>15</sup> But he that is spiritual judges all things.

## **Jerusalem, the Joy of the Earth**

Let us now read a few texts about the city itself. The patriarchs...

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>13</sup> ...confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth,

—because...

<sup>16</sup> ...they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city.

And this prepared city is one...

<sup>10</sup> ...which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.<sup>270</sup>

In *Zechariah* 14:4-6 we read that in the Day of the Lord, when judgment is executed, the Lord shall go forth,

### **Zechariah 14**

<sup>4</sup> And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley...

<sup>8</sup> And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the forward sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and winter shall it be.

<sup>9</sup> And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name One.

What those “living waters” are may be learned from *Revelation* 22:1. They are the river of life which flows from the throne of

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<sup>270</sup> See *Hebrews* 6:10-17.

God. This, together with the fact that God is in the midst of the city, the King of the earth, shows conclusively that the city will be on this earth. It is the New Jerusalem, because it will occupy the site of old Jerusalem.

Again: after the city comes down, with all the saints of God in it, the second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked will take place, when Satan will go out among them with his final deception, to make them believe that they can capture it, and thus possess the earth. John, seeing future things in vision, describes it thus:

### **Revelation 20**

<sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

<sup>8</sup> And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

<sup>9</sup> And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

If the city were not on the earth, the wicked could not go up on the breadth of the earth and compass it about. That will be the...

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>7</sup> ...day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men,

—to which the earth is reserved, when the righteous in the city will dwell safely in “the devouring fire” and “everlasting burnings.”<sup>271</sup>

Still further: when the New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven, it will be said:

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>3</sup> Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them.

God will then...

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<sup>271</sup> See *Isaiah* 33:14-15.



## 2 Chronicles 6

<sup>18</sup> ...indeed dwell with men on the earth.

So the apostle continues his prophetic description:

### Revelation 21

<sup>22</sup> I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

<sup>23</sup> And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

<sup>24</sup> And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.

Then will it be said:

### Psalm 48

<sup>1</sup> Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness.

<sup>2</sup> Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

<sup>3</sup> God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

The verses following those bring to view the same event that is described in *Revelation 20:7-9*.

## The Power of God's Protection

What of all this? Why is it worth while to take so much space merely to show that the city of God is actually to be located on this earth? What difference does it make to us whether it will be or not?

You may be sure that if it were of no present, practical benefit to us the Bible would not say anything about it; and the benefit is just this: It shows us God's power to save. The walls of the city will be called Salvation, and its gates Praise.<sup>272</sup> When it comes down on the place where the mount of Olives stands, then...

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<sup>272</sup> *Isaiah 60:18.*

## **Isaiah 26**

<sup>1</sup> ...shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

We often quote for our present encouragement:

<sup>3</sup> You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you; because he trusts in You.

<sup>4</sup> Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

But few stop to think that this applies especially to the people in the New Jerusalem when the host of the ungodly, with Satan at their head, encompass the beloved city, to take it. They will greatly outnumber those in the city; but:

## **Psalms 48**

<sup>3</sup> God is known in her palaces for a refuge,

—and the righteous will not fear. Yet their safety in that awful time will be no more than that of everyone now who trust in God for salvation from the assaults of Satan. Or, to put it in another way, our present assurance of deliverance from the attacks of the devil is the fact that God will preserve all the righteous from his assaults on the beloved city.

Are you not glad that God tells us those things in His book? and is it not comforting to know that they are all literally true?

## 84. How to Think

Present Truth, January 23, 1902

Will you please take the third of the following lines by Henry Van Dyke as the subject of your editorial at an early date, and write not only upon the value of clear thought, but, if possible, give us some rules that, patiently followed, will enable those who, like me, have had no early training, to think clearer and better than we do?

Four things a man must learn to do,  
If he would make his record true:  
To think without confusion, clearly.

**T**HE value of correct thinking is so obvious that no argument is needed to prove it; but how to think correctly and to good purpose is what many do not know; and none can know it too well. Therefore this phase of the subject will claim all our attention at present.

### **Proverbs 2**

<sup>6</sup> The Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

### **Vain Thoughts**

#### **Psalms 94**

<sup>11</sup> The Lord knows the thoughts of man that they are vanity.

This is emptiness; and this includes even the thoughts of “the wise,” for:

#### **1 Corinthians 3**

<sup>20</sup> The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.

Therefore while it might seem that we think naturally, that no thought need to be taken about it, but that we, so to speak, can “think without thinking,” the truth is that all men have to learn to think. The text just quoted shows us that much that is called thought is really not thought at all.

Often have I heard people proceed to tell what they “thought” about some portion of the Bible, when their words demonstrated that they had no thought about it whatever. They had only dreamed and conjectured.

### **God's Enduring Thoughts**

Where shall we go to learn how to think? Evidently to the One who knows most about it; to the One who is the Author of thought. He says to us:

#### **Isaiah 55**

<sup>6</sup> Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near:

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Our thoughts are so inferior to God's thoughts, so utterly empty, that the only thing to be done with them is to cast them aside, and take His instead. God's thoughts are the only ones that are of any value. Note the contrast in the following two statements:

#### **Psalms 146**

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help.

<sup>4</sup> His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

#### **Psalms 33**

<sup>11</sup> The counsel of the Lord stands for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.

It is not simply that man ceases to think when he dies. That is true, but the text says more than that: all that he has thought comes to an end; there is no enduring substance to it; but the

Lord's thoughts, on the other hand, are of such a nature that they endure for ever.

From this it appears that a real, true thought is a thing—something substantial. We can see this from a moment's study of words. In the Greek the same word indicates both "word" and "reason;" and the word in Hebrew which means "word," means also "thing." To "think illogically" is really not to think at all; while to think logically, according to reason, is to think according to the Word, which is God; and that means the formation of a thing that has substance to it, and which will never perish.

It must now be quite apparent that much that is called thought is not thought, but only fancy. It is, just as the Lord says, emptiness, imagination. Now there is no profit in building castles in the air. Life is too precious to be wasted in conjuring up something that will soon vanish out of sight, leaving nothing to mark the place where it seemed to be. So good sense would teach us to go to the Master of thought, and learn of Him. He invites us, and will teach us free of charge.

### **Learning How to Think**

What is the first step in learning how to think thoughts that will endure for ever? The verses already quoted from *Isaiah* 55 tell us: It is to seek the Lord, and find the forgiveness of sins. It is utterly to abandon our ways and our vain thoughts, casting ourselves upon God, submitting to His righteousness, and being lost in Him; to let Him be our personality. Turning from sin is the first step in right thinking.

#### **Job 28**

<sup>28</sup> The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

#### **Proverbs 8**

<sup>13</sup> The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

### **Psalm 111**

<sup>10</sup> A good understanding have all they that do His commandments.

David said:

### **Psalm 119**

<sup>99</sup> I have more understanding than all my teachers; for your testimonies are my meditation.

<sup>100</sup> I understand more than the ancients, because I keep your precepts.

An instance of this is seen in the case of Daniel and his three companions, who, through the fear of God, became,

### **Daniel 1**

<sup>20</sup> ...in all matters of wisdom and understanding,...ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers [in Babylon];

—that is, they were ten times wiser than their teachers. This last reference shows that we are not talking mere theory, but that this advice is practical.

From the beginning I have expected that someone would point to men who have “added greatly to the world’s thought,” who are “intellectual giants,” but who were not Christians; but this objection can find no place when we see that however wise worldly men may be, the one who fears the Lord can, through that fear of God, obtain wisdom which worldly men themselves will admit to be “ten times better” than that of those wise men. Gain is not godliness; but godliness is great gain, in that it comprehends all that is worth having in this life, and the whole of the life to come.

Take another text, which shows that righteousness is practical wisdom. Moses said to Israel:

### **Deuteronomy 4**

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do so in the land whither you go to possess it.

<sup>6</sup> Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

And again,

### **Psalm 119**

<sup>113</sup> I hate vain thoughts; but your law do I love.

We see, then, that to have the law of God in the heart, controlling the life, is to possess real, substantial, enduring thoughts—thoughts that are wholly unlike the vain, empty thoughts of the ungodly. It was through meditation on the law that the psalmist got more understanding than his teachers; and of him who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, but who meditates in the law of God day and night, it is said that...

### **Psalm 1**

<sup>3</sup> ...whatsoever he does shall prosper.

## **Constant Application**

There is no teacher like God, no book that equals His Word. To know God, and to be familiar with His Word, is “a liberal education.” This means first of all submission to God, to do His will, and then constant application.

Take a portion of Scripture, no matter where, anything that first specially attracts you, and study it. That is, give diligence to find out just what it says; for when you have God’s Word you have His thought; you can think clearly, because His Word is (*logos*) logic.

Note the different subjects in a chapter, if there are several, and group the details under those heads, to enable you to take in the whole at one view. Question the text, to find out the purpose of every word and sentence, and its relation to every other. Hold your mind to the exact statement, to just what the text says, and do not allow it to wander for a moment into speculation. Soon

you will become so well acquainted with the portion of the Scripture that you are studying that you can “think through it” without the Bible open before you.

Then you can “meditate” upon it. You can think—not about it, but—the text itself, when you are sitting in the house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you rise up, and when you lie down.

### **Proverbs 6**

<sup>22</sup> When you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you.

By this means right thoughts will in time be natural to you. Every case that comes under your notice will as a matter of course be decided by the principles of truth which are your life. You will be astonished every day to see how comprehensive God’s Word is, as the Spirit of God brings to your mind the thoughts—God’s Word—that make every obscure thing plan.

### **Agents of the Holy Spirit**

And this reference to the Spirit of God brings us to the conclusion of the whole matter—that we are properly but agents of the Holy Spirit. There is no perfect thought except when God thinks in us. Our brain is simply the instrument through which God will think His thoughts; and when the Word, which is Spirit and life, permeates us, and we exist only for Him to reveal himself in us, that will be the case.

Take the growing plant as an example. Watch the seed as it unfolds. See how the stem goes upward, and the rootlet downward, even though the positions be reversed as they come forth. Let some peas sprout on a thin cloth stretched over a glass of water. A single little stem comes forth, which forms both stalk and root. In some cases the peas will lie so that the root end of the stem points upward, and the stem end downwards, so that it is forced to push its way down though the cloth, toward the water beneath, while the root starts upward. But they will not continue in



those directions very long. As soon as they are long enough, they will turn; the root will go down, and the stem will make its way back through the cloth, to grow upwards.

Why is this? Some people, called wise, tell us that “gravitation” draws the root downwards; but their wisdom does not tell us why it does not draw the stem down also, especially when it has been forced to start that way. Can you tell what causes it? Let us consider the plant a little further, and then we will give the answer.

Here is a plant in a dry place several yards away from a spring of water. Dig down and examine the roots. You will find that they point to the spring. The plant needs water, and the roots must get it. They lose no time searching for it in the wrong place, but go straight to the place where water is to be found. If the plant grows on the side of a wall that encloses water, then its roots will grow horizontally, instead of downwards, in spite of gravitation.

Why do not the roots sometimes make a mistake, and grow away in the opposite direction in search of water? We can answer without hesitation. It is because God is the life of the plant, and He thinks in it and acts in it. His law is its life, and the plant is submissive to it, not setting up any will of its own in opposition to it.

Now remember that the man who meditates in the law of God day and night will be...

### **Psalm 1**

<sup>3</sup> ...like a tree planted by the rivers of water.

He, like the tree, will “think without confusion, clearly,” always correctly, and always to the point. God’s perfect thought will be his, and he will know every right way. Study God’s word, not to find distinction and honor for yourself, but for the glory of God, and He will glorify himself in you, leading you always in the way everlasting.

## 85. When Was the Sabbath Changed?

Present Truth, January 30, 1902

Someone has sent me a little pamphlet containing some statements concerning this question; and inasmuch as the subject is one of general interest, and the *Present Truth* and editor are specially referred to, we may have a little chat about it in this private corner.

The writer says that if there has ever been any change, “of course the date when it took place must be easily ascertained;” and then he proceeds to name several different dates, which he claims have been set forth by Sabbath-keepers as the time when the change occurred.

He says that one writer says it was done by Constantine in 321 AD; that another claims that it was done in 360 AD, at the Council of Laodicea; that still another fixes upon 537 AD as the exact time; and that the editor of *Present Truth* sometimes gives one and sometimes another of these dates, and “sometimes mixes two of the above-mentioned historical events together, as if they were contemporaneous.”

**N**OW it is of very little importance to ascertain what anybody teaches about anything; all that it is necessary for us to know is,

“What is the truth?”

—regardless of what anybody thinks about it. But we will take occasion to say this; that if any reader of *Present Truth* will point out the place where the editor has mentioned any date whatever as the exact time when the Sabbath was changed, the editor will at once make public apology for his error.

The editor’s opinions are of no consequence whatever; but in a pamphlet published at this office, entitled, *Origin of Sunday Observance*,<sup>273</sup> he has given the facts about the case, in the words of

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<sup>273</sup> Editor’s note: I’m not sure which pamphlet Waggoner is referring to, but there is a book of about 100 pages that Waggoner wrote titled, *Sunday: The*

observers of the first day of the week; and a perusal of this little volume will repay any seeker after truth.

Let us now enter upon a systematic, though necessarily brief, consideration of the question on its merits.

### **1. A CHANGE WAS MADE**

In the first place, it is so well-known and so universally admitted that the first day of the week was not the original Sabbath, that almost every one who speaks or writes in favor of Sunday observance mentions the fact of the “change.” Some attempt to give a reason for the change, and others say that the fact that the change has been made is sufficient evidence that it ought to have been done.

### **2. WHO AUTHORIZED THE CHANGE?**

This therefore opens up the questions,

“What day was originally the Sabbath?”

“Who instituted it?”

—and,

“Who authorized any change?”

These questions are easily answered. The fourth commandment tells us that:

#### **Exodus 20**

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God,

—and that in it we are not to do our own work,

<sup>11</sup> 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.

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*Origin of Its Observance in the Christian Church*, which is available on our website.

That this day, set apart by God himself, is not the day now generally observed, is demonstrated in every land by the presence of the Jews. To them...

### **Romans 3**

<sup>2</sup> ...were committed the oracles of God,

—and when Jesus came He recognized the day which they were observing as the Sabbath, calling himself its Lord; they observe the same day still, and it is the day known as Saturday, and not the one commonly called Sunday.

Two of the three questions are here answered; the third remains. Who authorized any change?

### **3. IS THE CHANGE LEGAL?**

This brings home forcibly to us that the essential thing is not,

“When was the Sabbath changed?”

—nor,

“Who changed it?”

—but,

“Is there any authority or command for a change?”

And it must be borne in mind that a change in any law must be by the same authority that instituted it, or by some one having equal authority; and, moreover the change must be as definitely stated, and as widely published as the original law.

### **4. NO EVIDENCE FOUND**

But there is no other power equal to God, and His Word will be searched in vain for any statement that He ever changed His law of rest. He spoke His law from the mountain-top, in tones that shook the whole earth; and the event was one of such importance that all the angels attended Him. To that awful day there will be no parallel until the same voice shakes not only the earth but also heaven, at the second coming of Christ. There is therefore no pos-

sibility of any change ever having been made in the day of the Sabbath by Divine authority; and this being the case, it is of no consequence whatever who presumed to make a change, or when it was done. Christ declared:

### **Luke 16**

<sup>17</sup> It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

## **5. NO CHANGE POSSIBLE**

As a matter of fact, no change has ever been made in the Sabbath, for that is impossible. The text last quoted shows this.

### **Ecclesiastes 3**

<sup>14</sup> Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever.

The Sabbath is the same as it was “from the beginning;”<sup>274</sup> but men’s customs have changed.

## **6. A MAN-MADE CHANGE**

The question therefore resolves itself into this,

“When did men begin to depart from the Lord, and to ignore His commandments?”

That can be paralleled by the following:

“When did men begin to make and worship images? When did Christians begin to offer prayers for the dead? When was ‘infant baptism’ first practiced?” etc.

Shall we say that if any change has been made we must of course be able to name the exact date when it occurred? The absurdity of that is apparent. We know that there was a time when all the inhabitants of the earth...

### **Romans 1**

<sup>21</sup> ...knew God, and that they did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful,...and that their foolish heart was darkened,

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<sup>274</sup> 2 Peter 3:4.

—until they...

### **Romans 1**

<sup>23</sup> ...changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

But nobody supposes that there was a certain day or month, or even a certain year, in which the people unitedly and formally resolved to turn from God, and worship idols.

- No Baptist can name any date as the exact time when sprinkling was substituted for baptism; yet every churchman knows that immersion was the original practice.
- No one can tell when prayers for the dead began to be offered in Christian churches.
- The greater portion of those who now call themselves Christians, believe and teach that a priest has power to convert a piece of bread into the very being of God; all Protestants repudiate this as a gross departure from the truth as taught by Christ and the apostles; yet no man can point to the exact date when the change took place.

### **The Beginning of Apostasy**

Apostasy does not come that way. No man drops in one day from perfect faith to gross error; much less do multitudes of people apostatize all at the same time. Error is insidious in its working, and the people who fall away are rarely conscious that any change is taking place in them. Indeed, the apostate church most vigorously claims to have the true, original faith, and stamps all others as heretics.

So it was with regard to the Sabbath. It is readily admitted that Sunday was by many observed instead of the Sabbath before Constantine was born. But even if it could be shown by unimpeachable testimony that it was observed as early as the time of the Apostle Paul, that would not make it right. The question concerning even “the church” is not,

“What did it do?”

—but,

“What ought it to have done? Were its acts in harmony with the Word of God?”

The “mystery of iniquity” was working in Paul’s day,<sup>275</sup> but that does not justify the existence of the Papacy. Here is something to think of: The Papacy does exist today, and has existed for hundreds of years; but the teaching of Christ and the apostles was as far from popery as light is from darkness; yet no man can tell when the Papacy began in the church. Its beginning was when the spirit of self-exaltation crept into the church; but this naturally was at first only among scattered individuals, and so did not attract general notice.

In 3 *John* 9-10, we read of a manifestation of it in a church to which the apostle wrote; but it was not till some years later that that spirit became general in the church. Because we cannot tell just when there were more people in the church who ignored the Word than there were who lived by its teachings, has there never been any apostasy?

Here is a thing that anybody may verify for himself if he will: No matter how early you find historical reference to Sunday keeping, you can find mention of image worship and prayers for the dead still earlier.

Did the Papacy, then, institute the change that has taken place with respect to Sabbath observance? It certainly did. When? This question can be answered when it is found out when the Papacy began to exist. For let it be understood that the Papacy is nothing else but the setting aside of the precepts of the Bible for the opinions and practices of men; therefore the gradual change with regard to Sabbath-keeping, baptism, etc., was the growth of the Pa-

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<sup>275</sup> 2 *Thessalonians* 2:7.

pacy; and the full development of the Papacy was the triumph of apostasy in the church.

## **A Blessed Rest**

If it be asked,

“What difference does it make whether one observes the seventh day or the first day?”

We must for the present be content with the brief answer,

### **Matthew 4**

<sup>4</sup> Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

That is sufficient. When God has spoken, man has no business to ask,

“What difference does it make?”

But whoever will hear and obey will speedily experience, to his inexpressible joy, that it does make a difference.

Peace is not a feeling, but a condition. Let it be settled forever that God has naught against the sinner. He is for every soul. But man is in rebellion against God. And,

### **Isaiah 57**

<sup>21</sup> There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.

But when the wicked man comes to Christ, gives up his own way, and will, and surrenders all, then there is peace. The poor soul, in darkness for years, may not realize this, yet it is true. Peace has its feeling, and that is blessed rest. He who takes hold of God's strength, and makes peace with Him, will find the rest which Christ alone can give.



## 86. The Spirit That Witnesses

Present Truth, February 6, 1902

One of my *Present Truth* customers pointed out to me that verse 7, in *1 John*, chapter five, does not appear at all in the *Revised Version*. He wants to know if you can account for this, and if the omission of this verse makes any difference in the reading of the Scriptures.

For your guidance, my friend's theory is this, that in the first place the verse was put in by a monk, who was translating the Scriptures, and that, not being found in the Greek, it was left out of our English *Revised Version*. Whether this is right or not I cannot say.

He also says that with the verse in, the Scriptures do not harmonize; for the Holy Ghost is on earth, and so cannot be bearing witness in heaven.

**I**N ORDER that all may see at a glance what is involved, we will print the text as it is in both versions. Beginning with the last part of verse 6, we have:

### **1 John 5**

<sup>6</sup> It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

<sup>7</sup> For there are three that bear record *in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

<sup>8</sup> *And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*

In the *Revision* it is thus:

### **1 John 5 [RV]**

<sup>7</sup> It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

<sup>8</sup> For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Knowing that the words “record” and “witness,” that appear in the text in our common version, are from the same Greek word, we see that what is left out in the *Revision* is the portion beginning with “in heaven,” in verse 7, and ending with “in earth,” in

verse 8.<sup>276</sup> This portion is not found in the oldest Greek manuscripts, and there is probably no room for doubt that it was added by somebody other than the apostle John; but who did it, or when it was done, nobody can tell.

Therefore, in reading and quoting *1 John* 5:6-8, we do well to quote it as it is in the *Revised Version*. What difference does it make? Practically none, so far as the general truths of Scripture are concerned; but we want to be accurate, and not add to the Word, or presume to find a truth stated where it is not.

In reality the text as it is in the so-called *Authorized Version* does not say anything that is not stated elsewhere in different words; but the words in question have given rise to an endless amount of controversy; and the text is much more simple and easily understood as it stands in the *Revision*; and since the controverted words are not in the original text, of course they ought to be omitted.

The Apostle John had a definite thing in mind when he wrote the passage in question; and the insertion of the words into the text cannot fail to obscure the sense. Bear in mind that they are not omitted because they are difficult to understand, or are controverted, for there are many other texts that are “hard to be understood,” and which men dispute about; but they are omitted because they have no right in the text.

Now a word about your friend’s statement, that:

“The Holy Ghost is on earth, and so cannot be bearing witness in heaven.”

It seems impossible that such a statement could ever have been made by a believer in God, and all that is necessary, in order to show the fallacy of it, is to quote a few texts of Scripture.

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<sup>276</sup> The part left out is marked in italics.

### **Isaiah 57**

<sup>15</sup> Thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.

### **Jeremiah 23**

<sup>23</sup> Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off?

<sup>24</sup> Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? says the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord.

### **Psalms 139**

<sup>7</sup> Whither shall I go from your Spirit? or whither shall I flee from your presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend up into heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in hell [the interior of the earth], behold, You are there.

<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

<sup>10</sup> Even there shall your hand lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

You ask what we teach about the Trinity. Inasmuch as we find no such expression in the Scriptures, we do not teach anything about it. But as to the Being of God,—the Godhead,—Divinity as revealed in the Father, the Word (the Son), and the Holy Spirit, we believe and teach just what the Bible says, and nothing else.

No man can by searching find out God. No creature can understand the Almighty to perfection. The finite mind cannot comprehend infinity. Therefore, in discussions about the Trinity, about the nature of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, are manifestations of gross presumption.

The Jews were reminded that they had no pattern by which to make an image of God, if they were so inclined, because:

### **Deuteronomy 4**

<sup>12</sup> The Lord spoke unto you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only you heard a voice.

<sup>15</sup> Take therefore good heed unto yourselves; for you saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spoke unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:

<sup>16</sup> Lest you corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.

### **Ecclesiastes 5**

<sup>2</sup> ...God is in heaven,

—but He is also on the earth; for He fills all things.<sup>277</sup> He is a Person indeed, but not confined to one certain place. His personality is everywhere. That is what the Scriptures tell us. If men had really believed in the personality of God and His Spirit, as set forth in the Bible, they could never have presumed to make any image of Him. We cannot understand how God can be...

### **Psalms 90**

<sup>2</sup> ...from everlasting to everlasting,

—but we accept the statement, and let it instruct our reason and enlarge our mind.

The Spirit witnesses both in heaven and in earth—in the very substance of the heavens and the earth, and in men and angels. He witnesses in the rain, the sunshine, and all the “operations of nature.” How the Spirit can witness in both places at once is a mystery, but it is no more incomprehensible than how He can witness in us at all.

Every man who receives the Spirit, and who yields to His working in him, must be a marvel to himself.

I know not how the Spirit works,  
Convicting men of sin;  
Revealing Jesus through the Word,  
Creating peace within.

But know whom I have believed,  
And am persuaded that He is able

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<sup>277</sup> *Ephesians 4:10; Jeremiah 23:24.*

To keep that which I've committed  
Unto Him against that day.<sup>278</sup>

—and that is sufficient.

So do not ever attempt to teach any theory of the Godhead, or to tell what the Holy Spirit is. He is the Spirit, and that is sufficient. God has not set forth the theory of His existence, and we should not make any. We know that God is; and we may know by experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and that is sufficient. We know His protecting presence always and everywhere; but as to how it is, we must always say:

**Psalm 139**

<sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

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<sup>278</sup> D. W. Whittle, Hymn: *I Know Not Why God's Wondrous Grace*, 1883.

## 87. Living in Sin

Present Truth, February 6, 1902

If I am honest before God, I must confess that I am a Sabbath-breaker, and only Christ can save me—not Sabbath-keeping. *John* 15:12 includes all.

**Y**OUR idea is that when you have confessed a sin, that is the end of it, and that thereafter you may go on committing the same sin without blame. Or, what amounts to the same thing, you think that acknowledging that a sin is a sin takes away its sinfulness; so that all a man who is transgressing the law needs to do is to say,

“I am a sinner, and I know it; I know that the course I am pursuing is wrong;”

—and that declaration would make him all right! That is very mixed reasoning. Let us try it on something besides Sabbath-breaking.

Here is a man who is a professional burglar. He makes it his business to break into houses, and rob people. And when he is confronted with the commandment which says,

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>15</sup> You shall not steal,

—he says,

“That commandment is just; I am obliged to acknowledge before God that I am a sinner; but Christ alone can save me—not commandment-keeping; so henceforth whenever I steal I shall trust in Christ for salvation from the sinfulness of the act.”

What would you say to him? I think you would quote the Scripture:

## **Proverbs 28**

<sup>13</sup> Whoso covers his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall find mercy.

Confession of sin implies the forsaking of it. If one says that he has sinned, and still continues in the same practice, he in reality declares either one or the other of two things:

- a) He says, "I know I am a sinner, and I intend to continue in sin;"
- b) Or else he by his action denies what his lips uttered.

He certainly does the latter, if he professes to trust in Christ; for,

## **1 John 3**

<sup>5</sup> ...in Him is no sin.

And so to profess trust in Christ while continuing to commit an acknowledged sin, is to deny the confession, and say that the thing confessed is not sin.

The Apostle Paul asks:

## **Romans 6**

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

<sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

<sup>3</sup> Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

This is very plain. Christ is not the minister sin.<sup>279</sup>

### **Matthew 1**

<sup>21</sup> He shall save His people from their sins.

It is true that Sabbath-keeping will not save us, nor will anything else that we do or refrain from doing.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.

<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained [prepared] that we should walk in them.

Our good works cannot save us, for we are not able to do any good thing. But the good works which God has wrought in Christ can save us; and:

### **John 6**

<sup>29</sup> This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.

### **Revelation 14**

<sup>12</sup> Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus.

Note that it is “the faith of Jesus” that we are to keep. Christ declared that He lived by faith in the Father. Thus the works of God were manifest in Him. Now we are to have and to keep the same faith—the faith of Jesus; and this we can do only by having Christ to live in us, exercising His own faith in us, as the Apostle says:

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

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<sup>279</sup> *Galatians 2:17.*



It was to enable us to keep the commandments that Christ came. Although the law was...

### **Romans 7**

<sup>13</sup> ...ordained to life,

—it cannot save us, because our flesh is too weak to do it. So,

### **Romans 8**

<sup>3</sup> What the law could not do, and that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Christ did not come to change the law<sup>280</sup>; He came to work a change in the flesh. Christ's life of faith in us is that which keeps us from committing sin. But do not make the sad mistake of supposing that Christ can transform evil into good. A woe is pronounced upon them that call evil good.

### **Isaiah 5**

<sup>20</sup> Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

*John* 15:12 does indeed include all. It says:

### **John 15**

<sup>12</sup> This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you.

It is true that...

### **Romans 13**

<sup>10</sup> Love is the fulfilling of law;

—but you must take notice that love is not a substitute for the law, but it is the law itself.

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<sup>280</sup> *Matthew* 5:17.

## **1 John 5**

<sup>3</sup> This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.

Love cannot take the place of any commandments; but the keeping of each one of the commandments is an expression of the love of God.

## **John 14**

<sup>21</sup> He that has my commandments, and keeps them, He it is that loves me; and He that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love Him, and will manifest myself unto him.

## 88. The Freedom of the Will

Present Truth, February 13, 1902

It is always said that God gave man a free will, and yet one of His principal acts was to forbid man to eat of a certain tree. How could men have a free will in this case, inasmuch as God said that he would fall?

**A** SINGLE text of Scripture is the key to the solution of this difficulty, which is so common among men—the idea that obedience to law is incompatible with freedom. The text is:

### **Psalm 119**

<sup>45</sup> I will walk at liberty; for I seek your precepts.

The free man is the man who obeys righteous laws; the slave is the one who falls into transgression. The words of Christ to the Jews tell us this truth:

### **John 8**

<sup>31</sup> If you abide in my Word, then are you my disciples indeed;

<sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

<sup>33</sup> They answered Him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how do you say, You shall be made free?

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin.

<sup>35</sup> And the servant abides not in the house for ever: but the Son abides ever.

<sup>36</sup> If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

### **The King Must Be Free**

When God made man, the crowning work of His creation, He crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of His hands, putting...

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>7</sup> ...all things in subjection under his feet.

<sup>8</sup> For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.

### **Psalm 8**

<sup>6</sup> God gave man dominion over...

<sup>7</sup> All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beast of the field;

<sup>8</sup> The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas.

Man was made ruler over the very earth itself,

### **Genesis 1**

<sup>28</sup> ...and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

Man—not only the first being that God created, but mankind, male and female—was made king. He was given dominion over the works of God's hands; and since the heavens are the works of God's hands,<sup>281</sup> it follows that man's rightful dominion extends beyond this planet on which we live. A most magnificent kingdom was given to him.

Now it needs no argument to show that one cannot be a king and a slave at the same time.

### **2 Peter 2**

<sup>19</sup> ...of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage,

—and when a man is in bondage he is evidently not ruling.

From time immemorial, the root idea of royalty, derived from God himself, has been that the king's person is sacred. If he be a king indeed, it will be so regarded, not only by his fellow-men, but by the beasts of the earth, as has many times been demonstrated. The truth may be stated either way:

*Every real king is a free man,  
and every absolutely free man is a king.*

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<sup>281</sup> *Psalm 19:1; Hebrews 1:10.*

Christ said that He makes His followers free, and the Scriptures also told us that all whom He frees from sin are made kings and priests.<sup>282</sup>

## **God's Absolute Freedom**

God is King of kings, and there can be no question but that He is absolutely free.

### **Psalm 103**

<sup>19</sup> The Lord has prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom rules over all.

### **Psalm 115**

<sup>8</sup> Our God is in the heavens; He has done whatsoever He has pleased.

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>11</sup> [He] works all things after the counsel of His own will.

The greatest ruler that ever exercised dominion on this earth, and who had demonstrated the futility of trying to resist God, said, when light and reason from heaven dawned upon him, that:

### **Daniel 4**

<sup>34</sup> His kingdom is from generation to generation:

<sup>35</sup> And all the inhabitants of the world are reputed as nothing: and He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What are You doing?

God, being absolute ruler, is absolutely free. His mind and will are free.

## **God's Will on Earth**

We are taught to pray to God, our Father:

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

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<sup>282</sup> Revelation 1:5-6.

This was the condition in the beginning, and it is that which is to be restored through the Gospel. But can you not see that such a state must necessarily be one of absolute freedom on earth? It follows from the fact that God is free, and that His will is absolutely unfettered. He is free, and He gives freedom by giving himself. Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and one with Him, has secured our everlasting freedom by giving himself to us. Being made partakers of the Divine nature,—being made one with Christ as He is one with the Father,—we must necessarily be as free as He is.

Let me repeat, in order that this truth may be very plain. God's will is absolutely free, and therefore whenever and wherever His will is done there can be only freedom. The man in whom God's will is done,—that one in whom God's will has free course,—whose only will is God's will, can, like God, do whatsoever He will. Nothing will be impossible to him. There can be no talk of bondage in connection with such a man.

### **What Constitutes a Perfect Man**

This we may know by reference to the formation of the man whom God pronounced “very good.” The simple story is told in:

#### **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,

—a perfect man. So again we read:

#### **Job 33**

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

#### **Job 32**

<sup>8</sup> There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.

Do you see what it is that constitutes the perfect man? that is, the man who is complete as man. It is just this: A body of dust with the Spirit of God. The clay we have; but just to the extent

that we lack the Spirit, the mind, the “perfect will of God,” do we come short of being perfect men.

Bear in mind that in using the word “perfect,” I do not mean simply “good,” but complete, just as one would say of an animal that has no blemish that it is a perfect animal, or of a machine that is complete in all its parts that it is a perfect machine. So the Spirit of God is an essential part of man. The man who lacks the Spirit of God, who is guided and controlled by any other Spirit, is an incomplete man.

The Spirit of God must of course always speak and act according to the will of God.<sup>283</sup> So the perfect, the complete man, is free because his body is yielded to God, so...

### **Romans 12**

<sup>2</sup> ...that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God,

—may be done in it, even as it is in the person of God himself. The man is free because he is dependent upon God, and because he acknowledges and acquiesces in that fact. Freedom of the creature is therefore always found in dependence, in obedience, and never in independence. When this truth is learned, God can send us out into His wide universe, to range as freely as He himself.

### **God's Will Not Arbitrary**

From all that has been said it must be evident that God's will is not arbitrary. That is, God does not, like human rulers, think out laws for the government of His subjects. He does not try experiments. He does not impose rules, or make prohibitions, simply because He wishes things to go in a certain way. His laws are all like himself,—they *are*. He cannot be other than He is, and so His law—His will—cannot be other than it is.

If this great truth be recognized, then it will make obedience very easy. Then we shall know that:

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<sup>283</sup> *Romans 8:27.*

## 1 John 5

<sup>3</sup> This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.

Knowing this we may see that it was not anything like what in man would be caprice, or the arbitrary exercise of authority, that made God forbid man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree was not, we may be sure, placed in the garden merely as a *test*. It was there because it was necessary for it to be there. Just *why* it was necessary we shall doubtless know better when we get into the garden; but we may be confident that God does not act capriciously.

It also necessarily follows that the fruit of the tree was forbidden, because it was not good for man, at least not at that time. Sometimes a merchant will purposely leave money in the way of a new office boy, to see if he will take it; but we must settle it for ever in our minds that God does not deal thus with His children.

## James 1

<sup>13</sup> God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man.

He never trifles with His creatures. Our knowledge of the fact that the very best fruit is not always, at all seasons, suitable to be eaten, may help us to understand that an explanation of why the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil had such a “mortal taste”<sup>284</sup> to Adam and Eve may sometime be forthcoming. Till then we may rest content in the knowledge of God’s goodness and absolute justice.

The essential part of your question is not answered. Man is a king, and free, only when he is simply the agent of the King of kings, whose will is perfect and unfettered. When man has no will but God’s will, no mind but God’s mind, because he has no spirit but God’s Spirit, then he is free indeed; for:

## 2 Corinthians 3

<sup>17</sup> Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

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<sup>284</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I.



Only so is he a man indeed.

## God's Foreknowledge and Man's Freewill

“But how could it be that man was free to act as he chose, when God knew beforehand just what he would do?”

This is an old question, and many have put it forward as proof that man is not free, while others use it as evidence that God does not know all things. Now it should be remembered that questions and objections are not proofs; and the fact that we do not understand a thing does not prove that it does not exist. The facts are clear, both that man is free except when he voluntarily goes into bondage, and that God knows all things, and knows them just as well before they occur as afterwards.

God is the one who is, and who was, and who is to come.<sup>285</sup> He is the beginning and the end.<sup>286</sup> He inhabits eternity.<sup>287</sup> But eternity is future as well as past. You may say that you cannot understand how God can dwell in the future; neither can I; but I can understand it just as well as I can understand how He has existed from all eternity, without any beginning. Can not you? We cannot understand the Being of God at all; but, accepting the truth that He *is*, we must also, and can just as easily, accept the truth that He is the one who *will be*. That is, He is even now in the days to come.

When you tell me something that you have done, and I tell you that I have already heard of it, you do not think that my knowledge of what has taken place in the least interfered with the freedom of your will. It does not curtail your liberty for me to look back upon your choice. Even so it does not interfere with our freedom for God, from His habitation in the eternity yet to come, to look back, as it were, upon what we are now doing.

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<sup>285</sup> *Revelation* 1:4, 8; 4:8.

<sup>286</sup> *Revelation* 21:6; 22:13.

<sup>287</sup> *Isaiah* 57:15.

Remember that eternity has neither beginning nor end. Then it is a circle. Now draw a circle upon a piece of paper and make two figures upon two different sections of it. Conceive them to be traveling around the circle in the same direction, and then say which one is ahead. Either one of them may be said to be ahead of the other. But even this is a feeble illustration, for God is not at one point only of the circle, but at every point of it at the same time.

Now I know that this does not explain God's existence or His foreknowledge; but this illustration of a Scripture statement enables us to realize that God is infinitely great, and that nothing is hard for Him, and that just because He knows all things, even before they happen, we are free agents. He knows the future, not because He looks ahead, but because He is there.

The practical benefit of this truth is the confidence it begets in His power to save. He can thwart every design of the enemy against us, making all things work together for our good. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

## 89. The Freedom of the Sabbath

Present Truth, February 20, 1902

THE following letter is signed by several persons, who are evidently in earnest; and as their case is so practical we publish it, long as it is, in order that many others may benefit by it.

We, among others, are workers in the iron, steel, and tin works of \_\_\_\_\_. We think it very wrong of your agent coming around here selling the *Present Truth* on Sunday, as there are six days in the week to do this kind of work instead of doing it on Sunday, and it is breaking the Sabbath.

We told your agent this; but he says Sunday is not the Sabbath; and, as it happened, we were working on the Sunday too; and he asked us what right we had to be working there on the Sunday, and at the same time condemning him for selling the papers on Sunday.

In answer to that, we told him our work was a work of necessity, and his was not; that we were obliged and compelled to do it, and that if we refused to do it on Sunday we should lose our job, and that would mean losing our bread and butter.

Your agent then told us there was not one law for us and another for him, but that "sin is the transgression of law" just as much for us men working in the works on Sunday as for him or any other man, and that God did not compel us to work here, and that we were not free men, much less Christian men, but slaves, if we let our masters force us to do wrong. He said it was our duty and privilege as Christians to obey God in every particular, and to trust Him for food and everything else, and that if we did not do this we were walking by sight, and not by faith.

You seem to answer all sorts of questions in your paper, and we should be grateful to you if you would take up this subject in all its different bearings, especially that relating to Sunday not being the seventh day, and this being a work of

necessity, and what your agent said about there not being one law for us and another for him.

This is the sort of letters and questions that we like to receive. It gives us pleasure to answer straightforward, honest questions, from men who have a good conscience, and who wish to have it instructed. As usual, in our “Private Corner,” our talk will be personal and confidential.

You say that there are six days in which to do such work as selling *Present Truth*, instead of on Sunday. There is where you are mistaken; there are not six days, beside Sunday, in which to sell this paper, because:

#### **Exodus 20**

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day is the Sabbath,

—and in it the agents must rest from all their work; not because we say so, but because they feel constrained to obey God’s law.

It would be inconsistent, would it not, for men to sell papers on the very day which those papers teach is the Sabbath of the Lord our God? But of course you do not yet see that Sunday is not the seventh day, and so not...

#### **Luke 23**

<sup>56</sup> ...the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

Perhaps that should be the first thing for us to consider.

### **Is Sunday the Seventh Day?**

Your letter intimates that you recognize the truth that...

#### **Exodus 20**

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.

You know that the seventh day ought to be kept, by some, at least; but you are laboring under the impression that Sunday is the seventh day. This is an erroneous impression, as you will admit when the truth is presented to you.

Ask the first clergyman you meet, or any minister of any denomination, why people keep Sunday. Ask the same question of every Sunday-keeper you meet. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred you will be told that it is in honor of Christ's resurrection, because He rose from the dead on that day. But the Scriptures tell us that Jesus rose from the dead on...

### **Mark 16**

<sup>9</sup> ...the first day of the week.

Read the following portion, describing what took place after Joseph laid the body of Jesus, and took it down from the cross and laid it in his own sepulcher:

### **Luke 23**

<sup>54</sup> And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

<sup>55</sup> And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid.

<sup>56</sup> And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

### **Luke 24**

<sup>1</sup> Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

<sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

<sup>3</sup> And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

## **The Sabbath Day according to the Commandment**

Here three days are brought to view in connection. The first was "the preparation," the day before the Sabbath. That was the day of the crucifixion. The second was the Sabbath, which was drawing on when Jesus was laid in the tomb; for the Sabbath begins Friday evening at sunset.

By the way, it might be mentioned that in the keeping of "Good Friday," for which of course there is not the slightest authority, both Churchmen and Nonconformists show their recognition of the fact that Jesus was crucified on Friday.

The next day, as the Scripture tells us, was “the Sabbath day according to the commandment;” and the third day was “the first day of the week,” on which Jesus rose from the dead, according to His word, that He should “rise again the third day.”<sup>288</sup> So we see that “the Sabbath according to the commandment,” immediately follows Friday, and comes between it and the first day of the week. Thus it is evident that the day commonly called Saturday is the seventh day of the week, and so is the Sabbath of the Lord.

This is an important point, for it contains the whole case for anybody who holds to the Fourth Commandment. Therefore we are justified in fixing it a little more certainly still.

It is a known fact that the majority of professed Christians hold to Sunday, while the body of the Jews, and many Christians, keep the day before. Now we do not intend to draw any argument from the practice of men, but only to show how impossible it is that the original Sabbath could ever have been lost, and how sure we may be as to which day is the seventh day in regular succession from the one which God blessed and sanctified at creation.<sup>289</sup>

Passing by the centuries between creation and the giving of the law on Sinai, we find there the same reason given for the Sabbath that is stated in *Genesis* 2:1-3. Compare the Fourth Commandment, *Exodus* 20:8-11, doubtless you can repeat it from memory. It is certain that the day then commanded was identical with the one sanctified at creation.

Moreover, by a series of daily miracles, with a special one at the close of the week, continuing for forty years, God made it impossible for anybody to mistake the day of the Sabbath, or to keep any other day in comfort, and the one which He commanded.<sup>290</sup>

We glance down the centuries, and we find that the Jews were frequently reprov'd for Sabbath-breaking, and were finally carried captive to Babylon, because they would not keep God's holy

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<sup>288</sup> *Matthew* 20:19; *Mark* 10:34; *Luke* 18:33.

<sup>289</sup> See *Genesis* 2:1-3.

<sup>290</sup> *Exodus* 16:16-31.

day.<sup>291</sup> Consequently we know that the Jews well knew which day was the Sabbath.

A few hundred years later “we see Jesus,”<sup>292</sup> the Word made flesh, dwelling in Judea and Galilee, associating with the Jews every day, and worshiping with them in their synagogues on the Sabbath day.<sup>293</sup> He recognized the day which they outwardly kept as the Sabbath, and declared himself to be its Lord.<sup>294</sup> He came from God, and therefore He knew the truth. He was the Truth.<sup>295</sup> Therefore we know that the day which the Jews kept, formally, in the days of Jesus, was the Sabbath according to the commandment—the seventh day.

Now for the last step in the proof. Even in the days of Christ there were Jews living in every country under heaven, and they came to Jerusalem to worship at least once a year. If any Jew had lost his reckoning the mistake would instantly have been apparent when he met with his brethren. But from whatever quarter of the world the multitudes came, all were keeping the same day. This shows again that the day was not lost; for it would be impossible for millions of people in different parts of the world all to make the same mistake in the reckoning of days and at the same time.

Furthermore, only a few years after the crucifixion of Christ, Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple was laid in ruins, never again to be rebuilt, and the Jews were permanently scattered to every land. Yet to this day, in every part of the world we find Jews, and they are everywhere, they are all keeping the same day. There is never any question among them wherever they meet, as to which day is the Sabbath, or who has it, for all are in perfect harmony. From this we know that the Jews still keep the same

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<sup>291</sup> See *Jeremiah* 17:19-27 and *2 Chronicles* 36:14-21.

<sup>292</sup> *Hebrews* 2:9.

<sup>293</sup> *Matthew* 12:9, *Mark* 1:21, etc.

<sup>294</sup> *Matthew* 12:8; *Mark* 2:28; *Luke* 6:5.

<sup>295</sup> *John* 14:6.

day that their forefathers did in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, and which He recognized has the Sabbath day.

Therefore also we know beyond the possibility of the shadow of a doubt that the day which the Jews now profess to keep is the seventh day in regular succession from the one which God rested upon and blessed and sanctified at the close of the creation week. And here is the unchangeable law:

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

<sup>9</sup> Six days shall you labor, and to all your work:

<sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates:

<sup>11</sup> 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.

### **What Excuse**

We have God's law, not one jot or tittle of which can fail, telling us to keep the seventh day, and giving the reason why; and we know which day is the seventh day, "the Sabbath according to the commandment." It only remains for each one to ask himself,

"Why am I not obeying this law? What excuse can I render for not keeping it? And will excuses avail in the Judgment? Shall I feel like offering them then? and if not, how dare I solace myself with them now?"

### **Sin is Transgression of Law**

It is indeed true that:

#### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> ...sin is the transgression of the law.

Therefore it is a sin not to keep God's Sabbath day. It is also true that:



## **Romans 4**

<sup>15</sup> Where no law is there is no transgression.

Nowhere in the Bible can there be found even the remotest hint of a law commanding rest on the first of the week—Sunday. Therefore it is not a sin for anybody to do any kind of legitimate work on Sunday.

Of course every Christian will be as courteous and as mindful of the feelings of others on Sunday as on any other day of the week, and will not do anything needlessly to annoy or disturb them. But anything that it is right to do on any day in the week it is perfectly right to do on Sunday. It is no sin to sell papers on Sunday, nor is it a sin to work in a factory on that day. Why not? Because that day is not the Sabbath day.

## **Only One Law**

I know of no other law. I do not find any modification of the commandment making an exception of those who labor in foundries, factories, etc. And there is no reason why there should be; for God is the God of the poor, and His Gospel is preached especially to the poor. The Sabbath is the friend of the poor man above all others; for the one who needs the most is always the one who receives most from God; and the Sabbath reveals God as Creator and Provider,—as the One with power to give us life not only for a few days or years, but for eternity; the One who supplies all our needs, because He creates all things.

## **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live and move, and have our being.

The Sabbath means to us, and is, absolute rest in God. It gives knowledge of the truth that the man without a farthing, who has implicit, unshakable trust in God, is richer than the millionaire who disregards His law. We cannot live a moment without God; every breath comes from Him; it is He that gives us power to get wealth even to the slightest extent; therefore it is most reasonable

to believe that we have a better hope of life in His service than out of it.

## **God's Service is Freedom**

And God's service is freedom.

### **1 Corinthians 7**

<sup>22</sup> He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free man.

### **John 8**

<sup>31</sup> Jesus said to those which believed on Him, If you continue in my Word, then are you my disciples indeed;

<sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

He who knows the Lord as his Master can never be brought into bondage to any man. For,

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>24</sup> No man can serve two masters; for either you will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon.

If you are the servants of God, then you are not the servants of man, and your daily work will be done, not to please either your employers or yourself, but God.

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>22</sup> Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

<sup>23</sup> And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

<sup>24</sup> Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.

The work of the Gospel is to turn men...

### **Acts 26**

<sup>18</sup> ...from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;

—to deliver them from fear of death,<sup>296</sup> and to make them free from sin's dominion.<sup>297</sup> This is the condition of a follower of Christ—the Christian. Now does it seem reasonable that a man who has this freedom should be compelled by some other man to do something against his will and conscience? Is it possible for one who knows the freedom that Christ gives to be so bound. What do you think?

## **Losing Life for the Truth's Sake**

“Well, shall I run the risk of losing my job, and so my bread and butter, in order to keep the Sabbath.”

I do not know. You might lose your job through keeping the Sabbath, and you might not. Jesus says,

### **John 21**

<sup>22</sup> ...what is that to you? follow me.

Our sole business is to seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; it is God's business to look after our life and our living. Even if we should die through adherence to the truth, what of that? We think that it is a noble thing to die for the truth—when we sit by the cozy fire and read about the martyrs of other days; but has God no need of martyrs now? Why should it be thought so much more terrible to die for the truth than to die for one's country, as so many thousands do?

Do you know what the Scriptures call a man who procures food for himself at the expense of the truth? They do not call him a Christian. Listen:

### **Hebrews 12**

<sup>14</sup> Follow...holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

<sup>15</sup> Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;...

<sup>16</sup> Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

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<sup>296</sup> *Hebrews 2:14-15.*

<sup>297</sup> *Romans 6:14.*

Jesus says:

**Matthew 16**

<sup>25</sup> Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

<sup>26</sup> For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Don't you think, then, that the wisest and safest plan is to leave your life, your body and your soul, in the Lord's keeping?

**Works of Necessity**

But you say that there are certain "works of necessity," which it must certainly be lawful to perform, even on the Lord's Sabbath day. Yes, there are; but those works do not embrace anything whatever that is "necessary" only because man's desire for gain makes it so.

The example of Christ is our guide here as elsewhere. He did works on the Sabbath day, not because He was compelled to, in order to satisfy somebody else's desire for gain, or to "earn His living," but because His love for suffering humanity drew Him to them. He did them, not because He was compelled, but because He was free.

The "works of necessity," which are lawful on the Sabbath day are those which the love of God—not love of self—constrains us to do, namely, to relieve the suffering and the afflicted. Christ's example shows us that a work of necessity is something which one does for another, without hope of reward, and without thought of self; and He says:

**Matthew 16**

<sup>24</sup> If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Will you do it?

## 90. The Power of Christ's Coming and Kingdom

Present Truth, February 27, 1902

Kindly explain *Mark 9:1*: "And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

THE context supplies the answer to this question. Jesus had been speaking about His coming...

### Mark 8

<sup>38</sup> ...in the glory of His Father,

—when He uttered the words quoted, and the next thing related is the Transfiguration, which is thus described:

### Mark 9

<sup>2</sup> And after six days Jesus took with him Peter, and James, and John, and led them up into a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.

<sup>3</sup> And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

<sup>4</sup> And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

<sup>6</sup> For he knew not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

<sup>7</sup> And there was a cloud that overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear Him.

<sup>8</sup> And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

We are not left to conjecture that this was what Jesus meant when He said that some of those standing by should see the kingdom of God come with power; for Peter, who saw the transfiguration, states the matter very plainly. He says:

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>16</sup> For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

<sup>17</sup> For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

<sup>18</sup> And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

The transfiguration of Jesus, then, was a representation of His Kingdom,

## **Luke 21**

<sup>27</sup> ...with power and great glory,

—even...

## **Romans 6**

<sup>4</sup> ...the glory of the Father.

There were with Him also Moses and Elijah,

## **Luke 9**

<sup>31</sup> ...who appeared in glory,

—as representatives of the two classes of the saints who will be transfigured with Jesus at His coming, namely, those who have fallen asleep, and those who are alive and remain until His coming.

The question is often asked how Moses and Elijah could be at the mount with Jesus, if...

## **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not anything.

This question does not take two things into account: Elijah never died, but was translated to heaven as Enoch was.<sup>298</sup> There is therefore no room for any difficulty in this case. Moses, however,

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<sup>298</sup> 2 Kings 2:11.

### **Deuteronomy 34**

<sup>5</sup> ...died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor; but no man knows of his sepulchre unto this day.

How then could Moses be on the mount with Jesus, unless the dead go to heaven and are conscious? This brings us to the second thing that is usually overlooked, which is brought to view in:

### **Jude**

<sup>9</sup> Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you.

Michael is...

### **Daniel 12**

<sup>1</sup> ...the great Prince which stands for the children of your people,

—who in the time of trouble at the last day stands up for their deliverance. There can be no question but that Christ is the one referred to. It was He who disputed with the devil about the body of Moses. It is by...

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> ...the voice of the Archangel,

—that the sleeping saints will be called to life at the coming of the Lord; and as there could be no dispute between Him and the devil about the body of Moses, except as to who had a right to it, we know that in the case of Moses, the resurrection day was anticipated.

The devil is the one that...

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>14</sup> ...had the power of death,

### **Isaiah 14**

<sup>17</sup> ...[who] opened not the house of his prisoners [voluntarily].

But Christ entered into his prison-house, the grave, voluntarily, and disarmed the devil,<sup>299</sup> and He has the keys of death and the grave,<sup>300</sup> so that He can release whosoever He will. Christ was...

### **Revelation 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...slain from the foundation of the world,

—and therefore before His crucifixion on Calvary He had the same power to open the grave of His people, and to call them forth to life, that He has now; and this power He often exercised.

The case, then, is very plain: Christ was on the mount in the dazzling glory in which He will appear at the last day, and Moses and Elijah appeared in glory with Him as representatives of the saints who have slept and those who have remained alive, who will be...

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> ...changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,

—from mortality to immortality. When Christ comes from heaven He will...

### **Philippians 3 [RV]**

<sup>21</sup> ...fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto himself.

If we should stop here, we should have only the bare outline of facts, and should perhaps not learn the lesson designed to be conveyed by the recital. Let us therefore note very briefly and plainly a few things, some of them by way of review, and some for the purpose of getting additional light.

- a) In the mount of transfiguration Christ appeared in His kingdom; the power of His kingdom was seen by those who were present.

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<sup>299</sup> *Luke 11:21-22.*

<sup>300</sup> *Revelation 1:18.*



- b) He himself was transfigured. The glory in which He was clothed was the glory that came from within Him.

### **John 1**

<sup>14</sup> We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

- c) This is exactly what will take place with all the saints at the harvest “in the end of this world,”<sup>301</sup> when they are gathered home.

### **Matthew 13**

<sup>43</sup> Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

The light with which they will then be clothed will be a light that is already within them, for they will *shine forth*.

- d) This therefore is a manifestation of the truth that “the kingdom of God is within you.”

There is no trifling, no play upon words, when Jesus told His disciples that some of them should see the kingdom of God come with power. The kingdom of God was there in the person of Jesus, and on the mount of transfiguration the disciples saw the power of it in Him, as well as in Moses and Elijah. God is...

### **Exodus 15**

<sup>11</sup> ...glorious in holiness,

—and so is His kingdom in His people. The grand lesson that we are to learn from this representation is...

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> ...the power that works in us,

—to enable us to do the will of God on earth even as it is done in heaven. All the power indicated by the glory of God,—the power by which Jesus was raised from the dead, and by which the bodies of all the righteous will be changed at His coming, and fashioned like unto His glorious body,—is the power of the kingdom

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<sup>301</sup> *Matthew 13:40.*

of God within us, by which when believe we overcome sin, and are now changed into the same image from glory to glory.<sup>302</sup>

### **Romans 8**

<sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

With these truths before us knowing that the Lord is in His holy temple, dwelling between the cherubim, and that our bodies are the temple of God, we may pray with the Spirit and the understanding as never before,

### **Psalms 80**

<sup>1</sup> You Shepherd of Israel, You that lead Joseph like a flock; You that dwell between the cherubims, *shine forth*.

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<sup>302</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:18.

# 91. Should Christians Drink Stimulating or Intoxicating Liquors?

Present Truth, March 6, 1902

We have on record that Christ made water into wine at the marriage feast. Is that sufficient testimony that Christians may indulge in a glass of beer? When a man is converted, does he wander from the true path of Christ by taking an occasional glass of beer as a stimulant?

WE HAVE often talked in these columns about the wine which Christ made at Cana;<sup>303</sup> but this question brings up a phase of the subject that we have not before considered in this connection, and therefore we shall find it profitable to take it up again from the beginning. We shall try to do it so simply that there can be no confusion.

The miracle was recorded in *John* 2:1-11. The wine had been used up, and there were six empty water pots standing by. Jesus said to the servants,

## **John 2**

<sup>7</sup> Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

<sup>8</sup> And He said unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bore it.

And when the governor of the feast tasted it, he perceived that it was better wine than that which they had at the beginning.

## **The Wine God Makes**

This was “natural wine,” such as God makes every year. The miracle was to show us God’s agency in the products of the earth, especially in “the fruit of the vine,” and incidentally to teach us the kind of wine men ought to drink.

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<sup>303</sup> See article 53, “The Wine That the Lord Makes.”

It should be understood that the element of time is not a factor in any miracle. That is to say, the miraculous nature of an action does not depend upon its having been done quickly. The miracle consists in the doing of it, whether long or short time be taken. For example, in the case before us, the miracle does not consist in the fact that water was turned into wine in the space of a few minutes, but in the fact that it was done. If the miracle takes a year to accomplish it, the miracle is none the less.

If anybody thinks otherwise, let him try it. Let him take a year, or ten years, and at the end of that time he will be no nearer producing wine from water than at the beginning. But God can and does do it. He is constantly doing it in vines all over the earth. Usually He occupies several months in the process; but at the wedding feast He did it in a few minutes in the True Vine. Christ is...

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>18</sup> ...the Beginning,

—even the Source or,

### **Revelation 3**

<sup>14</sup> ...Beginning of the creation of God.

In Him everything is created, and in Him all things consist.<sup>304</sup> That which is in Him is life.<sup>305</sup> His blood, His life, is pure and perfect, and everything that comes from Him is perfect. In the stream of life that flows from the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne,<sup>306</sup> there is no element of decay. It is the...

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>1</sup> ...pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.

Thus the wine that the Lord makes is not poisonous, but pure and life-giving. The word “intoxicating” means poisoning, and

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<sup>304</sup> *Colossians* 1:16-17.

<sup>305</sup> *John* 1:3-4.

<sup>306</sup> Compare *Revelation* 5:4 and 22:1.

poisoning means death; therefore it is clear that the wine which the Lord makes—"the fruit of the vine"<sup>307</sup>—is not intoxicating.

We can demonstrate this for ourselves. The wine which God yearly produces from water is hermetically sealed in small flasks grouped in clusters. One may take of it even to repletion, but it will not produce intoxication any more than fresh apples will.

### **Alcohol not a Product of Nature**

Alcohol is not a "product of nature," not a "creature of God."<sup>308</sup> God never made alcohol, nor any fermented or malt liquors of any kind. If grapes or grain were allowed to remain as God makes them, they would never have stimulating or intoxicating effects. It is only by artificial processes, or when the fruits and grains have been crushed so soaked and allowed to decompose, that alcohol, which stimulates and intoxicates, is formed.

Now what God never does in all creation, we may be sure He did not do that day in Cana; therefore there is no connection whatever between the wine that Jesus made and the beer that men make. To say that because Jesus made wine from water therefore I may drink beer or any other intoxicating liquor, has no more reason in it than to say that because He was righteous, I may sin. We have no warrant to pronounce sentence upon anybody, and we do not need to; for each one can answer for himself whether or not the making and drinking of beer is following in the steps of Jesus.

It does not seem that there can be any question as to whether or not Christians, or anybody else, for that matter, should take that which intoxicates. To put the case vividly, What would you think of one who should stand by the river of life, a few hundred yards below where it issues from the throne, and mix poison with it before drinking it, saying that he liked it better so? You would think it a sacrilegious act, and would say that he was despising God's good gift. Now that is really what men do when they take

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<sup>307</sup> *Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18.*

<sup>308</sup> *1 Timothy 4:4.*

intoxicating liquor. They show lack of appreciation for God's pure life stream; they slight the good and perfect gift, and choose that which is perverted and degenerate.

### **What is a Stimulant?**

But what about stimulation? Ah, that is so much milder a term than intoxication that many people are deceived by it; but the difference is really only one of degree; for the first effect of all intoxicants is to stimulate. If we examine the matter closely, we shall see that the use of stimulants of any kind whatever is directly opposed to the principles of Christianity.

Take the simple meaning of the word. *Stimulus* is a pure Latin word, meaning:

...a pointed, pricking instrument; a goad for driving cattle, slaves, etc.

"Stimulant," and "stimulation" are from the Latin verb *stimulo*, which means:

...to prick with a goad; to prick or goad on; to goad, torment, vex, trouble, disturb.

Do you think that this is the way God treats His children? Does He goad them on like cattle or slaves? Does He vex or trouble them? Far from it. He gives rest and peace.<sup>309</sup> Those who hearken to Him have peace like a river,<sup>310</sup>—the river of life,—calmly flowing, and are not goaded and harassed and worried. Instead of being spurred on to exert and exhaust their strength, they are continually renewing their strength, so as to keep the freshness of youth.

A stimulant is a whip, a goad. When does one take his "occasional stimulant," provided of course that he is "moderate" and takes it only occasionally? It is when he is tired and worn out, is it not? When his nerves are unstrung, and his muscles are re-

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<sup>309</sup> *Isaiah* 32:17.

<sup>310</sup> *Isaiah* 66:12.

laxed. What is the result? He feels new energy for the moment, and can think clearly and work with vigor. But he has received no strength whatever. He has simply forced himself to do what he really was unfit to do. That is cruelty.

If you put a horse in the place of the man you will see that is so. Your horse is exhausted: he has worked all day, and ought to be in the stable resting, with a good feed. He comes to a hill and, although he is willing enough, he stops. Then you ply the whip, and force him on, and you prove that he can do more work yet. But you know that the whip added no strength to him; it clearly took strength out of him, making him less fit for future service.

Time is lost not gained, by working either horses or men when they are tired; and when they are not tired, but in possession of health, they need no beating to incite them to work.

### **The Use of Stimulants is Slavery**

Now to show that stimulation is absolutely contrary to the principles of Christ: God made man to have dominion, to be ruler over all things, and hence absolutely free. Christ says:

#### **John 8**

<sup>31</sup> If you continue in my Word, then are you my disciples indeed;

<sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

God redeems the life of His children from destruction, so that their youth is renewed like the eagles'; He renews their strength, which is far different from giving them the appearance of strength for a time, while actually diminishing their vitality.

Is it not self-evident that the person who is goaded to his work by a stimulant is not free? The master does not have to be driven to do his own works; he does it because it is his work, and he loves it; he finds pleasure in working. Indeed he finds more rest and comfort in activity than he could find in idleness. As soon as he has to be driven to the work, he ceases to be master, and becomes a slave. But the very essence of Christianity is liberty.

## Slavery Is Opposed to the Gospel

The service of God is love, and love is not and cannot be forced. It must come spontaneously.

### 1 John 5

<sup>3</sup> This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.

To do even that which is right, because we are forced to do it, is not righteousness. There are no people on earth that conform more closely to the laws and regulations laid down for them, than the convicts in prison; but there is no virtue in their deed.

The sum of the matter is that no man ought ever to be driven or to drive himself to do anything whatever. The Gospel is the good news of salvation,—wholeness,—grace to help in every time of need, from God who is...

### Psalm 46

<sup>1</sup> ...our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble.

The help and strength placed at our disposal is infinite, and it is the Christian's business to become so thoroughly in touch with it, and so familiar with the means by which it may be appropriated, that it will be his delight to do the will of the Lord, even as a strong man rejoices to run a race. When one is...

### Ephesians 6

<sup>10</sup> ...strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,

—he will have no need of stimulants to goad him to any legitimate task.

The Gospel is intensely practical. It concerns itself with the whole spirit, soul, and body; and therefore the strength of the Lord, and “the power of His might” pertains to the body as well as the mind. Our God is the Healer; and He has promised to take disease away from those who keep His commandments.<sup>311</sup> When Jesus returned from His baptism,

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<sup>311</sup> *Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 7:11-15.*



## **Matthew 4**

<sup>23</sup> [He] went about all Galilee,...preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease;

—and “the Gospel of the kingdom,” which He preached, is the same that He commissions His servants to preach today, and until the end. Therefore in Him we may always be...

## **Titus 3**

<sup>1</sup> ...ready to every good work,

—and take keen delight in doing it. Our work should be a pleasure, not a drag upon us.

## **Isaiah 40**

<sup>31</sup> They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;...they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Jesus calls us to come and learn of Him, and to take His yoke upon us, and find rest; because His yoke is easy, and His burden light.<sup>312</sup>

## **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.

Literally, “we do not get tired.” It is no rash assertion, that this joyful rest in service is possible for every Christian who has faith and zeal enough to study and submit to the working of the Life by which all good work is done.

If you are tired, the proper thing to do is to rest. This will not always be by going to bed. Sometimes, indeed, very often, the weariness is due to poison in the system, on account of a too “liberal” diet and lack of exercise or fresh air. Regulate the diet, cleanse the system, take regular and abundant exercise in fresh air, keep the stream of life in constant flow, and then you will do all the work you ought to do, from pure love of it. And when you

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<sup>312</sup> *Matthew 11:28-30.*

do not feel fresh for any task, that will be a signal that you should wait and gather new strength.

Whoever does not feel this freshness for his daily duties, should make it his first business to search diligently for the cause of his weariness and languor, and, having found it, to remove it in the strength of the Lord. Thus, trusting and living in the Lord, you will...

**Psalms 84**

<sup>7</sup> ...go from strength to strength,

—and even in this present world will have a vivid foretaste of the time when...

**Malachi 4 [RV]**

<sup>2</sup> ...you shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall.

## 92. Everlasting Punishment and Eternal Life

Present Truth, March 13, 1902

Will you kindly explain the last verse of the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Matthew*? Are the words “everlasting” and “eternal” synonymous terms?

THEY are not synonymous, but identical. The first reads thus:

### **Matthew 25**

<sup>46</sup> And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

The two words, “everlasting” and “eternal” are from one and the same Greek word, so that the verse is correctly rendered in the *Revised Version*:

<sup>46</sup> And the shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into the eternal life.

There is absolutely no difference in the meaning of the two words, “everlasting” and “eternal;” and it is very evident that there cannot be in this instance, since, as just stated, the very same Greek word is used in each clause of the verse.

Does not this then prove that the punishment of the wicked will last as long as the reward of the righteous? Most assuredly it does; the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous are alike eternal.

Then the wicked will be, after the Judgment, tormented to all eternity, will they? Not by any means. The verse affords no warrant for such a conclusion. Note well that it contains no hint of torment, and we have no right to substitute “torment” for “punishment.”

The text before us says that the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; but let us now read another text, which tells what this punishment will be.

2 *Thessalonians* 1:7-9 says that:

## 2 *Thessalonians* 1

<sup>7</sup> ...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>9</sup> Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

The punishment into which the wicked will go at Christ's second coming, will be destruction, and it will be everlasting, eternal. The wicked will be destroyed for as long a time as the righteous will live.

Let us have a few parallel texts. *Romans* 6:23 tells us:

## *Romans* 6

<sup>23</sup> The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Death then is the punishment of the wicked; and it will be eternal death, since the punishment is to be eternal. To say that the wicked will be conscious through all eternity, is to make nonsense of the Word; for they could not be conscious without being alive; and if they were alive to all eternity, no matter how deplorable their condition, they would have eternal life as surely as the righteous, and there would be no contrast.

It would be folly to say that the wages of sin is eternal life; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord; yet that is just what the text would really say, if "death" meant eternal life in misery or in any condition whatever. There is a sharp and decided contrast between death and life. The two terms have nothing in common. The punishment of the wicked will in every respect be the exact opposite of the reward of the righteous, but just as lasting.

Again: 2 *Thessalonians* 1:9 says that the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,

and from the glory of His power. The destruction comes from the presence of God. Now read:

**Psalm 97**

<sup>3</sup> A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.

Also,

**Psalm 68**

<sup>2</sup> As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

These text most clearly show what the punishment of the wicked will be.

It is true that the Scriptures say that the wicked shall be tormented, and shall suffer. It could not expected that they could be destroyed by fire without pain and suffering; and this torment will be proportionate to the guilt of each individual. But there will at last come an end, no matter how extended the period of torment may be; for we read:

**Isaiah 10**

<sup>23</sup> The Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined in the midst of all the land.

<sup>25</sup> For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and my anger in their destruction.

And again:

**Obadiah**

<sup>15</sup> The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as you have done, it shall be done unto you; your reward shall return upon your own head.

<sup>16</sup> For as you have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

All this is in the text first quoted; for the Greek word there rendered “punishment” means *to cut off*; *to prune*, as a branch from a vine. See *John* 15:1-6, where we read Christ’s statement that the branch that does not bear fruit is cut off,

## **John 15**

<sup>6</sup> ...and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

So we read that:

## **Psalm 37**

<sup>9</sup> Evildoers shall be cut off.

<sup>28</sup> The seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

<sup>38</sup> The end of the wicked shall be cut off.

But in contrast to this, God saints...

<sup>28</sup> ...are preserved for ever.

This is not told for the purpose of frightening us into being good, much less that we should gloat over the threatened fate of the wicked. The keeping of the commandments is love, not fright. No person ever could be frightened into goodness; if he could be, he would be a cringing slave, and not a free child of God. But the sure destiny of the wicked is foretold for our comfort.

“What comfort can there possibly be in it?” you ask.

Just this, that it shows how completely God destroys sin. Sinners will be destroyed only because they are inseparably joined to sin, and sin must be rooted out of God’s universe. So as sinners will be destroyed by the glory of the Lord’s presence, against which they have rebelled, that same glory will also destroy our sins, if we delight in God’s presence; and it will destroy them to all eternity, so that they will have no more existence, and will never rise up to plague us.

Is not that a blessed revelation?

## 93. The Unpardonable Sin (1902)

Present Truth, March 13, 1902

Note: This topic was covered in another article of the same name, about a year later. See, "[The Unpardonable Sin \(1903\)](#)."

A friend of my wants to know what is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and would like to have some Scripture references on the subject, for his own benefit.

CERTAINLY I will give your friend some Scripture references, for I could not answer the question otherwise. The Word of God is our only guide, and nobody is authorized to speak anything but that Word.

In order to get a clearer idea of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is the one unpardonable sin, you should read *Matthew* 12:22-32. I will quote a part of it.

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>22</sup> Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spoke and saw.

<sup>23</sup> And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?

<sup>24</sup> But when the Pharisees heard it they said, This fellow does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of devils.

Jesus knowing their thoughts, told them that a house or a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and showed them that His work could not possibly be of the devil; and then He added:

<sup>30</sup> He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me, scatters abroad.

<sup>31</sup> Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

<sup>32</sup> And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

We see a marked contrast between “all the people” and the Pharisees. The people accepted Jesus as the Anointed Son of David; but the Pharisees rejected Him. Whether Jesus meant to indicate that the Pharisees had already sinned against the Holy Ghost, or whether He spoke to warn them of their danger, we have no means of knowing; and it is not important that we should know. The important thing is to know that the unpardonable sin is the conscious, willful rejection of Christ,

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>14</sup> ...who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.

This is plainly indicated in the text, and others corroborate it. The same thing is stated in:

### **Hebrews 6**

<sup>4</sup> It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

<sup>5</sup> And have tasted the good word of God; and the powers of the world to come,

<sup>6</sup> If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

This text is very simple, and no one need have any trouble over it. It does not say that no backslider can be reclaimed; but it does say those who reject Christ cannot be renewed unto repentance; and this is so because...

### **Acts 4**

<sup>12</sup> ...neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Note that those spoken of in this verse have been almost the same as in heaven. They have had the richest Christian experience, knowing the Word of God, and tasting the powers of the world to come. They have been fully enlightened; they have expe-



rienced all that God has for men: yet they have turned their backs upon it all. It is impossible to renew such to repentance. Why? Because...

### **Hebrews 6**

<sup>6</sup> ...they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

Do not fail to notice that the text goes back of forgiveness. It does not say that these cannot be forgiven, but that they cannot repent. That is the worst possible case. Of course they cannot be forgiven if they cannot repent. And they cannot repent, because they continue deliberately to reject Christ, whom God has...

### **Acts 5**

<sup>31</sup> ...exalted with His own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour; for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sin.

Lastly we have:

### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>26</sup> If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins,

<sup>27</sup> But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

<sup>28</sup> He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

<sup>29</sup> Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall be thought worthy, who has trodden underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done desperate to the Spirit of grace?

Here there is willful rejection of Christ, and treading Him under foot. So, "there remains no more sacrifice for sins" for them. The reason of this is plain. It is because Christ is the only sacrifice; whoever rejects Him has nothing to hope in or for.

But with this text we must not fail to place...

### **John 6**

<sup>37</sup> Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

There is sacrifice and atonement for the sins of every one who comes to the Lord Jesus, and abides in Him. There remains no sacrifice for sin, only when the One provided by the Eternal Spirit is despised and trampled under foot. And mind, this trampling under foot must be done willfully, with full knowledge of who He is.

## **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>8</sup> The princes of this world,

—who slew the Lord of glory, did not know what they were doing,<sup>313</sup> and therefore there was forgiveness for them. Judas basely and willfully betrayed innocent blood, and even his prayer became sin.<sup>314</sup>

How much more than what has here been set forth may be involved in the sin against the Holy Ghost, I do not know; but one thing is sure, and that is, that no one who is mourning over his sins, and is fearful that he has committed the unpardonable sin, has been guilty of it. The one who has committed that sin is not penitent. Nobody has a right to say of another, that he has committed the unpardonable sin; and nobody who has committed it ever accuses himself of it.

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<sup>313</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:8; Luke 23:34.

<sup>314</sup> Psalm 109:6-18.

## 94. The Fullness of the Gentiles

Present Truth, March 20, 1902

Will you please explain the expression, “Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles come in”? What is the meaning of “the fullness of the Gentiles”?

THE expression occurs in *Romans* 11:25, and in that chapter we shall find the answer, which some other texts of Scripture will corroborate. I must ask you to read the entire chapter from your Bible, as it is too long to be quoted here. Supposing that you have your Bible open before you, I will briefly note the contents of this chapter. The apostle asks,

### **Romans 11**

<sup>1</sup> Has God cast away His people?

—and immediately answers in the negative. By “His people,” he refers to Israel, and he is much concerned in the matter, for he speaks as...

<sup>1</sup> ...an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

No; God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. As in the days of Elijah, when the prophet declared that he was the only worshiper of the true God, it was told him that there were seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal,

<sup>5</sup> Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Note this last statement, *Romans* 11:5. The apostle is not speaking of the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when he says that:

<sup>2</sup> God has not cast away His people which He foreknew;

—for the remnant reserved is...

<sup>5</sup> ...according to the election of grace.

The natural descendants of the patriarchs, according to the flesh, are never, either in the Old Testament or the New, reckoned as the seed of Abraham—the people of God. That is to say, no people are God’s people by virtue of their nationality. It is only by receiving Christ that men have the right and the power to become sons of God.<sup>315</sup>

We have only to go back to chapters in the *Epistle to the Romans*, to learn of whom the apostle speaks as the people of God.

### **Romans 9**

<sup>6</sup> For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

<sup>7</sup> Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called.

<sup>8</sup> That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

With this in mind, let us proceed with our reading of the eleventh chapter. The election is by grace, and not by works. Grace brings salvation; therefore when we are told that God’s people, Israel, are such “according to the election of grace,” we know that the real Israel is composed of such as are “being saved.”<sup>316</sup>

### **Romans 11**

<sup>7</sup> What then? Israel has not obtained that which he seeks for; but the election has obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

Again we see that Israel is composed of the elect alone, and that blindness has come upon “the rest,” that is, upon those who have the name of Israel, but who have not the faith that makes them actually Israel. Being blinded by unbelief, “the rest” have fallen.

<sup>11</sup> I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

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<sup>315</sup> *John* 1:12.

<sup>316</sup> *Acts* 2:47.

<sup>12</sup> Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?

The question is,

“Shall the number of God’s people ‘which He foreknew’ be diminished? Shall there be only ‘a remnant,’ while all ‘the rest’ fall away and are lost?”

And the answer is, Not by any means. Many, yea, the majority, of those called Israel, are such only in name; but their places will be filled by those who were...

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>11</sup> ...in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

<sup>12</sup> [Who,] at that time...aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,  
–and far off from them,

<sup>13</sup> ...are made nigh by the blood of Christ,

<sup>19</sup> [And so] are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

Then follows the illustration by the olive trees. Contrary to nature, for by grace, the branches of the wild olive tree are grafted into the good olive tree, in place of its severed branches, and bear its fruit according to the root of the fatness of the good tree. Those that have been cut off,

### **Romans 11**

<sup>20</sup> ...because of unbelief,

–are as real Gentiles as those who never knew God, for:

### **Romans 2**

<sup>25</sup> If you be a breaker of law, your circumcision is made uncircumcision.

<sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

<sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew which is one inwardly.

But,

### **Romans 11**

<sup>23</sup> They also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

<sup>24</sup> For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

<sup>25</sup> For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

<sup>26</sup> And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

<sup>27</sup> For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

There you have the whole story. The coming in of the fullness of the Gentiles, the filling up of the number of Israel, the conversion of both Jews and Gentiles. Note well the statement that,

<sup>26</sup> ...so all Israel shall be saved.

How shall all Israel be saved? By the coming in of the Gentiles. Then will Israel be full, and the blindness will have passed away. Christ, the Deliverer, turns away ungodliness from Jacob, by saving Gentile sinners as well as sinners of the Jews.

The same truth is very clearly expressed in the fifteenth of *Acts*. At the great meeting in Jerusalem, Peter told how he had been chosen by the Lord to preach the Gospel to the heathen, and they had believed;

### **Acts 15**

<sup>8</sup> And God, which knows the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us;

<sup>9</sup> And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Then James stood up and said,

### **Acts 15**

<sup>14</sup> Simeon has declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.

<sup>15</sup> And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

<sup>16</sup> After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

<sup>17</sup> That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who does all these things.

Here it is plainly stated that the house of David is restored and built up by taking from among the Gentiles a people for God's name. All Israel shall be saved, without the loss of one; but the number will be made full by the bringing in of every humble, contrite Gentile in the world. And this will be no new departure from God's original plan.

<sup>18</sup> Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.

It will be the carrying out of the very plan with which He started, when He called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees. Abraham was a Gentile, but he believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness while he was yet uncircumcised,

### **Romans 4**

<sup>11</sup> ...that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

All Israel, from first to last, is composed of people called out from among the Gentiles. This is our hope. That which God did for Abraham, He will also do for us. And so, no matter what our nationality or condition, we may...

## Revelation 22

<sup>14</sup> ...have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city,

—although there is not a gate that has not on it the name of one of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.<sup>317</sup>

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## The Times of the Gentiles

Present Truth, March 20, 1902

SINCE the article in the “Private Corner,” [see above] on “The Fullness of the Gentiles” was written, the question has been asked,

What is the meaning of “the times of the Gentiles”?

The question naturally accompanies the other, and we answer it here in the same paper, so that it will not be necessary to repeat what has already been written. Read that article first, and let this be considered the close of it.

The Saviour was answering the question of the disciples, as to the time of His coming and of the end of the world, beginning with the destruction of Jerusalem; and He said:

### Luke 21

<sup>24</sup> Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Knowing that God’s promises to Israel are fulfilled by the bringing in of the Gentiles through the preaching of the Gospel, and that when...

### Matthew 24

<sup>14</sup> This Gospel of the kingdom shall [have been] preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; then shall the end come,

—it is obvious that “the times of the Gentiles” are the times devoted to the preaching of the Gospel to them. Those times will be

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<sup>317</sup> *Revelation 21:12.*



fulfilled when all the world has heard the message concerning Christ's coming in His kingdom, and all who are willing that He should reign over them have been taken out of...

**Revelation 14**

<sup>6</sup> ...every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

Those who already believe are given for...

**Isaiah 49**

<sup>6</sup> ...a light to the Gentiles,

—to be God's salvation unto the end of the earth; and:

**2 Corinthians 6**

<sup>2</sup> Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

## 95. Whom Shall We Follow?

Present Truth, March 27, 1902

Some of my friends say, "If it is important to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, why have not Wesley, Spurgeon, Müller, General Booth, and other good Christian men seen it and kept it?"

THE best way to find out would be to ask them, instead of me; for I cannot answer for them. No man can know the working of another man's mind and conscience. But every man can read the Bible; therefore, we may easily know that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and that its observance is most important; but we cannot tell why certain good men have not kept it.

The three men first mentioned are dead, and cannot be questioned; but Mr. Booth is still alive, and your friends might, if they wish to, asking the following questions:

- a) If baptism and the Lord's Supper are important, why has the Salvation Army, under its leadership, not merely ignored them, but formally voted not to allow them? If those ordinances of the Lord's appointment are important, why is any officer instantly dismissed if he begins to preach repentance and baptism?
- b) If the coming of the Lord is important, why does General Booth call it a secondary matter, and advise his people to let it alone, and never say anything about it?

When he has answered these questions, perhaps he will tell you why he does not keep the Sabbath.

Whom are your friends following—Wesley, Spurgeon, and Booth? or are they following Christ? What is their guide—the practice of those men? or the precepts of God's Word? If asked in the Judgment why they did not keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, would they say to the Lord:

“I know you told me to keep it, but Wesley, Spurgeon, and Booth did not keep it, and so I thought it was not necessary for me to.”

The Judge asks,

“You professed to believe; why then were you not baptized?”

And your friends would doubtless reply,

“General Booth did not believe in baptism, and so I thought it was of no importance.”

They no doubt often sing,

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand;<sup>318</sup>

But here, instead of building on Christ’s Word, they are building on emptiness. Thus: God’s Word gives positive commandments: but instead of building on them, they are resting their hope of salvation on somebody’s neglect of them. Is not that building on a “sinking sand”? Is a man’s failure to obey God’s Word of more authority than the Word itself?

There is not a commandment that has not been broken by some good man; shall we therefore say that none of the commandments are of any importance? No one can deny that there have been good Christians in the Roman Catholic Church, not only in the centuries before the Reformation, but since; shall we therefore say that the second commandment, which forbids the bowing down to images, is unimportant?

No man was ever yet good enough to be saved by his own good works: yet there are many people who think that they can be saved by even the failures of good men. Is it not strange that a man who will acknowledge that his own good works will not save him, will trust for salvation in the absence of some good work in another man? The mistakes and errors of good men form

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<sup>318</sup> Edward Mote, Hymn: *My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*, 1834.

a very shaky foundation on which to build Christian experience and character.

It is a very narrow mind which supposes that the preaching of any truth is the condemnation of everybody who has not seen it. Christ was the truth, and He preached the truth, yet He said that He came not into the world to condemn the world, but to save it.<sup>319</sup> The divine command is,

### **Jeremiah 23**

<sup>28</sup> He that has my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully.

But that does not mean that we are to pronounce sentence of condemnation on those who do not see it; nor, on the other hand, are we to ignore God's Word, because some good man does not see it all. If every man had always waited until every other good man saw and accepted all the truth, before he took a step in advance, there would never have been any Christian growth in the world.

The case may be summed up in the words of Christ to Peter. The Lord had told Peter something about his future life, and Peter, looking around, and seeing John walking near them, asked,

### **John 21**

<sup>21</sup> What shall this man do?

Jesus replied,

<sup>22</sup> What is that to you? follow me.

So in the case of these good men and the Sabbath. You read God's commandment, telling you to keep His Sabbath, and you understand it; but you look around, and see some of His servants who are not keeping it; and you say,

“What about these men? If I ought to keep the Sabbath, why don't they do it?”

And God replies,

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<sup>319</sup> *John* 12:47; 3:17.

“What is that to you? follow me.”

Each one stands or falls to his own master;<sup>320</sup> and each man shall give account of himself to God;<sup>321</sup> and we shall have enough to do to give account of ourselves, without troubling about other men.

Christ and His Word is the one foundation. He alone is perfect, and He alone, of all the men who ever trod this earth may be taken as an example. If we follow Him in everything, we can never make a mistake; but if we take as our model any other man that ever lived, even though it be Moses or Paul, we shall be sure to go wrong.

Whom will you follow?

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<sup>320</sup> *Romans 14:4.*

<sup>321</sup> *Romans 14:12.*

## 96. Can the Soul of Man Die?

Present Truth, April 3, 1902

On reading the article regarding the eternal punishment of the wicked, it struck me that as the soul of man is undying, how is it that death will be the punishment of the wicked, since although dead, the soul was yet alive and conscious? Please explain in your next issue, as it seems perplexing.

**T**RULY it does seem perplexing; but the difficulty will speedily disappear if we go about it in the right way. There is no difficulty whatever in the Scriptures; the difficulty comes in the attempt to reconcile the truth of the Bible with an impossible theory of human invention.

This question affords us an excellent opportunity to contrast the right and the wrong way of dealing with the Bible. The wrong way is to assume a certain thing, and then to become perplexed because the Bible does not agree with our assumption.

Thus, the disciples had settled it in their minds that Christ would immediately overthrow the Roman dominion, and establish His own everlasting kingdom on this earth, and therefore when He spoke about His resurrection from the dead, they wondered what that expression could mean. They were perplexed, and were overwhelmed by the event; but they would have had no difficulty, and would not have been taken by surprise, if they had said:

“He says that He is to die, and rise again the third day; therefore it is evident that we have not understood the Scriptures, and are mistaken in our ideas.”

So in the question before us, the Bible says that...

### **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> The wages of sin is death,

—and that the wicked...

## 2 Thessalonians 1

<sup>9</sup> ...shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

But you say,

“How can this be, since the soul of man cannot die?”

That is the wrong way. The right way would be to say:

“Since the punishment of the wicked is death, and is to be eternal, even ‘everlasting destruction,’ it is evident that I have been mistaken in supposing that man is an undying creature, and that there is really no such thing as death.”

You say that “the soul of man is undying.” God says:

### Ezekiel 18

<sup>4</sup> The soul that sins, it shall die.

### Psalm 89

<sup>48</sup> What man is he that lives and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?

The answer comes:

### Psalm 49

<sup>6</sup> They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

<sup>7</sup> None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him:

<sup>8</sup> For the redemption of their soul is precious [costly], and it ceases [must be let alone] for ever.

<sup>15</sup> But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me.

Here we have your question completely answered. The difficulty is solved, and the perplexity ought now to cease. The only trouble was, that you assumed something that is contrary to the truth.

How is it possible for anybody to say that there is no death? Surely one's own observation ought to convince him, even without the testimony of the Scriptures. That man is mortal, that

death has come into the world by sin, is declared throughout the Bible; and we see it everywhere on earth.

To say that there is no death, is to deny the necessity for Christ's sacrifice; for we are told that He partook of man's nature,

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>14</sup> ...that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

<sup>15</sup> And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.

He tasted death for every man<sup>322</sup>; and...

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>26</sup> The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

He says,

### **John 6**

<sup>33</sup> The Bread of God is He which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world.

And again:

### **John 10**

<sup>10</sup> I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

To the unbelieving Jews He uttered this sorrowful reproach:

### **John 5 [RV]**

<sup>39</sup> You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have the eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me;

<sup>40</sup> And you will not come to me that you might have life.

Christ did not come into this world for nothing. It was terrible need that called for so wondrous a sacrifice.

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<sup>322</sup> *Hebrews 2:9.*



### John 3

<sup>16</sup> God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Without Christ, all men would perish. The fact that He came for the sole purpose of giving life, shows that without Him there is nothing but death for man.

Death is not the same thing as life. To say that the dead are alive and conscious is as absurd as to say that the blind see, that the dumb speak, or that the deaf hear. It is even worse than absurd; it is wicked; for it is not only a direct contradiction of the Bible, but it virtually teaches that there is no such thing as death, and that what is called sin is really righteousness.

For it is declared that sin brought death.<sup>323</sup> Being sinners we were dead,<sup>324</sup> since death had passed upon all men: but if it were true that death is the same thing as life, it would be evident that what the Bible calls sin is really the same as righteousness. Thus we see that it is not a light thing to say that there is no death, since it really denies the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

### Matthew 25

<sup>46</sup> These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

The punishment we have already seen to be death—everlasting destruction. Now see how the statement that there is no death makes nonsense of the Scriptures: it would have Christ say that the wicked shall go away into everlasting life; but the righteous into everlasting life. It would make *Romans* 6:23 say that the wages of sin is life, but the gift of God is eternal life. Of course professed Christians never think of the consequences of the false ideas that they have imbibed concerning death; for they could have no respect for the Scriptures, if they really thought that they contain such absurdities.

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<sup>323</sup> *Romans* 5:12.

<sup>324</sup> *Ephesians* 2:1.

What does the Bible say about death, and the condition of the dead? Let us read a few statements.

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything.

<sup>10</sup> Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave wither you go.

### **Psalms 146**

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

<sup>4</sup> His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

### **Psalms 6**

<sup>5</sup> In death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who shall give you thanks.

### **Isaiah 38**

<sup>17</sup> You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for You have cast all my sins behind your back.

<sup>18</sup> For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

<sup>19</sup> The living, the living, he shall praise You, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known your truth.

The case is very simple.

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>4</sup> Christ...is our life.

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In [God] we live, and move, and have our being.

### **John 14**

<sup>6</sup> [Christ is] the way, the truth, and the life.

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>17</sup> In Him all things consist.

In the beginning,

## **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

So we read,

## **Job 33**

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of God has made me; and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

In Christ we live; without Him there is no existence. All mankind live by the same means by which the first man lived—by the breath of God. God is constantly doing for each one of us what He did for Adam in the beginning—breathing into our nostrils the breath of life; thus only is it that we are living souls.

In the things that God has made, and which are for our use, the everlasting power and Divinity of God are clearly seen;<sup>325</sup> and:

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup> His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue.

God gives himself to us in His gifts.

## **1 John 5**

<sup>11</sup> God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son.

<sup>12</sup> He that has the Son has life; and He that has not the Son of God has not life.

Now all men have the Son, the Word life, whether they know Him and accept Him, or not; for:

## **Romans 5**

<sup>18</sup> ...the free gift has come upon all men unto justification of life,

—and the Word of life is in the mouth and heart of all men, in order that they may do it.<sup>326</sup> Thus all are without excuse; for they have not to go in search of eternal life, but only to lay hold of and

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<sup>325</sup> *Romans 1:20.*

<sup>326</sup> *Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:6-9.*

keep that which has been committed to them. But not all will accept Christ, and yield to His control, even when they know Him. They say,

### **Luke 19**

<sup>14</sup> We will not have this Man to rule over us.

Nevertheless He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish,<sup>327</sup> and therefore He does not immediately take them at their word, and leave them to themselves. Patiently and long He suffers their manners, drawing them to himself by the cords of His everlasting love.<sup>328</sup>

Still many are obdurate, and will resist the Holy Ghost unto the end. Then at the last, when all God's ways have been made plain to all mankind, and it still appears that men choose their own ways, instead of His, God gives them over wholly to their own choice. They choose to live apart from the Lord; but Christ...

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>10</sup> ...ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things;

—and when that is accomplished there will be no place in the universe for those who have fully and finally rejected Him. They will not have God to dwell in them, nor are they willing to abide in Him; therefore they will be left to themselves, and the result will be that they will cease to be, and will...

### **Obadiah**

<sup>16</sup> ...be as though they had not been.

The breath that, joined to the body, made man a living soul, will depart, and then the soul will no longer live.

Can you not see that the Scriptural view shows the supremacy of God, while the idea that even the wicked who reject Him can

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<sup>327</sup> 2 Peter 3:9.

<sup>328</sup> Hosea 11:4.

have life independently of Him, makes them gods, self-existent beings the same as He is?

But there is but one God,—the living God,—He alone is our dwelling place in all generations.<sup>329</sup> We must either live in Him, or else not live at all. Just as apart from Christ we can do nothing,<sup>330</sup> even so apart from Christ we cannot live. Righteousness is life,<sup>331</sup> and both come from God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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<sup>329</sup> *Psalm* 90:1.

<sup>330</sup> *John* 15:5.

<sup>331</sup> *Galatians* 3:21.

## 97. Between Death and the Resurrection

Present Truth, April 10, 1902

The condition of the soul between death and the resurrection is a thing which I have never been able to solve satisfactorily. I sometimes think we are not intended to solve the mystery.

**I**F IT were left to our wisdom to “solve,” it would remain a mystery for ever; but “those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children;” and the state of the dead is one concerning which God has taken pains to give us special information. In *1 Thessalonians* 4:13 we read:

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>13</sup> I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

Since God, who inspired the words of Paul, does not wish us to be ignorant on the subject, it is evident that we may understand it by simply giving heed to His Word. So we read further:

<sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

<sup>15</sup> 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 [“precede” RV] them which are asleep.

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

Notice that “the dead in Christ” are said to be “asleep.” When Stephen was stoned by the priestly mob,

## **Acts 7**

<sup>60</sup> He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

That leaves us in no doubt as to the condition of the dead. We well know that sound sleep is a condition of utter unconsciousness. The one who is asleep takes no note of the passing time. One may awake after half-an-hour's sleep, and think that he has slept hours; and on the other hand a night's sleep may seem but as a moment. The sleeper is totally unconscious of everything that is going on around him; and so a sleep, in which there is breath left in the body, is used as a perfect representation of death, in which the breath has departed.

What more need be said? It is evident that those who are asleep are not singing praises. They are not with the Lord; for it is not till the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, and the trump of God, that they are raised, and, with those who have remained alive until the Lord's coming, are taken to be with the Lord.

## **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>17</sup> So shall we ever be with the Lord.

How? By the resurrection of the sleeping saints, and the translation of the living, at the second coming of Christ.

As a matter of fact there is no "mystery" whatever about the state of the dead. We are unfortunately too familiar with death not to have had ocular demonstration of the fact that the condition of the dead is in every respect the exact opposite of that of the living. But there is a mystery connected with them nevertheless, and that is the giving of life to them again. This is set forth in the following words, which further emphasize the fact that the dead are not now with the Lord, but are in the dust of the earth:

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

It may be asked,

“What difference does it make what the condition of the dead is, or what we believe about it? How can our belief about this matter affect our lives as Christians?”

Whether we know what difference it makes, or not, it is evident that it is important for us to know the truth, else Inspiration would not express such solicitude that we should not remain ignorant. Only those things are unimportant, of which the Scripture says nothing; everything revealed in the Bible is of the utmost importance.

The reason given for telling us about those that are asleep, is that we should not sorrow as those who have no hope.

### **Proverbs 14**

<sup>32</sup> The righteous has hope in his death,

—and this hope is the resurrection at the coming of Christ. Note that all depends upon the coming of the Lord. If He were not coming, there would be no hope for those who have fallen asleep, nor for the living either, for that matter.

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>16</sup> If the dead rise not,...

<sup>18</sup> Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

There is one reason why we should know the truth, and that is, in order that we may not be led astray by lying spirits. The spirits personate dead men, and come with messages to their friends.



There is the most abundant and conclusive evidence that these Spiritualist manifestations are of a supernatural character; and those who believe that their dead friends are in heaven, or who are in doubt as to their condition, can easily be made to believe that the communications purporting to come from them are messages direct from heaven.

It has often been the case that men have been led to abandon their faith in Christ, through giving heed to these “seducing spirits;”<sup>332</sup> for when men are in doubt on one item of revelation, it is easy to lead them to doubt others.

But one who is instructed in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us “wise unto salvation,”<sup>333</sup> and who holds to them, cannot be deceived by any pretended communications from the dead, no matter what “tests” the spirits may give. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable and necessary.<sup>334</sup>

One more item is worthy of special note in the comfort which the Apostle Paul gives to the sorrowing ones. They are not to sorrow as those that have no hope, because God will bring the sleeping ones from the grave. But when he comes to the grand climax, after stating that when the Lord descends the dead shall rise first, and then we shall be...

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air,

—it is not said,

“...and so shall we ever be together;”

—but,

<sup>17</sup> ...so shall we ever be with the Lord.

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<sup>332</sup> 1 Timothy 4:1.

<sup>333</sup> 2 Timothy 3:15.

<sup>334</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16.

That is the “blessed hope”<sup>335</sup> above all others. It is the being with Him that makes it possible for friends to be united; for apart from Him there is nothing. There is no real friendship or relationship even in this world, except in Christ; there can be no perfect union except in Him. In Him all fullness dwells; in Him all relationship is summed up.

This is what makes the loss of all things, and even of friends, endurable; for He is the same, and His years do not fail.<sup>336</sup> Though we lose everything, yet in Him we have everything; and so, when in the world to come we rejoice at the meeting with friends, it will be known and recognized that the love of each is but a branch from the mighty stream flowing from the heart of Christ.

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<sup>335</sup> *Titus* 2:13.

<sup>336</sup> *Hebrews* 1:12.

## 98. A Personal Devil

Present Truth, April 17, 1902

A friend and myself were talking about Satan a few days ago. He holds the opinion that there is no such spiritual being as Satan, but that man's mind being evil, that is what leads him to sin, and that there is no other tempter. He quotes the temptation of our first parents as the foundation of his argument, as no spiritual being known as Satan is mentioned in that connection.

As there is such a diversity of opinion, I should esteem it a favor if you would take up this important question at an early date.

**T**HIS is indeed an important question, and intensely practical, —one that personally concerns every one. Ignorance of the reality of the tempter, and of his methods, and consequently of how to resist him, has been the rule of many; but it is not necessary for us to be...

### **2 Corinthians 2**

<sup>11</sup> ...ignorant of his devices.

The Bible gives us full information concerning him, plainly teaching that there is an evil spirit, a real personality, called Satan.

### **Satan the Serpent in Eden**

Let us begin with the basis of your friend's argument, the temptation of our first parents. True, the record in *Genesis*, being very brief, does not describe the person of the tempter; but it does clearly teach us that a real, visible creature, having the form of a serpent, addressed Eve, and beguiled her with lies. Read the whole of the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of *Genesis*. Now with that read:

### **Revelation 12**

<sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven; Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

<sup>8</sup> And prevailed not; neither was there place found any more in heaven.

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels with him.

Here we find that the one who tempted Eve was Satan in the form of a serpent. This shows not only that he is a real being, but that to use your expression, he is “a spiritual being,”—that is, he is a spirit, the same as the heavenly angels, of whom he once was one. Being a spirit, he can assume various forms, making himself visible or invisible at will.

As the Spirit of God manifested himself in the form of a dove, so this evil spirit revealed himself as a serpent. But Satan, the deceiver, does that which the Spirit of Truth will not do—he often assumes the forms of other intelligent beings, not only of angels of light,<sup>337</sup> but of men, making people believe that they see and communicate with their dead friends.

### **The Accuser of the Brethren**

Reading farther in the twelfth chapter of *Revelation*, we find that Satan is the accuser of the brethren,

#### **Revelation 12**

<sup>10</sup> ...which accused them before our God day and night.

<sup>11</sup> And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;

—and great trouble is brought to the earth, because the devil is come to its inhabitants...

<sup>12</sup> ...having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.

### **Like a Roaring Lion**

This agrees with *1 Peter* 5:8, which is a warning against a real tempter:

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<sup>337</sup> *2 Corinthians* 11:14.

## **1 Peter 5**

<sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.

This cannot apply to the evil disposition of any man.

## **Meeting with the Sons of God**

With the last two texts quoted,—the one which speaks of Satan as the accuser of the brethren, and this which says that he walks about as a roaring lion, seeking to devour whomsoever he can, read the story of Job in the first and second chapters of that book.

### **Job 2**

<sup>1</sup> There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

<sup>2</sup> And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence come you? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Then when God called Satan's attention to Job, he began to accuse him, saying that he served God only for gain.

### **Job 1**

<sup>12</sup> And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself put not forth your hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

## **Seeking to Kill Job**

Again we read that after coming to another assembly of the sons of God, and accusing Job,

### **Job 2**

<sup>7</sup> Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils.

Here we have something besides man's evil disposition. We see that Satan is as real a being as the sons of God. In keeping with his character he accused Job before God, and tried to kill him. From this we should learn that our only safety lies in God's protecting care. If we take ourselves out of His hand, our lives are not for a moment secure against the attack of Satan.

Thus we see how significant is that just before the Apostle Peter warns us that our adversary, the devil, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, he tells us to cast all our care upon God, saying,

**1 Peter 5**

<sup>7</sup> ...He cares for you.

**Tempting Christ**

Take the case of the temptation of Christ. He had no evil disposition, but He was tempted by the devil. It is impossible to deny that Satan is a real being, without denying the reality of the temptation of Jesus. We read that after trying to get Jesus to make bread of stones,

**Matthew 4**

<sup>5</sup> The devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him on a high pinnacle of the temple.

Again,

<sup>8</sup> The devil took Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

<sup>9</sup> And said unto Him, all these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me.

<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said unto him, Get hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him,

—but only...

**Luke 4**

<sup>13</sup> ...for a season.

Many times Satan sought to seduce and destroy the Saviour, but was unsuccessful.

No one who believes this account of the temptation of Jesus can avoid believing that Satan is a real being, with wonderful power.

As before stated, Jesus had no evil disposition; but even if He had, an evil disposition could not carry Him from the wilderness to the top of the temple in Jerusalem, or to the top of a high mountain, and show Him the kingdoms of the earth, and beg to be worshiped.

## Bound and Destroyed

One more out of the multitude of references to Satan must suffice for the present. In the twentieth chapter of *Revelation* we read these words of John in prophetic vision:

### Revelation 20

<sup>1</sup> And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

<sup>2</sup> And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

<sup>3</sup> And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season.

<sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

<sup>8</sup> And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

<sup>9</sup> And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

<sup>10</sup> And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

Here we have the account of the final disposition of Satan; but from first to last we see that he is described as a person—an evil spirit, as real as are any of the angels who are sent forth to do service for those who shall inherit salvation;<sup>338</sup> only his purpose is to destroy instead of to save.

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<sup>338</sup> *Hebrews* 1:14.

## Enticed Through His Own Lust

But your friend is impatient to ask what is meant by the statement that:

### James 1

<sup>14</sup> Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

He wishes to ask how this can be reconciled with the idea of a personal tempter. Well, even if I were obliged to say that I do not know, that would not invalidate the Scriptures that we have already read; nor would it show that this text is out of harmony with them. It would merely show my lack of knowledge. However, I am glad to be able to help you in this case also, for I find no difficulty in it.

You must bear in mind that Jesus...

### Hebrews 4

<sup>15</sup> ...was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

### 2 Corinthians 5

<sup>21</sup> He knew no sin.

Therefore we know that to be tempted is not a sin. But the possession of an evil mind is sin; therefore it is effectually settled that Jesus was not tempted by an evil disposition.

## Divers Lusts and Pleasures

We must first learn that the word “lust” does not necessarily always mean sin. The word simply means “desire,” or pleasure and the desire may be for that which is good, as well as for that which is evil. We have the word direct from the Scandinavian and German languages, in which it is still in common use in a good sense.

For example: The first *Psalm*, in both German and Danish reads that:

“The man is blessed who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful but he has lust to the law of the Lord.”



That sort of lust is certainly lawful. It is only when one lusts after evil things, and is ruled and corrupted by his lust, that sin comes in. This is made plain in *James* 1:15, where we read that:

### **James 1**

<sup>15</sup> When lust has conceived it brings forth sin.

There is in this such a wonderful lesson, so strengthening an elevating, that we must study it together for a few minutes, and then think of it for a long time.

Let us first consider this word “lust” a little further: the Greek word from which it is translated is found in *Luke* 22:15, where it is rendered “desire.” Thus, Jesus sat down in the upper room with His twelve apostles,

### **Luke 22**

<sup>15</sup> And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you.

Also in *Philippians* 1:23, where Paul says that he has...

### **Philippians 1**

<sup>23</sup> ...a desire [lust] to depart, and to be with Christ.

The verb from which the noun is derived occurs also in *1 Peter* 1:12, where we read that the angels desire (have lust) to look into the things which are preached to us in the Gospel. So we see that a person may have lust to that which is good, and that such lust is not sin.

## **Tempted but Sinless**

And now we come back to the wonderful lesson taught by the temptation of Jesus. It presents to us the possibility of a life of holiness that is most glorious to contemplate.

Christ was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> *Hebrews* 4:15.

## **James 1**

<sup>14</sup> Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;

—and not till lust has conceived does it bring forth sin. But you say,

“We often desire evil things.”

That is true; but such desire is sin itself, and not merely temptation to sin.

## **Proverbs 24**

<sup>9</sup> The thought of foolishness is sin.

## **Romans 7**

<sup>14</sup> The law is spiritual,

—and is:

## **Psalms 119**

<sup>96</sup> ...exceeding broad,

—covering not merely the outward act of transgression, but the secret purpose, or even the desire to transgress. Such desire Jesus never had, for:

## **1 Peter 2**

<sup>22</sup> [He] did no sin,

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>22</sup> ...[and] knew no sin,

—yet He was tempted. Now I hear your friend exclaim,

“Surely, Jesus was not enticed by His own lusts?”

Well, I am glad to hear your friend say even this; for it shows at least that he has given up the idea that the tempter is one's evil disposition. But if you will consider the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, you will see that He was indeed enticed by His own lawful desires, or lusts. That is to say, the devil tempted Him through them. Therein lay the strength of the temptation, and Je-

sus could have been tempted in no other way; for He had no evil desires. According to the strength of the temptation resisted, is the power of Jesus to deliver us when we are tempted.

### **Lawful Desires Not Gratified**

Three distinct temptations are recorded, and they are typical, covering every possible phase of temptation. Jesus had fasted forty days, and was hungry. Then the devil tempted Him on the side of appetite.

#### **Matthew 4**

<sup>3</sup> ...command that these stones be made bread.

Jesus had a desire for bread, and that desire was perfectly lawful. He also had the power to produce bread even from stones. But He would not use His power for the gratification of even His own lawful desires.

Afterward, when a multitude of hungry people were in the desert, He used His power to produce bread for them; but He would not gratify His own desires. He waited for His hunger to be satisfied, till the devil had left Him, and the angels of God came and ministered unto Him. The same angels are sent to serve us, if we will allow them, instead of trying to help ourselves.

Taking our cue from Christ's trust in God to provide Him food, Satan attempted to induce Him to presume upon God's care. It was right for Jesus to trust the Father, and it was lawful for Him to desire to be out of Satan's power; but Jesus would not make any effort to take himself out of the place where the Spirit of God had led Him.

The third and most audacious temptation was the most cunningly devised of all; for Jesus had come to this earth for the express purpose of gaining dominion over it. Satan took advantage of Christ's lawful desire, to tempt Him to do a thing that was plainly sinful. How subtle and how great the temptation was, we can never know; but Jesus withstood it. God had said that He himself would give Him the kingdom, and Jesus would not con-

sider any other way of getting it. Thus, He worshiped and served God only.

### **Christ Pleased Not Himself**

What do these temptations illustrate? Just this, that:

#### **Romans 15**

<sup>3</sup> Even Christ pleased not himself.

He thought not of himself, even when He was in heaven, in the form of God, but:

#### **Philippians 2**

<sup>4</sup> ...emptied himself.

#### **Galatians 1**

<sup>4</sup> [He] gave himself for us.

That is the law of heaven—the law that sustains the universe—the giving up of self to please others. Jesus pleased not himself, but said,

#### **John 4**

<sup>34</sup> My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work,

—and,

#### **John 8**

<sup>29</sup> I do always those things that please Him.

We have not wandered from the subject, but are learning a practical lesson of great importance from it. Satan fell because he cherished an unlawful desire; and his purpose is to induce everybody to think only of himself. Christ, on the other hand, resisted the desire to please himself, even in the gratification of lawful desires, thus showing how much greater is His power than Satan's. This is the power He offers us, and the possession of it marks one as "every inch a king." Instead...

#### **Titus 3**

<sup>3</sup> ...of serving divers lusts and pleasures,

—thus being the slave of his desires, he is the ruler of them. He makes pleasure wait upon him, instead of waiting on pleasure. He who can deny himself even a lawful pleasure, patiently waiting till he receives it at God's hands, no matter how long the time of waiting, is safe from all evil. The greater includes the less; the man who can say to his body when it clamors for lawful food and drink,

“You must wait my time, for I am master, and I am not to be driven,”

—will have no difficulty in abstaining from evil things.

## **Pleasure and Privation**

But you ask,

“Is life, then, to be one continual penance? Does Christianity mean the repression and extinction of every joyful emotion or enjoyment of pleasure?”

Far from it; it means the finding and the constant enjoyment of the highest keenest pleasure—it means...

### **Romans 5**

<sup>11</sup> ...joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But this highest pleasure is found only in not pleasing ourselves. Divine and blessed paradox! God is the...

### **Genesis 15**

<sup>1</sup> ...exceeding great reward

—of His faithful ones. When we learn that only in His...

### **Psalms 16**

<sup>11</sup> ...presence is fullness of joy,

—and that our joy can be full only as Christ's life of self-denial is in us,<sup>340</sup> we can say,

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<sup>340</sup> *John* 15:4-11; 2 *John* 1:2-4.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; You maintain your law.

<sup>6</sup> The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

### **Psalm 73** [Norwegian version]

<sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven? And when I have You, I have no desire [lust] for anything on the earth.

He who can with his whole heart say this, is safe from the seductions of Satan; and Satan but brings sure destruction of himself in seeking to devour such a one.

### **Psalm 63**

<sup>3</sup> Because your loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.

<sup>4</sup> Thus will I bless You while I live: I will lift up my hands in your name.

<sup>5</sup> My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips:

<sup>6</sup> When I remember You...in the night watches.

<sup>7</sup> Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of your wings will I rejoice.

<sup>8</sup> My soul follows hard after You: your right hand upholds me.

<sup>9</sup> But those that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

Here is joy for the sorrowing; rest for the weary; food and drink for the hungry and thirsty; health for the afflicted; deliverance for the tempted; and life for the dead.

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## **Happiness in Self-Forgetfulness**

Present Truth, April 17, 1902

**P**ART of the lesson drawn from the temptation of Christ, in the "Editor's Private Corner" this week, is thus stated by Booker T. Washington, in his story of his life work, in "Up from Slavery":

In order to be successful in any kind of undertaking, I think the main thing is for one to grow to the point where he completely forgets himself; that is, to lose himself in a great cause. In proportion as one loses himself in this way, in the same degree does he get the highest happiness out of his work.

Everybody who has observed at all, can bear witness that the most unhappy people in the world are those who are continually thinking of themselves.

There is nothing else equal to the great love and work of God, for absorbing the mind and employing all the energy; and therefore nothing else can give perfect happiness.

## 99. Tormented for Ever and Ever

Present Truth, April 24, 1902

IN THE issue of March 13 there was a short article in this department, in answer to a question on “Everlasting Punishment and Eternal Life.”<sup>341</sup> It consisted mainly of Scripture statements to the effect that the punishment of the wicked is eternal, as lasting as the life of the righteous, but that it is *destruction, death*.

Since then we have received a number of letters referring to, and asking for further explanation, especially of certain texts which speak of torment for ever and ever. One letter will suffice as a sample of all.

A constant reader of your valuable paper, and a firm believer in the second death, has a great desire to be enlightened on *Revelation* 14:9-11, and also *Revelation* 20:10. Hoping to see your comments according to the Word, I remain, yours in His service.

The texts referred to read as follows:

### **Revelation 14**

<sup>9</sup> And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

<sup>10</sup> The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb;

<sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.

The next speaks of:

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<sup>341</sup> See article 92 in this collection, “[Everlasting Punishment and Eternal Life](#).”



## **Revelation 20**

<sup>8</sup> ...the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth,...the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,

—who are gathered by Satan after the second resurrection to do battle against the Lord, and says:

<sup>9</sup> And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

<sup>10</sup> And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

In the first place let it be understood that the Scripture cannot contradict itself. In the article referred to there were no opinions or conclusions stated, but only plain texts of Scripture. Let us briefly recall a few of them.

## **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Death and life are opposites. As long as a man has existence, he is not dead; when one is dead, he has no life. Death does not mean a state of misery; for however greatly one may be suffering, he is not dead as long as the suffering continues. There are thousands of people in this world who are dragging out a miserable existence, but they are nevertheless alive. Many have no joy in life, and long for death to put an end to their misery; but no one would think of calling them dead. The terms “life” and “death” are so distinct, and so well understood, that it is past all comprehension how people can use them as though they meant virtually the same thing.

## **2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>9</sup> Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

The reward of the wicked, according to the Scripture, will be in every respect the opposite of the reward of the righteous. The righteous will have eternal life; the wicked will have eternal death.

#### **Malachi 4**

<sup>1</sup> The day comes, that shall burn as an oven, and the proud, yea, and all that to wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that shall leave them neither root nor branch.

#### **Psalms 37**

<sup>20</sup> The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

#### **Obadiah**

<sup>16</sup> They shall be as though they had not been.

Nevertheless the statements concerning the torment for ever and ever still remain, and must be given attention. If this is done, it will be noticed that in *Revelation* 20:10, the only place where the expression “tormented day and night for ever and ever” occurs, it is not used with reference to the great body of the wicked. We read that:

#### **Revelation 20**

<sup>9</sup> ...fire came down from God out of heaven, and *devoured them*,

—and then that the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Still if there were but one to suffer eternity of torment, the fact would remain. If we study a few parallel texts we shall get some light on these terms.

## Some Uses of the Term “For Ever”

In *Exodus* 21:1-6 we learn that a Hebrew slave was to be set free at the end of seven years; but that if he had a wife who must remain in servitude, and should refuse to leave her and his master,

### **Exodus 21**

<sup>6</sup> Then his master shall bring him to the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him *for ever*.

Jonah was in the whale’s belly three days and three nights; but in his song of thanksgiving he said:

### **Jonah 2**

<sup>6</sup> The earth with her bars was about me *for ever*: yet have You brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.

Jeremiah said:

### **Lamentations 4**

<sup>4</sup> The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her;

—yet we read that Sodom and Gomorrah...

### **Jude**

<sup>7</sup> ...are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of the eternal fire.

They are not burning now, however.

Now we know full well that no devoted Hebrew servant has been living and serving his master from the days of Moses until now. It is evident, therefore, that the term “for ever and ever” may in some cases have a limit. The Hebrew servant who had his ear bored was to serve his master for ever, that is, as long as he should live. He certainly cannot serve him longer than during his natural life.

In like manner we see that the term “for ever” has a very narrow range in the case of Jonah, being limited to three days. With

these cases in mind, and remembering also that the Scriptures repeatedly states that the wicked are to be totally destroyed, as completely as though they had never been, and we have no difficulty with the statement that they, or some of them, are to be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. That may mean many days, or it may, as we have seen, not cover more than three days. But whether it be long or short, the period of torment will certainly have an end; for of those who drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured into the cup of His indignation, we read:

### **Isaiah 10**

<sup>25</sup> For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and my anger in their destruction.

Take another pertinent example. In *Isaiah* 34 we have a description of God's Judgment on the earth.

### **Isaiah 34**

<sup>8</sup> It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion,

<sup>2</sup> [When] the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon their armies.

It is the time when...

### **Revelation 6**

<sup>17</sup> ...the great day of His wrath is come,

### **Isaiah 34**

<sup>4</sup> And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down as a leaf falls from off the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.<sup>342</sup>

In that day it is said that the land shall be soaked with blood,

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<sup>342</sup> Compare with *Revelation* 6:13-17.

### **Isaiah 34**

<sup>9</sup> And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

<sup>10</sup> It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever and ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; and none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Still further description of desolation follows, and the subject is continued to the next chapter, which says that:

### **Isaiah 35**

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

<sup>7</sup> The parched ground [or “blowing sand”] shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.

So we see that the earth, which is to lie desolate “for ever and ever” is afterwards to blossom as the rose; for:

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>13</sup> We, according to His promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth; wherein dwells righteousness.

This settles the whole question. The wicked are to be recompensed in this earth which itself is to become a “lake of fire;” yet afterwards the whole earth is to be like Eden. It is very evident, therefore, that in the case of the torment of the wicked, as in that of the Hebrew servant, and others, the term “for ever and ever” is limited by the nature of thing to which it is applied. They will be tormented as long as they remain alive, but they will not have receive their punishment until they shall be dead, destroyed, reduced to smoke and ashes, as though they had not been. And their torment is only the preliminary part of their punishment, which is to be completed by death.

Someone will ask,

“Since the term ‘for ever’ may be limited, how do we know but that the death of the wicked may be only a short duration, and

that they may after a while be restored to life in the favor of God?"

We know that they will remain dead, with no possibility of a resurrection, because they will have deliberately and finally rejected the Lord Jesus, through whom alone there can be a resurrection. When they become...

### **Obadiah**

<sup>16</sup> ...as though they had not been,

—they will never be again; for we read that the end—the future time—of the wicked shall be cut off.

### **Psalms 37**

<sup>38</sup> But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

## **The Assurance of Victory Over Sin**

But we must not leave the question here, as though it were only a matter of exegesis. If it were only a theoretical question, we might well leave its exposition alone, and wait until the end itself demonstrates the facts in the case; but it is not so. The right understanding of this matter has a decided bearing on our hope and courage in the contest against sin and Satan. This is why it is dealt with in the Bible; for nothing is there revealed for the mere purpose of satisfying curiosity.

It is simply a question of whether or not the Lord can conquer and root out sin. There was a time when there was no sin in the universe. There was once a time when there was no sin in this earth. Sin is distasteful to God, and utterly foreign to His nature.

### **Psalms 92**

<sup>15</sup> [He] is upright, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Sin is rebellion against Him and His kingdom. On His ability to put down all rebellion, and utterly to destroy every trace of transgression against His authority, depends the stability of His government. If there were a huge, seething mass of sin that He could

not extirpate, even though He had it shut up within certain limits, it would show that Satan had been successful, and that God's kingdom of righteousness had received an irreparable blow. To say that God could destroy sin, if He wished, but that He will not, is to charge Him with harboring and cherishing it.

Moreover, upon God's ability to root sin out of the universe, and the assurance that He will certainly do it, depends our confidence that He can utterly destroy sin in us.

### **1 John 3**

<sup>8</sup> The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

If a host of blaspheming sinners were to occupy some corner of God's dominions to all eternity, continually adding sin to sin, then the object of Christ's manifestations to the world would have failed, and He would have died in vain. In that case there would be no hope of our complete deliverance from sin. To put the case sharply and clearly, we may say:

- a) If willful and unrepentant sinners be not finally blotted out of existence, then sin will not be destroyed.
- b) If sin—the works of the devil—be not destroyed, then Christ will have failed of accomplishing the object for which He was manifested.
- c) If it were that Christ had failed of accomplishing the object for which He came to this earth, then not only we, but also all the inhabitants of the earth, could never be freed from sin; there would be no salvation for anybody.

But Christ has not failed. He has already triumphed gloriously. He has conquered the old serpent, and will soon crush his head. He is able to blot out from us the last trace of sin, so that we may be as pure in His sight as though we never had sin; and He will do the same for the universe, so that...

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>3</sup> ...there shall be no more curse;

## **Revelation 21**

<sup>4</sup> ...and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

<sup>5</sup> And He that sat upon the throne said, *Behold, I make all things new*. And He said unto me, Write, for these things are true and faithful.

This is our confidence and our rejoicing for present salvation, which we may hold steadfast unto the end.



## 100. A Comprehensive Question

Present Truth, May 1, 1902

I have read with pleasure your answers to correspondence on the soul's condition after death; but as there are so many passages which seem to favor the commonly-received idea that the soul enters either a state of happiness or misery, I should esteem it a favor to have further explanation of such statements of Scripture.

Jesus said to the thief, "Today shall you be with me in Paradise." The parable of the rich man and Lazarus seems to imply that the soul enters at once into a state of happiness or misery.

You give Paul's statement in Thessalonians (and also the case of Stephen), but Paul says also, to the Philippians, that he was in a strait betwixt two, "having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Now it seems to me that if Paul believed that his soul would go to sleep he would have preferred to live for the Master.

If Elijah was not taken to heaven, as the Scripture affirms, where did he go to? Evidently he was somewhere in a state of consciousness, as well as Moses; for they both appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration.

These, with other passages, prevent me from fully adopting your views, though I try to come to the truth with an open mind. I think you will see where I am, and will help to a right understanding of God's Word.

YOU have asked a comprehensive question, or rather, a series of questions, any one of which really demands an entire article by itself; for a question cannot be answered satisfactorily in a short space as it can be asked. You have been pleased with the answers hitherto given, simply because they were Scripture statements, and not speculations or expressions of personal opinion.

To say “Yes,” or “No,” or even to summarize the Scripture evidence in a short paragraph, is not a real answer to a question concerning anything mentioned in Scripture. A true answer to such questions puts the questioner in possession of the same data that the one questioned has, so that he can see the truth directly, and not through some other person’s eyes; and this requires both time and space. Nevertheless we shall not risk dissipating the interest of your question by dividing it, but shall cover the entire ground as fully as the limits of one issue will allow.

You kindly say that you have read with pleasure the answers that have been given to questions on the soul’s condition after death. As already stated, your pleasure in the answers is due solely to the fact that they were not the expressions of personal opinion, but were the very language of Scripture.

Now that which is positively and plainly stated in the Scripture cannot be overthrown by anything else, no matter how much opposed it *seems*. That which is obscure is to be understood by that which is plain; the incidental allusion is to be compared with the direct positive statement; for the entire Scripture is one Word, and cannot contradict itself.

### **With Christ in Paradise**

When Jesus hung on the cross,

#### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected of men.

#### **Matthew 27**

<sup>39</sup> They that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads,

<sup>40</sup> And saying, You that destroy the temple, and build it in three days, save yourself. If you be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

<sup>41</sup> Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said,

<sup>42</sup> He saved others; himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, led Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.

<sup>43</sup> He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God.

<sup>44</sup> The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth.

It was the darkest hour in the life of Jesus. He had made some very strong, positive statements as to who He was and what He would do; but now it seemed as though they had been but the irresponsible utterances of a dreamer, a fanatic, or a hypocrite. His own loved disciples had turned their backs on Him, and fled. One who had been foremost in confessing that He was the Christ, the Son of God, had denied Him with fierce oaths. No wonder the thoughtless multitude...

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>4</sup> ...did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,

—when even He himself was so overwhelmed as to cry out in bitter anguish,

### **Mark 15**

<sup>34</sup> My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?

Surely that was not a time when one would expect to hear a message of comfort and salvation from His lips. But into the thick darkness a ray of light shines and pierces the mind of one of the thieves, so that he ceased reviling; and when...

### **Luke 23**

<sup>39</sup> One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If You be Christ, save yourself and us,

—he rebuked him, saying,

<sup>40</sup> Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation?

<sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man has done nothing amiss.

<sup>42</sup> And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

What marvelous faith! A new disciple is gained by that which made all the old disciples doubt!

### **Romans 5**

<sup>1</sup> Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

—and Jesus, who...

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>20</sup> ...made peace through the blood of His cross,

—because His death was His victory, spoke the message of peace to this poor believer, saying,

### **Luke 23**

<sup>43</sup> Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with me in Paradise.

Leaving this verse for a moment, let us note a few details which will help us to an understanding of it. The first item is as to Christ's entry into Paradise. On the morning of the third day, when He showed himself to Mary at the tomb in the garden, and she would have embraced at least His feet for joy, Jesus said to her,

### **John 20**

<sup>17</sup> Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Later on He allowed them all to touch Him, and even asked Thomas to thrust his hand into the wound in His side; therefore we know that after He saw Mary, and before He met with the rest of the disciples, He ascended to the Father to receive from His own lips the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted. But the point is, that He did not ascend to the Father on the day of the crucifixion; for...

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>7</sup> ...in the midst of the Paradise of God...

–is the tree of Life; and the tree of life is by the side of the river of life, which flows from the throne of God.<sup>343</sup> God’s throne is in Paradise; and as Jesus had not ascended to the Father on the morning of the third day after the crucifixion, it is evident that He did not go to Paradise that day, and therefore could not have met the thief there that day. The reason why He did not go, was that He died, and went to the grave.

The next point to be noticed is the thief’s request:

### **Luke 23**

<sup>42</sup> Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

Did Jesus receive His kingdom that day? He himself had, but a few days before, spoken a parable to the disciples,

### **Luke 19**

<sup>11</sup> ...because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear,

–in which He showed them that the case with Him and His kingdom was likened to...

<sup>12</sup> ...A certain nobleman [who] went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Christ has not gone to that far country; when He comes again He will have received the kingdom, and will set upon the throne of His glory, and all nations will be gathered before Him.<sup>344</sup> It is when the nations are angry, and His wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, the Christ takes to himself His great power, and reigns.<sup>345</sup> So the time for the fulfillment of the repentant thief’s request has not yet come.

What then? was the thief disappointed? Not by any means, for he died, and has lain in the grave for hundreds of years, unconscious of the lapse of time. When he opens his eyes at the call of

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<sup>343</sup> *Revelation 22:1.*

<sup>344</sup> *Matthew 25:31-32.*

<sup>345</sup> *Revelation 11:17-18.*

the Lord, and sees Him in His kingdom, it will be as though there had been but the blink of an eye since he saw Him on the cross, and he will be satisfied.

But did Jesus tell an untruth? Nay, verily, that is an impossibility. What is the inevitable conclusion, then? Just this, that Jesus did not tell the thief that they would meet in Paradise that day, and the thief had no such thought in his mind.

But does not the text say that Jesus promised the thief that he should be with Him in Paradise that day? No; what He declared was that He said to him *that day*, even then, as He hung on the cross, seemingly at the end of all His hopes, that he should have his desire, and should yet be with Him in Paradise.

You ask,

“Does not the punctuation and the construction of the sentence contradict this view?”

Certainly not. In the first place, you must remember that punctuation is a comparatively modern thing. When the Bible was written, all the characters were run together without break or mark of the division in the sentences. Moreover, in the Greek, as in many other languages, the personal pronoun as the subject of a sentence is often unexpressed, being indicated by the verb; and so it is here; therefore the verb may be translated “you shall,” as well as, “shall you.” So we read the text, in harmony with all the testimony of Scripture,

“Verily I say unto you today, you shall be with me in Paradise.”

When will he be with Him? When He descends...

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> ...from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall arise,

<sup>17</sup> ...and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

For a parallel to this style of expression, read:

## **Zechariah 9**

<sup>11</sup> As for you also, by the blood of your covenant I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

<sup>12</sup> Turn to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope; even today do I declare that I will render double unto you.

It is only when we read *Luke 23:43* as we have given it, remembering the circumstances under which the words were uttered, that we can see the force and beauty of it. Then the sublime faith of both the thief and Christ shines forth, and we know that nothing is too hard for the Lord, and that no matter how everything may seem to be against us and Him, He is abundantly able to save. Thus we derive the comfort from the scripture that it was designed to give.

## **Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus**

Inasmuch as you recognize that this is a parable, we need not spend much time over it. The main thing with respect to a parable is to know what it was designed to teach. Some parables, like those in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Matthew*, concerning the kingdom of heaven, are so completely explained in every detail, that there is no chance for any misunderstanding. And there need be none in this instance, for it is plainly made known why it was given.

Jesus had spoken a parable concerning the use and abuse of money, and had told the people that they could thus serve God and Mammon;

### **Luke 16 [RV]**

<sup>14</sup> And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things: and they scoffed at Him.

Then He said to them,

<sup>15</sup> ...that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God,

—and then He spoke the parable, showing that a man's worldly prosperity or adversity did not indicate his standing with the Lord.

This parable is not meant to teach anything whatever as to the state of the dead, as a little examination will show. True, the Saviour represented dead people as talking, but that did not confuse His hearers, for they all knew the Scripture teaching on the state of the dead. The fact that Christ spoke of them in His parable as active and talking was no more misleading than when Jotham told about the conversation among the trees when they went forth to seek a king,<sup>346</sup> or when God said to Cain,

#### **Genesis 4**

<sup>10</sup> The voice of the your brother's blood cries out unto me from the ground.

When we have it stated in the plainest possible language, that:

#### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not anything,

—and that:

<sup>10</sup> ...there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave,

—we know full well that when in a parable the dead are represented as talking, they are simply personified, as are the trees in Jotham's parable.

Now read a few words of the parable.

#### **Luke 16**

<sup>22</sup> The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

What! are the dead carried bodily and placed in Abraham's bosom?

“Oh,” I hear it said, “that is figurative; of course. ‘Abraham's bosom’ is but a figurative term for the place of happiness, and Lazarus was not carried there bodily, but only his soul.”

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<sup>346</sup> *Judges 9:7-15.*



Ah, then, the thing is figurative, is it? Very good; then we can at once let the parable drop, so far as our present subject is concerned. I think all will agree that this parable may be left out of the consideration of this question. If we learn from it not to trust to money, and not to be cast down by poverty, we shall do well.

## **In a Strait Betwixt Two**

Speaking of life and death, the Apostle Paul said,

### **Philippians 1**

<sup>22</sup> What I choose I wot not.

<sup>23</sup> For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.

Read this thoughtfully, and you will see that it plainly teaches that it is not by death that we depart to be with Christ. It is impossible to charge upon the apostle the absurdities of saying that he was in a strait between two, namely, life and death, not knowing which to choose, but he chose to die! No; there were three things open before him:

- a) To die;
- b) "To abide in the flesh," that is to live;
- c) "To depart and to be with Christ."

Which of the first two he would choose, if the choice were left to him, he did not know; but he had an intense longing for the third, namely, to depart and be with Christ.

Is it not clearly manifest that to depart and be with Christ is something far different from dying? Just what it is we learn from *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18, where we are told how people go to be with the Lord, and also *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54. Not all sleep in the grave, but some live and are changed. Now Paul's only desire was to magnify Christ in his body, and the reason why he did not know which to choose, whether life or death, was that he did not know which would be the greater gain to the cause of Christ: but he could long for translation; for if the Lord should come and take

him from this earth, that would show that his work was finished on earth.

So we see that this scripture, instead of teaching that the Apostle Paul expected to be with Christ by dying, teaches just the opposite. His epistle to the Philippians does not contradict the one written to the Thessalonians.

## **To Die is Gain**

### **Philippians 1**

<sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

I cannot think that one who cites this as proving that Paul longed for death, can have read the chapter in which it is found. As we have just noted, the verse that immediately follows states that he did not know which was better, life or death. How can people be so thoughtless, even reckless, in their reading, as to make the apostle contradict his own words in one breath?

Now read the connection closely, and you will see that the apostle had not a single thought of self-interest. From his prison he wrote a courageous letter to cheer the Philippian brethren. He tells them not to be troubled over his afflictions, because all that has happened to him has been for the furtherance of the Gospel. Verse 12. His bonds were the occasion of Christ being made known throughout Caesar's palace. His only desire was, as he says, that:

<sup>20</sup> Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

Then he adds,

<sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

How is it possible for anybody, in the face of the preceding verses, to think that Paul was speaking of personal gain? He had just said that he desired that Christ should be honored through him, whether by his life or his death, it mattered not to him which. If he lived, his life was devoted to the service of Christ,

and if he died, the cause of Christ would gain by that. Do you not see how incongruous it is to think that after all that the apostle has said, he should suddenly intimate that it would be a grand thing for him to die, and be out of trouble? Whoever thinks that has mistaken the character of the apostle, and does violence to his statements.

No; Paul's whole being was lost in Christ. It was not he that lived, but Christ that lived in him<sup>347</sup>; only one desire animated him, and that was to preach the Gospel of Christ, and to see it advanced; and he could laugh at the vain attempts of his persecutors to stop the good work, because even if they put him to death it would only be helping the cause of Christ along. What an unselfish, devoted, heroic soul he was! A grand old man indeed!

### **The Translation of Elijah**

You ask,

If Elijah was not taken to heaven, where did he go?

Why, he was taken to heaven. The Scripture says so. He was taken away bodily in a chariot of fire, without dying, and thus became a representative of those who shall be alive at the coming of Christ, and be changed to immortality, and taken to heaven without ever dying.

Do you not see that Elijah's case is something entirely different from what takes place with the mass of people? Of course he went to heaven, for he never died; here his case does not come into a consideration of the condition and state of the dead.

### **Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration**

But Moses died and was buried in the land of Moab, yet he was also on that mount with Elijah and Christ. Yes, he was; and thus he was a representative of the class who have died, and who will

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<sup>347</sup> *Galatians 2:20.*

be raised to life at the coming of Christ in His kingdom with power and glory.<sup>348</sup>

Moses died, it is true; but we read that Michael the Archangel—the same one whose voice will at the last day call the dead to life<sup>349</sup>:

**Jude**

<sup>9</sup> ...when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses.

The devil is the one that had the power of death,<sup>350</sup> and Christ came to overcome and destroy him, and deliver those whom he has shut up in his prison house, the grave. Moses is one whom He has chosen as an example of what at the last He will do for all the faithful who have died, just as Elijah is the representative of the living who have never died.

**Conclusion**

Let no one suppose that I have devoted all this space to the discussion of a merely technical, theological question. The Bible was written to show people the way of salvation, and not to afford them something on which to exercise their argumentative powers. It is not a book of puzzles, or of theoretical problems, the solution of which is a purely academic matter, with no influence whatever upon human life and conduct.

Whatever motive our friends may have in asking questions, the *Present Truth* has no other object in answering but to help the people in the way of life and salvation. We have no time or space to spare for controversy or the mere satisfying of curiosity.

Now what bearing does this question of the state of the dead have on our salvation? What difference does it make to us in our Christian life? It has just this bearing, that it makes us know the power of the Lord to save us now from sin.

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<sup>348</sup> See *Matthew* 16:18; 17:1-8; *Mark* 9:1-8; *2 Peter* 1:14-18.

<sup>349</sup> *1 Thessalonians* 4:16.

<sup>350</sup> *Hebrews* 2:14.

### Philippians 3 [RV]

<sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>21</sup> Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, *according to the working* whereby He is able to subject all things unto himself.

The power by which Christ will raise the dead and change our bodies *at His coming*, is the power by which He is now able to:

### 2 Corinthians 10

<sup>5</sup> Cast down every high thing [in us] that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

We are simply studying Christ's power to save. Salvation means life from the dead. The power of Christ's coming is His power to raise the dead; and this is the power by which we are now saved from the bondage of corruption.

Moreover, we are putting the readers of *Present Truth* on their guard against the deceptions of Satan. He is able to transform himself into an angel of light,<sup>351</sup> and it is no marvel if his angels can personate human beings, and from their knowledge of their past, tell many secrets that would seem to identify them as dead friends of some with whom they communicate. Now if people think that the dead are alive, it is but an easy matter for them to be led into Spiritualism when they receive strong messages from what purport to be their dead friends. And the history of the past demonstrates that when a Christian has been led into Spiritualism his faith in Christ and the atonement ceases.

It is not surprising that a Spiritualist should disbelieve what the Bible says about Christ's sacrifice, and our dependence on it, when he has to disbelieve what the Bible says about the state of the dead, in order to be a Spiritualist at all. It is utterly impossible for one who firmly believes the Scripture truth that we have life only in Christ, and that the dead are unconsciously sleeping, ever

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<sup>351</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:14.

to become a Spiritualist; and the event will show that it is impossible for those who do not believe this, not to become Spiritualists. So we have ample reason for devoting so much space to this subject.

We have in hand a question concerning the structure of man, asking for a statement of the distinction between body, and soul, and spirit, and the meaning of these terms, and if God will, we shall take this up next week.

# 101. Body, Soul, and Spirit

Present Truth, May 8, 1902

I have been very much blessed by reading the last two numbers of *Present Truth*, on this whole question, and would like to have you explain what Paul means in *1 Thessalonians* 5:23, where he speaks of the “whole spirit and soul and body.” Or, in other words, What is the soul? Is the soul distinct from other parts of the man? If you can give us a lesson on this subject, I shall esteem it a great favor.

THE text in question reads thus:

## **1 Thessalonians 5**

<sup>23</sup> The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It may be well in this connection to have the next verse before us, as an assurance that this is no vain prayer:

<sup>24</sup> Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it.

It is a blessed assurance! What a pity that so few accept it.

In solving any problem we must always have recourse to first principles; and so it is with Scripture questions: everything must be referred to the beginning. We therefore turn to the account of the making of man:

## **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

It is evident that we have here the body, soul, and spirit, as in *1 Thessalonians* 5:23. The body was formed of the dust; the spirit was breathed into the nostrils; and the living soul was the result. That is the making of man; let us now read the description of its

dissolution. In the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Ecclesiastes* we have death set forth by a variety of figurative terms, closing with the words:

### **Ecclesiastes 12**

<sup>7</sup> Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit return to God who gave it.

But what about the soul? It is not mentioned in the account of the resolving of man into his original elements. And why not?

This question can best be answered by referring again to creation. Where was the soul of man before the breath of God came into the body of dust? Evidently it did not exist. We have the account of the union of the body and the breath of the spirit, but no mention is made of the soul until that union was effected. Then man, according to the literal rendering of the Hebrew, became a soul of life.

It is plain, therefore, that the soul has no separate, independent existence, but is simply the union of the spirit and the body; and when these are separated, the soul ceases to exist. In death the dust returns to the earth, “as it was,” the spirit returns to God who gave it, just *as it was* before He gave it, and the soul is likewise *as it was*, so to speak; that is, it is not; for it was not before.

This is a simple, Scriptural statement of the case. Of course there are many other texts of Scripture bearing on the subject, but we cannot now note them all, nor is it necessary. It should be stated, however, that the word “soul” is often used in other senses than the primary one here set forth. Thus the entire man is called the soul, and the body alone, even without the breath, is sometimes called the soul; but in whatever accommodated sense the term is used, every other use of it is derived from the one here brought to view.

To illustrate the union by which the soul comes into being, and its cessation of existence when that union ceases, let us take water. It is well known that it is composed of a fixed proportion of the two gases, oxygen and hydrogen—two molecules of hydrogen



one of oxygen. It is possible, by various processes, to resolve water into its constituent elements; the hydrogen gas may be collected in a receiver by itself, and likewise the oxygen gas in another by itself. Where is the water then? There is none. Nothing has been destroyed or annihilated, yet the water exists no more. The gases may again be united, and then we shall have water; but as soon as they are separated we look in vain for any trace of it.

Just as we ask,

“Where is the water with the gases of which it is composed separated?”

—the Scripture asks,

“Where is man when the breath has departed from his body.”

#### **Job 14**

<sup>10</sup> Man dies and wastes away [the dust returns to the earth as it was]; yea, man gives up the ghost [the spirit returns to God who gave it], and where is he?

He is *not*. The weeping mothers of Bethlehem and vicinity mourned for their children, whom Herod slew, and refused to be comforted, because they were not.<sup>352</sup> The soul, which is the essential man, *is not*, as soon as the breath leaves the body.

But although the man dies, he shall live again. The Spirit that returns to God who gave it will again be sent forth to quicken the dust, and it will arise and sing.<sup>353</sup> God says:

#### **Ezekiel 37**

<sup>13</sup> You shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,

<sup>14</sup> And shall put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land.

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<sup>352</sup> *Matthew* 2:17-18.

<sup>353</sup> *Isaiah* 26:19.

## Entire Sanctification

We can now leave this phase of the subject, to consider the more practical part, namely, sanctification. From *Genesis* 2:7, compared with *Genesis* 1:26-31, we find that a perfect man,—one formed fully by God's image,—is a body of dust animated by the life of God.

There is no room for the idea that it is unmanly, or that it is slavery, for a man to allow God to control him; for without God there can be no complete man. It takes a union of God and a human body to make a complete, perfect man. Anything less than a full and complete union of the two is less than a man. God has demonstrated this for us by sending Christ, the second Adam, into the world.

### John 1

<sup>1</sup> ...the Word was God,

<sup>14</sup> And the Word was made flesh.

There was a perfect union of a human body and the Divine Spirit, and the result was a perfect Man, the Pattern for all men.

<sup>14</sup> The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Literally,

“The Word became flesh and *tabernacled in us*.”

### Deuteronomy 30

<sup>14</sup> The Word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart.

Yea, more,

### Hebrews 4 [RV]

<sup>12</sup> The Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

<sup>13</sup> There is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

The Word of life penetrates to every ultimate fiber and cell of the body, so that all its activity is the result of the personal presence and working of the living God, the Divine Word that is Spirit and life. So intimate is the life connection between God and man. Why is God so closely identified with man? In order that man may live.

### **Deuteronomy 30**

<sup>20</sup> ...for He is your life.

But it is not God's pleasure to furnish life to be used in sin. Sin is the transgression of the law of life; it is opposition to God's life, the action of...

### **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>4</sup> ...the god of this world,

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>2</sup> ...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

This spirit...

### **2 Thessalonians 2**

<sup>4</sup> ...opposes and exalts itself against all that is called God, or that is worshiped.

The lusts of the flesh that are according to it,

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>11</sup> ...war against the soul,

—producing corruption and death; but the Divine nature of which the knowledge of God (which is life eternal)<sup>354</sup> makes us partakers, it gives us deliverance from these lusts and the attendant corruption; for Christ has...

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<sup>354</sup> *John 17:3.*

## **John 17**

<sup>2</sup> ...power over all flesh,

—and He is stronger than the god of this world. The difference between the sinner and the Christian is this:

- The sinner allows the flesh to control, and fulfills its desires, holding down the truth—Christ—in unrighteousness;
- The Christian yields himself to God, as one alive from the dead, and his members as instruments of righteousness.

Just to the extent that one yields to God, is he sanctified. To be sanctified wholly is to have every fiber of the being completely yielded to God, so as to be fully under His control. This takes place when one learns the ways of God through acquaintance with His works, so that one can definitely and intelligently yield to Him. Knowing what pleases God, one will in no particular oppose His working, but will allow Him to work His own will.

## **Deuteronomy 30**

<sup>14</sup> The Word is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

God is in the flesh, the life of it, in order that the life may be perfect. Every man has the power residing in him, the life of His flesh, by which he may be preserved blameless, if he will but recognize it and yield to it. This is perfect rest. It is true Sabbath-keeping. We may rest, because the Word of God, which is in us, is living and active.

We then know no life but that of Christ; His Spirit alone animates and controls the body, so that even though we are still in the flesh we are spiritual, living as though actually in the world to come, with the same power to live free from sin and disease that we shall have when we have spiritual instead of fleshly bodies.

Truly our God is a great God! What a blessed truth! What glorious possibilities it presents to everyone! The flesh itself is sinful and corruptible, but there is in it the power that can save it even from its own sinfulness and corruption; and there need be no

question as to our ability to avail ourselves of this power, for it is the life of our bodies. It is by the gift of God's endless life that we live at all and so if we conscientiously and intelligently confess...

### **1 John 4**

<sup>2</sup> ...that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,

—we are indeed born of God.

### **2 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup> His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

The life that gives us existence is sufficient for everything necessary for the world to come. This is God's pure Spirit producing a sound body and a perfect soul. He says:

### **Proverbs 4**

<sup>20</sup> My son, attend to my words; incline your ear unto my sayings.

<sup>21</sup> Let them not depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart.

<sup>22</sup> For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

We see that whole sanctification means wholeness of body and soul. It means perfect soundness. Who can talk about the hardship of self-denial, with such a pleasant prospect before him? Self-denial means simply the rejection of that which destroys, for the full enjoyment of that which springs up into everlasting life.

## 102. What is Christian Perfection?

Present Truth, May 22, 1902

Have we any Scriptural warrant for expecting that a believer may be really rid of sin this side of the resurrection, beyond having the gracious liberty to pray and fight it down? Is it correct teaching, that sin is eradicated through Christians believing for and claiming sanctification? and can you give a Scripture instance of it? Will you tell us how far people are justified in claiming perfection as an experience by faith? The Lord being everywhere, in all, and through all, can He dwell in the heart where sin, not reigning, is?

**T**HIS is a live, practical question, just such as I like to receive. While always perfectly willing to respond to the question,

“What does this text mean?”

—as far as possible, it is far more gratifying to be called on to answer the question,

“What must I do to be saved?”

There are many people whose interest in the Bible never really rises above the level of mere curiosity, and whose “religious experience” consist mainly of the ability to “hold their own” in an argument concerning the meaning of certain texts. While they stand in their relation to the Bible it makes very little difference what they believe; but those who have questions to ask concerning their personal relation to God and righteousness will always meet with a hearty welcome in the “Corner.”

The best thing to do in answering this series of questions is to have before us a few plain statements of Scripture. They will serve to hold us steady in our course. First, the words of Christ, recorded in:

## **Matthew 5**

<sup>48</sup> Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

The Saviour never commands impossibilities, and so we have the statement also:

## **Hebrews 10**

<sup>14</sup> By one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Then comes this inspired prayer, containing the blessed assurance of the possibility of the thing prayed for, and the revelation of the means by which it is done:

## **Hebrews 13**

<sup>20</sup> Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

<sup>21</sup> Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ.

## **2 Corinthians 6**

<sup>16</sup> You are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

<sup>17</sup> Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you,

<sup>18</sup> And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

## **2 Corinthians 7**

<sup>1</sup> Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

## **Hebrews 11**

<sup>14</sup> Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

## **Perfection a Necessary State**

These texts make it plain that holiness, perfect purity of body and spirit, is not only possible, but absolutely necessary; and the state is to be ours in this present evil world, before the resurrection; for we are told that without it no man shall see the Lord.

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

With these words of Scripture before us, it should make no difference to us whether any person has ever had the experience or not. We are not judges, and cannot tell who has and who has not. But in any case, our experience is to be built upon God's word, and not upon our own previous experience, or any other person's experience, or lack of it. The Christian life is a continual revelation of new things, continual growth, continual pressing forward to something beyond.

### **Hebrews 6**

<sup>1</sup> Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.

The words of Joshua to Israel when about to cross the Jordan are to be taken as the words of the Lord to us every day:

### **Joshua 3**

<sup>4</sup> You have not passed this way heretofore.

## **One Perfect Man**

But we do know of at least one Man who was perfect in holiness before the resurrection, and that is:

### **1 Timothy 2**

<sup>5</sup> ...the Man Christ Jesus;

—and with the record of His life before us, and the presence of His Spirit with us, we do not need another instance. He was made...

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>10</sup> ...perfect through sufferings,



—and having suffered, He has entered into His glory. He was the Word made flesh, human flesh.

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>14</sup> Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

<sup>15</sup> And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

He is the first fruits,

### **Romans 8**

<sup>29</sup> ...the firstborn among many brethren;

—and,

### **Romans 11**

<sup>16</sup> If the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy.

He became partaker of our flesh and blood, and is entered into heaven. That is our assurance that we all shall go there; for a partaker of our flesh is there already. There will be in the kingdom of God but...

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>15</sup> ...one new man;

—that Man now lives; therefore His perfection is by the new birth the right of every soul. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are to bring us,

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>13</sup> ...in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

### **Romans 1**

<sup>4</sup> [Christ was] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

The power of His resurrection was the Spirit of holiness that dwelt in Him. It was by the Spirit that kept Him from sin, that He was raised from the dead; and it will be the same with us.

### **Romans 8**

<sup>9</sup> You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

<sup>10</sup> Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

<sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

### **1 Peter 4**

<sup>1</sup> Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

Christ had exactly the same struggles that we have with sin; for His body was the same as ours, and He had our sins to contend with. Now we must not take the Scriptures for discouragement, for that is to abuse them. So we must not despondently say:

“But He had no sin,”

—implying that there is after all a difference between Him and us. It is true that:

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>22</sup> [He] did no sin,

—and,

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> ...knew no sin.

It is true also that we have sinned; but it is still further true that:

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

## **Isaiah 53**

<sup>6</sup> The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Therefore,

## **1 John 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...as He is, so are we in this world.

The Lord counts us as sinless as He counts Christ, and the sins that we bear are the sins of the world.

Do not misunderstand this, for it is a vital truth. What I mean is this: Since God does not impute our trespasses to us, it is evident that He counts us sinless. In this knowledge we may rejoice, and assure our hearts before Him. Then we may know that the sins that we must struggle against in the flesh are not our personal sins, as indeed they are not so long as we reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin. They will not have dominion over us, no matter how sorely they press us; and we shall know that the burden of them is upon us solely in order that we may be able to lift the burden off from some poor soul that is fainting beneath it. It is that we may show him how Christ bears his sins even in his flesh, and that he may be wholly free from them even while bearing them in his body.

The nature of the flesh of a Christian is not a bit different from that of a sinner. The flesh of every man is corruptible, and will be till the Lord comes to change us to immortal glory.<sup>355</sup> The difference between the sinner and the Christian is this, that the sinner is ruled by the flesh,

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>3</sup> ...fulfilling the desires of the flesh of the mind,

—while the Christian allows the Spirit of Christ in him to rule the flesh, and to subdue its passions; for he has...

## **John 17**

<sup>2</sup> ...power over all flesh.

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<sup>355</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Philippians 3:20-21.

The body itself is an example of this life that cleanses. By the breaking down of tissue, poisons are continually forming in it, that if retained, would kill us; but the life stream flowing from us bears them away, and keeps us constantly alive and active. It is action that breaks down tissue; yet that very action, if it is rightly related to the fountain of life, tends to the removal of the waste matter.

### **God, not Man, the Justifier**

How far, then, may man claim perfection? Not to any degree whatever.

#### **Romans 8**

<sup>33</sup> It is God that justifies.

#### **2 Corinthians 10**

<sup>18</sup> Not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

There have been righteous persons, perfect, holy men, approved of God; but they did not boast of their own goodness. Zacharias and Elizabeth...

#### **Luke 1**

<sup>6</sup> ...were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Enoch was translated by faith;

#### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>5</sup> ...for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

No higher testimony than this can be received by a man from God. It is the testimony that God gave Jesus at His baptism. But even Jesus made no claim to perfection in himself, but said,

#### **John 5**

<sup>30</sup> I can of my own self do nothing.

#### **John 14**

<sup>10</sup> The Father that dwells in me, He does the works.

God himself said:

**Job 1**

<sup>8</sup> Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and eschews evil?

What a testimony that is, and we know that it was true; yet Job said:

**Job 9**

<sup>20</sup> If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

He was a perfect man according to God's own testimony; yet if he claimed perfection, that very claim would prove him perverse. This is in harmony with the words of the Apostle John:

**1 John 1**

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all of righteousness.

It is while we have fellowship with God, while we, ourselves at one with Him, lost in Him, so that we say,

**Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> Not I, but Christ lives in me,

—that:

**1 John 1**

<sup>7</sup> The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses us from all sin.

There is sin there, but the ever rising tide of the life of Christ continually sweeps away, and keeps the soul clean. We agreed with God, for that is what confession is, and then we are one with Him, and He declares us sinless.

You see, do you not, that to say that we are sinless is to deny Christ as the Saviour from sin? It is while we confess our sins, that we are cleansed. Constant cleansing from sin means constant

confession of sin. Are we cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ that is now applied? That very joyful declaration is a confession that we are sinful. Sin is in our members, but it has no dominion over us.

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>57</sup> Thanks be to God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is possible for every one of us in Christ a height and depth and breadth of holiness, such as we have never yet experienced; yet, having experienced it, we shall still see such infinite possibilities before us that, like Job, we shall say,

### **Job 42**

<sup>6</sup> I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;

—and with Paul, the chief of the apostles:

### **1 Timothy 1 [RV]**

<sup>15</sup> Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief:

<sup>16</sup> Howbeit for this cause have I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all His longsuffering, for an ensample of them which should hereafter believe in Him unto eternal life.

## 103. Jews and Gentiles: The Law and the Sabbath

Present Truth, May 29, 1902

I have had a talk with a friend, on the Sabbath question. He says that the law was given to the Jews, before there were ever any Gentiles, and that therefore Gentiles have nothing whatever to do with it. He refers to Paul's writings, where he says something to the effect that if a man's conscience tells him to keep a certain day, let him keep it, and if it tells him to keep another day, let him keep that. If you can enlighten me on this subject, I shall be very glad.

### When and For Whom the Sabbath was Given

**I** THINK it will not be very difficult to help you, if you will take your Bible and notice when the Sabbath was given. The first chapter of *Genesis* contains the record of creation, closing with the account of the creation of man on the sixth day.

#### Genesis 1

<sup>31</sup> And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

#### Genesis 2

<sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

<sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

You can see plainly that the Sabbath was given before there were either Jews or Gentiles; for there was only one man, Adam, the head of the whole human race. Inasmuch as the Sabbath was

given to Adam and Eve, immediately after the close of creation, and before there were any descendants, it is very evident that:

### **Mark 2**

<sup>27</sup> The Sabbath was made for man,

—as the Saviour tells us. Is a Jew a man? then the Sabbath was made for him. Is a Gentile a man? then the Sabbath was made for him also. Wherever man is found, wherever there is one who can claim that title, you may know that the Sabbath was made for him.

### **Jew and Gentile**

Thus the whole question is answered, and we might stop; but a double answer may be useful. Your friend needs to know the difference between the terms “Jew” and “Gentile.” The term “Gentile,” in the Bible, means simply “nations,” and is often used as synonymous with “heathen,” inasmuch as all the nations of earth have turned away from God. There is but one Hebrew word where we have the three words, “Gentiles,” “heathen,” and “nations,” in the Old Testament. One Hebrew word suffices, where we have the three; which shows that the three terms are really identical.

Now it must be evident that there were no Jews before there were any nations; and this is the same as to say that there were no Jews before there were Gentiles. As a matter of fact there were Gentiles hundreds of years before there was a Jew. The word “Jew” comes from Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, and he was not born till nearly six hundred years after the flood, or more than twenty-two hundred years after creation. There were many nations in the earth long before Judah was born.

The Jews themselves are but a branch from Gentile stock, even as all the people of the earth are descended from one common parent. The father of Abraham was a Gentile, a heathen,<sup>356</sup> and Abraham, who believed in God, was called out from his kindred

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<sup>356</sup> *Joshua* 24:2.



only in order that he might be freed from their contaminating influences, and that he might preach the Gospel to other heathen.

But the calling of Abraham from Mesopotamia to Canaan did not in the least affect his origin or his relationship. He was still the son of Terah, and remained the son of that Gentile to the end of his life, because he could never cease to be his father's son. The fact that Abraham's immediate descendants were born in Canaan did not make them any differently related to the Gentile inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and of the rest of the world, then if Abraham had always remained in his native country, and his children had been born there.

### **All Mankind are One Flesh**

I have set forth the simple facts in order to enable you to see clearly that there is no essential difference in men, no matter at what time or in what part of the world they live, nor by what name they are called. There is but...

#### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>39</sup> ...one kind of flesh of man,

—and,

#### **Acts 17**

<sup>26</sup> God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.

Consequently all mankind are brethren, and whatever applies to one applies equally to all. There is no requirement, no way of salvation, for one person or one family or one tribe or one nation or one race, that is not for all.

### **Christ the Brother of All Men**

When Christ came into the world, He was...

#### **Galatians 4**

<sup>4</sup> ...born of a woman, born under the law,

<sup>5</sup> That He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

He was in all things made like those whom He came to redeem, whom He called His brethren,<sup>357</sup> and:

## **Hebrews 2**

<sup>14</sup> Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

<sup>15</sup> And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.

<sup>16</sup> For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham;

<sup>9</sup> ...[and] by the grace of God tasted death for every man.

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>15</sup> He died for all.

Do you not see the great truth that these few Scripture texts teach? Read them carefully, and think of them, as I summarize these statements.

### **The Nature of Abraham the Same as That of All Men**

- a) Christ died for all mankind—"for every man."
- b) It was necessary that Christ should be of the same nature—the same flesh and blood—as those whom He died to redeem.
- c) But He took on Him the nature of Abraham.

The conclusion, therefore, is obvious, that the nature of Abraham was precisely the same as that of all the rest of mankind, whom Christ came to redeem.

## **John 4**

<sup>23</sup> Salvation is of the Jews,

—for Jesus was a Jew; but, thank God, it is not confined to the Jews.

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<sup>357</sup> *Hebrews 2:11-17.*

## The Law for All Mankind

Now think a little further. Christ came to redeem His brethren, and He was made like them in all things. But He was...

### **Galatians 4 [RV]**

<sup>4</sup> ...born of a woman,

—thus becoming “the Son of Man,”<sup>358</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ...under the law,

—in order that He might redeem them that were under the law. That is, those whom Christ came to redeem—every one born of a woman—were under the law; and this, regardless of the meaning of the term “under the law,” shows that the law had to do with all mankind,—that all stand in a definite relation to it.

One step further will show us exactly what the relation of all men is to the law, and that will show us Christ’s relation to it, and the relation of the law and the Gospel.

### **1 Timothy 1**

<sup>15</sup> This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

### **Romans 3**

<sup>23</sup> All have sinned,

—therefore He came into the world to save all. The angel said to Joseph,

### **Matthew 1**

<sup>21</sup> You shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.

But,

### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> ...sin is the transgression of the law,

—and,

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<sup>358</sup> *John* 1:51, and many other places.

## **Romans 5**

<sup>13</sup> ...sin is not imputed when there is no law;

—therefore all mankind—every man born of a woman—has had the law, and has transgressed it, and has thus become guilty, and under condemnation of death; and Christ came to save them all from the transgression of the law. In other words, Christ came in order...

## **Romans 8**

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.

Someone will recall the statement that the Gentiles have not the law, and so will I, that I may point out that it was made for the purpose of emphasizing the fact that the Gentiles, no matter how benighted, do really know the law of God. The Apostle Paul is showing that all men, both Jews and Gentiles, will be judged by the law, and says:

## **Romans 2**

<sup>14</sup> For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves;

<sup>15</sup> Which show the work of *the law written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.

## **Salvation is Only For Those Under the Law**

Whoever would evade his accountability to the law of God, must resign his claim to the salvation purchased by Christ's life and death and resurrection; because Christ died to save none but sinners—transgressors of the law. But none can evade this accountability, so everybody has a right to...

## **Romans 3**

<sup>24</sup> ...the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

There is but one way of life, and it is the same for both Jews and Gentiles.

### **Romans 3**

<sup>22</sup> The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ [is] unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference:

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace.

There is one law for all, which all have transgressed, and so there is one Gospel for all,—one life of obedience to the law, which becomes the birthright of every man, who by receiving Christ becomes a son of God.

### **Carefulness Enjoined, Not Laxness**

We may now devote a little attention to the expression of Paul's to which you refer, and it need not detain us long. It is in the 14<sup>th</sup> of *Romans*, where the apostle is exhorting to unity, and warning us against throwing a stumbling-block in anybody's way. I quote the *Revised Version*:

### **Romans 14**

<sup>5</sup> One man esteems one day above another: another esteems every day. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind.

<sup>6</sup> He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord, and he that eats, eats unto the Lord.

From the reading of the chapter it is evident that, if the Sabbath comes into consideration at all in this chapter, which I shall not attempt to decide, the exhortation is to greater carefulness, instead of to laxness. The thought is,

“Be careful lest by your indifference you cast a stumbling block in some weak brother's ways.”

Nobody ever stumbles over a Christian's diligence in...

### **Luke 1**

<sup>6</sup> ...walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,

—but many are made to fall over carelessness of professed Christians in matters which God enjoins.<sup>359</sup>

## Full Assurance

But what about:

### Romans 14

<sup>5</sup> Let every man be fully assured in his own mind?

Does that mean that it is a matter of indifference? Not by any means, quite the contrary. One does not need to be “fully assured in his own mind” concerning a matter of unimportance. The Sabbath question is one, above all others, of which one must be fully assured; for the very essence of the Sabbath is “blessed assurance”—the...

### Hebrews 10

<sup>22</sup> ...full assurance of faith.

It means the ceasing from our own works, and the resting on the perfect, finished work of God.<sup>360</sup>

### Exodus 20

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day is the Sabbath [the rest] of the Lord;

—but to keep God’s rest means more than simply to cease work one day in the week. What tongue can describe, what mind can formulate, the glorious rest of God? It is beyond expression, even as it passes all understanding. It is spiritual rest, for God is Spirit. It is rest from all sin, for:

### Psalms 92

<sup>15</sup> ...there is no unrighteousness in Him.

It is rest from the weariness of physical toil, even while actively engaged in it; for:

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<sup>359</sup> See *Romans* 2:23-24.

<sup>360</sup> *Hebrews* 4:10-11.

## Isaiah 40

<sup>28</sup> ...the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not neither is weary,

<sup>29</sup> [And] He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increases strength.

<sup>30</sup> Even the youths shall faint and be weary...

<sup>31</sup> But they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall run, and not be weary;

—because they rest in the everlasting arms and on the everlasting word that created the heavens and the earth, and that always works.

On the seventh day God rested from all His work which He created and made, after having completed it on the sixth day, and seeing that everything was very good. The seventh day is therefore a memorial, a sign of the new creation. It is the revealer of the God who sanctifies. It is the assurance that God makes all things new, and the assurance that it gives us is the assurance of experience in our own bodies.

Oh, if everyone who names the name of Christ only knew this blessed assurance, this glorious rest, this unspeakable gift of God, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the fullness of the power of the Spirit over the flesh, the infinite possibilities that are open to the one who with well-instructed mind is wholly yielded to God's possession, we should never again hear any excuses, to evade serving Him, or any questions as to whether or not it is necessary to keep His Sabbath.

## 104. Faith and Feeling

Present Truth, June 5, 1902

I am anxious to obtain that faith without which it is impossible to please God; I want to know I possess it. "I say to myself," wrote one in similar mental straits, "that I do trust Him; that I know He can save me; that I know His blood was shed for me, etc., but still I am not sure if I fully realize it all." These words exactly describe the state of my mind in relation to my spiritual condition.

We are urged by the apostle to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith. Faith, the Scriptures tell us, is the gift of God; and this gift I have prayed for, and I responded to the teaching of *Romans* 10:9: "If you shall confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and shall believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;" but I am still without assurance essential to peace; I cannot say, "I *know* in whom I have believed."

This continuous seeking for light, and never emerging from darkness is painfully perplexing, and I find myself often in that state of mind reflected in the observation of Mark Rutherford. "Our temptation is to doubt whether it is of the smallest consequence whether we are or are not, and whether our being here is not an accident." I have prayed for forgiveness, but I do not feel that I am forgiven; while the fact that my cares, which I have cast oft and again upon the Lord, are increasing instead of diminishing, invests with a perplexing interest the promise, "I will deliver you."

I am told that feeling must not be made the test of our spiritual condition. "Don't mind your feelings," said the late Mr. Moody, "let feelings take care of themselves;" but on another occasion, in dealing with an anxious penitent, he said, "At ten tonight I will pray for you; and make up your mind you will not sleep until you *know* your sins are forgiven." How can these statements be reconciled? How can one be assured of the peace which the Lord gives to believers apart from feeling?



**B**EFORE taking up this inquiry, let me say that it is just such a one as every Gospel worker is glad to be called upon to answer. It is of the kind that is specially desired for the “Corner,”—and inquiry as to what to do to be saved, and how to know that one is saved, rather than a curiosity to know the meaning of some peculiar text.

It was for the express purpose of coming into the closest personal touch with *Present Truth* readers that is possible without actually seeing them, that this Department was opened. While I am glad to expound any portion of Scripture, I wish to lead all to realize that the sole object of the Bible is to teach men the necessity and the way of personal salvation, and how to serve God.

Your questions and statements reveal a state of self-consciousness that is very common among professed Christians who have not yet become so well acquainted with God that he absorbs their thoughts, to the exclusion of themselves. It is true that we are exhorted,

### **2 Corinthians 13**

<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith;

—but this gives no warrant for the analysis of one’s own mind, and the bringing of one’s own self to the bar of Judgment, that is so common among certain very good and conscientious people. We have no more right to try ourselves before an Inquisition than we have to subject somebody else to it. We are simply to let ourselves alone, and allow God to deal with us in His way, which is not by any means the Inquisitorial method.

### **Praying for Faith**

I have been waiting for many years for somebody to show me the place in the Bible where we are told to pray for faith. It is true that the disciples said,

### **Luke 17**

<sup>5</sup> Lord, increase our faith;

—but that is in itself no warrant; and the answer of Christ was a rebuke to their request, for He immediately said:

### **Luke 17**

<sup>6</sup> If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say unto this sycamine tree, Be plucked up by the root, and be planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

That is, whoever has any real faith at all, has all the faith there is. Whoever has faith has it, and that is all there is to it.

### **Romans 12**

<sup>3</sup> God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

This you recognize, for you say that faith is the gift of God. Well, now, why should one pray for that which God has already given? and which, without respect of persons, He has dealt out to every man? It is true that we speak of “lack of faith,” and the Bible itself speaks of men that have little faith; but this is not a contradiction of the truth that God has given it to them. Men often reject God’s gifts, and otherwise allow them to lie unused; but the fact that one does not exercise the faith does not show that it has not been given him. When we speak of lack of faith on the part of some person, we mean that that person does not exercise the gift.

A moment’s consideration will suffice to show that faith is the one thing that cannot be prayed for. We are to...

### **James 1**

<sup>6</sup> ...pray in faith, nothing wavering,

—if we would receive. It is only when we believe that we receive the things we ask for, that we do indeed receive them.<sup>361</sup> Nothing but the prayer of faith is real prayer; therefore without faith one could not really pray.

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>6</sup> He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

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<sup>361</sup> *Mark 11:24.*

How could it be thought necessary to ask God for faith, when without it we could not come to God, nor ask for anything? Faith is the one thing that we do not need to ask for; for if we have enough of it to enable us to receive it in asking for it, we have enough for anything else.

## **What Faith Is, and How It Comes**

### **Romans 10**

<sup>10</sup> Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith in God is the simple, unquestioning reception of His Word, the acceptance of it as the final and absolute authority, and the resting in it as free from fear that it will fail as are the worlds which it sustains. To ask God for faith, when we have His Word, is to insult Him to His face, calling Him a liar; for when we hear Him speak, and then ask Him to help us to believe what He says, we virtually ask Him to act in such a manner that we can have confidence in His honesty and sincerity. We tell Him that we do not regard Him as trustworthy; for:

### **1 John 5**

<sup>10</sup> ...he that believes not God has made Him a liar.

Think how it would be to treat a man as God is ordinarily treated. Suppose a man promises you something which you would like to receive, and you look at Him steadily, and say,

“I wish I could believe you; I wish I could have faith in your promise;”

—you see at once what that would imply. He might well ask,

“What have I done to cause you to lose confidence in me?  
When had you known me to break my word?”

—and if you could not point to a single breach of faith on his part, he would tell you that you are bound to believe him until you have found him untrustworthy. Even in courts of law, a man is always given “the benefit of the doubt;” but men do not deal as

fairly as that with God, whom they have not the slightest reason even to doubt.

## **The Full Assurance of Faith**

You say that you are...

“...still without assurance essential to peace.”

Well, be so no longer. I will give you all the assurance you need, and tell you where you can find many times more.

### **John 14**

<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

### **Isaiah 43**

<sup>25</sup> I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins.

### **Isaiah 44**

<sup>22</sup> I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed you.

### **1 Timothy 2**

<sup>15</sup> This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,

—and He assures us,

### **John 6**

<sup>37</sup> Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We can hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering,

## Hebrews 10

<sup>23</sup> ...for He is faithful that promised.

## 1 Corinthians 1

<sup>9</sup> God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

He has sworn by himself,<sup>362</sup>—by His own existence,—and as long as we know that He lives,—that *He is*,—we know that pardon and peace and righteousness are ours. This, His word, is our assurance. It is all that can possibly be asked or given. Nothing else could possibly be assurance, for everything else is liable to fail. Only...

## 1 Peter 1

<sup>25</sup> ...the Word of our God abides for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

## Feeling Is Not Assurance

You already have the assurance; the trouble is that you do not recognize it, and are trying to manufacture it yourself, out of yourself. You are looking for emotion in yourself, a happy feeling, and you think that this will be assurance to you.

But feeling is not and cannot be assurance of pardon, and righteousness, and peace. The assurance must come from God, in order to be of any value, and He gives it in His sacred Word. Your feeling is only something springing from yourself; and it is self-evident that you cannot give yourself assurance that God has fulfilled or will fulfill His promises.

All the emotion is simply the response of one's being to something that affects it; and any genuine feeling that you may have will be simply the result of your acceptance of the assurance that God gives. When you believe that God has forgiven your sins, you cannot help being glad, but that gladness will not always take the form of exuberance of spirits. The peace of God is superior to any circumstance or condition. It exists when the soul is in the

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<sup>362</sup> *Hebrews* 6:13.

deepest trouble, buffeted on all sides, just as surely as in the clearest sunlight and the most perfect calm.

There are times when one has almost no feeling at all,—when the senses are benumbed, as, for instance, by intense cold, or when one is ill; how sad it would be if one could not at such times have the full assurance of acceptance with God. But it is not so. At times when one is too weak to feel, when one merely exists, and cannot even think,—one can quietly and sweetly rest without thought in the everlasting arms, fully persuaded that what He has promised He is able to perform.

### **Isaiah 30**

<sup>15</sup> In returning and rest shall you be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.

### **Our Place in God's Plan**

It is most unfortunate that so many good men have seemed to think that the world at large would be interested in reading their doubts. So they have most religiously recorded all the unbelief which came to them in unguarded moments, and people read it as though it were necessary for them to have the same experience.

If Rutherford ever doubted whether he was of the slightest consequence, or thought that his existence was a mere accident, he ought to have known better than to write it down for others to read. He ought, indeed, to have known God better than ever to have entertained a thought so dishonoring to Him. Let us read some of the assurance on this point also.

### **Psalms 139 [RV & others]**

<sup>13</sup> You have formed my reins;

You have knit me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup> I will give thanks unto You;

For I am fearfully and wonderfully made:

Wonderful are your works;

And that my soul knows right well.

<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from You,

I was made in secret,

And curiously wrought in the lowest part of the earth.

<sup>16</sup> Your eyes did see my unperfect substance,  
And in your book were all my members written,  
Which day by day were fashioned,  
When as yet there was none of them.

<sup>17</sup> How precious also are your thoughts unto me, O God!  
How great is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup> If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand;  
When I awake I am still with You.

## **Ephesians 1**

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

<sup>4</sup> According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

<sup>5</sup> Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

<sup>11</sup> In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

## **2 Timothy 1**

<sup>9</sup> [God] has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

## **Romans 16**

<sup>25</sup> Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

<sup>26</sup> But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith;

<sup>27</sup> To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.  
Amen.

Of what do all these texts assure us? Of this, that in the eternal ages of the past, “before the world began,” God had us all, and each one of us individually, in His mind. In times eternal God had a plan for each one of us. God is never taken by surprise; everything is known to Him from the beginning; and from before any creature had existence He saw the place that every one of us should occupy, and the work that each one of us was to perform. This is saying nothing more than that a wise builder knows just what he is going to make, and what it will be like, and what its use will be, before he begins it.

Now think what a marvelous ground for confidence and trust this is. Unnumbered ages before creation God had the whole plan of the universe, down to the smallest detail, in His mind. Ages rolled round, and no sign of anything appeared, but God did not forget. The powers in the heavens were created, and innumerable millions of beings worshiped before Him; but still no earth with its inhabitants appeared. Still God did not for a moment lose sight of His purpose. All things were as naked and open to His eyes than as now; but there was no indication of it to any other eye.

At last the earth was created, and in due course of time we came into being, for the purpose of filling the very place in creation that God appointed us ages upon ages ago. Can you not see that He who held us, and not us only, but the very sparrows, steadily in His mind to countless ages, never once swerving from His purpose, will not allow anything to interfere with His eternal purpose for us, if we are but willing that His will should be done in us? What more perfect assurance do you want than this?

### **Knowing Without Feeling**

You find difficulty in reconciling two statements by Mr. Moody,—one to the effect that feelings are to be left to take care of themselves, and the other that a certain person should *know* that his sins were forgiven. Now it is a slight matter whether any two statements of Mr. Moody or any other man are reconciled or not; but the truth in this case is that they agree most perfectly, and I



think that you can already see it. The promises of God are sufficient to enable anyone to *know* that he is forgiven.

Suppose you had in some way injured me, and apologize and ask for forgiveness; how would you know that you were forgiven? There could be but one way—by my word. If I said,

“I forgive you freely,”

—you would take that as a statement of the matter, provided you had confidence in my sincerity; and you would never once think that your feelings had anything to do with it. You would *know*, without feeling; whatever feeling you might have afterward would be the result of that knowledge.

Even so it must be between you and God. Get acquainted with Him through His Word. Learn first of all that the Bible contains no such text as:

“I know *in* whom I have believed.”

That would certainly be true, if one really believed, but it does not express the fullness of the truth. The verse reads,

## **2 Timothy 1**

<sup>12</sup> I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

It is not enough to know who it is whom we believe, but we must know Him personally. Personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ will establish your confidence in Him, so that, instead of wondering if you are accepted by Him, nothing can cause you to doubt it for a moment.

Study His Word; remember that it is true from the beginning, for He cannot lie; hold fast to everything that He says to you, and all your difficulties will vanish like the mist before the rising sun.

## **Psalm 9**

<sup>10</sup> They that know your name will put their trust in You; for You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You.

# 105. The Meaning of the Cross

Present Truth, June 12, 1902

Why is it that “without shedding of blood is no remission”<sup>363</sup>? Why could not God save men without Christ dying?

WITH this question you have touched the very core of the Gospel, and, in fact, the work of the creation, the secret of all existence.

It is a sad fact, yet it is a fact, that few professed Christians know the true principles, the foundation truths, of the Gospel. I do not mean by this that they do not know anything about the Gospel; that they have never to any extent become acquainted with the Lord and learned to draw strength from Him; but I mean that to very many there is a vagueness, a dimness, in the Gospel, and it seems to them a complicated affair, when it is simplicity itself.

We spend the most of our lives going backward to the beginning. It is necessary that we begin at the beginning, and so we have the paradox, that to go back to the beginning is the only way to make real advancement. But it takes the most of us so long to get back to the beginning, to begin as little children, to learn the alphabet of Christianity, that comparatively few have ever appreciated the absolute simplicity of the Gospel, and the marvelous fullness that there is in that simplicity; for there is one glorious truth: then we have really come to the beginning and have the whole; for He who is the beginning is also the end.<sup>364</sup>

## Colossians 2

<sup>3</sup> In [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

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<sup>363</sup> *Hebrews 9:22.*

<sup>364</sup> *Revelation 21:6; 22:13.*

## **The Cross the Revelation of God**

If I were to answer your question offhand in my own words, I should say that Christ shed His blood because He couldn't do otherwise and be himself. It was in His very nature of things that He should do so. Giving—the giving of life—is the law of the universe. By that means the whole creation came into existence, and by the same means it is upheld.

The cross is not a unique thing, standing apart by itself, but is the expression of the law of life. It was not a thing devised by God after the fall of man, but the continuation of that by which man was created. It was not an afterthought, but God's original thought, and the fullness of His thought from everlasting to everlasting. The events of Calvary are an object lesson, to show mankind what God is continually doing for His creatures; in it we find the Fatherhood of God revealed.

Let us set two texts of Scripture together. The first is:

### **Jeremiah 9**

<sup>23</sup> Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

<sup>24</sup> But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

The second text is:

### **Galatians 6**

<sup>14</sup> God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Both these texts were inspired by the one Spirit of God, and are therefore in perfect accord. The first says that we are not to glory in anything except in the knowledge of God—in the knowledge that in all the earth He is working lovingkindness, judgment, and

righteousness. The second teaches that we are to glory in nothing except the cross of Christ.

It is evident, therefore, that it is the cross that makes us know God; that in the cross, and in that only (for we are not to glory in anything else), we see the lovingkindness, judgment, and righteous dealing of God. But,

**Psalm 33 [RV]**

<sup>5</sup> The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord,

—and therefore we know that in all the earth we shall find the cross. Wherever there is life and love,—the life that is love—there is the cross of Christ.

### **Heathenism Among Christians**

Just to the extent that one does not see the cross in its true light, and understand its meaning, is there lack of knowledge of God.

Now the fact that so many professed Christians do not see why God could not save men without the death of the cross, and that the question of the atonement is still a vexed one among theologians, shows that the cross, and therefore the nature and character of God, is not understood by them; and that means that there is a vast amount of heathenism in the professed church of Christ; for the heathen are they who do not know God.

There are many degrees of heathenism, grading all the way from absolute ignorance of God, and so the grossest degradation, up to the point just below the full vision of God's glory with unveiled faces, and thus complete deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The lingering heathenism in the church is seen in the common thought of God, which is expressed in the following line so frequently sung:

My God is reconciled.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Charles Wesley, Hymn: *Arise, My Soul, Arise*, 1742.

The idea that Christ died to appease God's wrath, and to reconcile Him to sinful man, is totally foreign to the Scriptures, and highly dishonoring to God. God is considered as like unregenerate man, desiring revenge, and not satisfied after any offense, without some victim of His wrath. The idea is that an offense has been committed, and so somebody must be punished, must die; no matter who it is, only so satisfaction has been made, and His outraged feelings appeased by blood. This is called the Atonement!

On the contrary, it is pure heathenism; the idea cannot fitly be described by any other term than devilish, for it describes the character Satan, and not of God.

The prevalence of this false view of God is the reason why so many people are afraid of Him, and the ground of the questions so often asked,

“Will God accept me?”

“Can He forgive my sins?”

“Have I not sinned so greatly that He cannot have anything to do with me?”

It is responsible for the almost universal idea that we must do something, make some sacrifice, punish ourselves in some way, in order to win His favor. It is the reason why there is not more spontaneous acceptance of God and salvation, and more joy in Him.

## **God is Love, and He Makes Reconciliation**

### **1 John 4**

<sup>8</sup> God is love.

That is His nature, His life. He is Spirit, and...

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>22</sup> The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

<sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance.

All these things flow out from the Being of God. They constitute His Being. He does not mark iniquity, but there is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared.<sup>366</sup> He is not the destroyer, but the Saviour, and Preserver; and He saves by the cross, which shows the gift of himself. He says to sinners:

### **Malachi 3**

<sup>6</sup> I am the Lord; I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.

He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity<sup>367</sup>; He is the perfection of the love that...

### **1 Corinthians 13**

<sup>5</sup> ...thinks no evil,

–or, “takes not account of evil”; and therefore it was said of Him by inspiration of His own Spirit:

### **Numbers 23**

<sup>21</sup> He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither has He seen perverseness in Israel.

–and that notwithstanding the fact that Israel had rebelled against Him, and, choosing their own way, had blindly and stubbornly refused to recognize His presence among them. Such is the longsuffering lovingkindness of our God. His name is...

### **Exodus 34**

<sup>6</sup> The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

### **John 3**

<sup>16</sup> God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,

–and in giving Him He gave himself and all heaven; for Christ was but the manifestation of God in the flesh.

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<sup>366</sup> *Psalm* 130:3-4.

<sup>367</sup> *Habakkuk* 1:13.

## **John 1**

<sup>18</sup> No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Jesus said:

## **John 14**

<sup>9</sup> He that has seen me has seen the Father.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>32</sup> He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

## **1 John 4**

<sup>10</sup> Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

## **Romans 5**

<sup>8</sup> God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup> Much more then, Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

<sup>10</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of the Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>18</sup> All things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and have given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

<sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

The enmity is all on our side, the love all from God. He takes no account of our rebellion, but gives himself to us, taking all the responsibility and all the guilt of our sin upon himself, making himself the sinner, us the innocent: and since He will by no means clear the guilty, He did not spare himself; for be it known that the blood of Christ the Son of God is the blood of God itself, as we read in the apostle's exhortation in:



## **Acts 20**

<sup>28</sup> Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.

## **Life Comes From Life**

The cross is a necessity, because life can come only by the giving of life. It is necessary for God to give His life to us, because we have no life in ourselves.

## **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being,...for we are His offspring.

## **1 Corinthians 8**

<sup>6</sup> There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things.

## **Psalms 90**

<sup>1</sup> Lord, You have been our dwelling-place in all generations.

<sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were brought forth [born], or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God.

There is not a created thing in the universe that is not the product of the life of God, and that is not kept in existence by the continued gift of His life. The invisible things of God, even His everlasting power and Divinity, are to be perceived through the things that are made, and have been thus clearly manifested ever since the creation.<sup>368</sup>

## **Romans 11**

<sup>36</sup> Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things.

## **Ephesians 4 [RV]**

<sup>6</sup> There is one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

We are not self-existent; therefore God, the self-existent One, must give His life to bring us into being, and then, having

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<sup>368</sup> *Romans 1:20.*

brought us forth, He must continue to give us His life, in order that we may not cease to be; and when we have sinned, and have gone astray from Him, then is there the more need that the life should be bestowed, to restore to us His image. So we see that the cross is simply the manifestation of creative power. It stands as a revelation of what God is—of His eternal purpose and work. It shows us what God has always been doing, and what He will continue to do throughout eternity.

## The Cross in Creation

### Genesis 2

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

God breathed His own life into man, and by that life we now exist. Now in connection with this text, are the following words concerning Christ as He hung on the cross:

### Mark 15

<sup>37</sup> And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

The words “gave up the ghost” are from a single Greek word (*ekpneo*), meaning literally *to breathe out*, to expire. The word “expire,” a common synonym of “die,” is a compound Latin word meaning to breathe out. Jesus breathed out His life upon the cross. It was not forcibly taken from Him, but He laid it down voluntarily, and laid it down on purpose that He might take it again, as He had the ability to lay it down and take it again.<sup>369</sup>

### Hebrews 2

<sup>9</sup> [Jesus] tasted death for every man.

### Isaiah 53

<sup>6</sup> With His stripes we are healed.

Through His death we receive life.

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<sup>369</sup> *John* 10:17-18.

## Ephesians 1

<sup>7</sup> We have redemption through His blood.

Now let us state the case in this simple way:

- a) Christ had to give life to the world;
- b) To die is *to expire, to breathe out*;
- c) Man has life by *breathing in* the life of God;
- d) Therefore Christ *breathed out* His life on the cross, that we might *breathe it in*;
- e) Thus we see that the cross was simply the revelation of the Creator at work, and in the cross we see God creating man, the breathing into his nostrils the breath of life.

## 2 Corinthians 5

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,

–or, “there is a new creation,” just as it was in the beginning; and we see clearly that the power of the cross is identical with the power by which man was created in the beginning, and by which mankind still lives. That which is technically known as the cross, is that by which all creatures live, and by which the worlds were made.

You know He died not for himself,  
Nor for himself arose;  
Millions of souls were in His heart,  
And you for one He chose;  
Upon the palms of His pierced hands  
Engraven was your name,  
He for your cleansing had prepared  
His water and His flame.  
Sure you with Him are risen:  
And now with Him you must go forth,  
And He will lend your sick soul health,  
Your strivings, might and worth.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> John Keble, *Lyra Innocentium*, “Easter-Day,” 1827.

## **The Cross Not an Afterthought**

We see, therefore, that the “plan of salvation” was not a thing devised after the fall. The Father and the Son did not, as seems sometimes to be imagined, sit down to think out some method by which sinful man could be redeemed, and arbitrarily decide upon the Cross; far from it. God was not taken by surprise and forced to invent something new to meet the emergency; but the stream of life which had been flowing from eternity was not withdrawn nor turned aside, but still continued to flow.

### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> Sin is the transgression of the law.

Transgression means a going across; it is, so to speak, an obstruction, a dam, placed across the stream of life, and all that is needed to remove it is for the stream to flow on uninterruptedly. Thus,

### **2 Timothy 1**

<sup>9</sup> [He] has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

The cross is the manifestation of God’s “eternal purpose;” the preaching of Christ is...

### **Romans 16 [RV]**

<sup>25</sup> ...the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence through times eternal.

God’s eternal purpose is seen in creation; that is to say, the fact that God created the world and its inhabitants, is evidence that it was His eternal purpose; and therefore it is still further evident that the cross by which fallen men and the lost world are redeemed, is but the carrying out of that eternal purpose. So,

### **Isaiah 45**

<sup>17</sup> Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: you shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

<sup>18</sup> For thus says the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; He has established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

## **The Seed and Its Fruit**

All nature teems with illustrations of this glorious truth. The sowing of seed and the growth of the plant, is one of the most common phenomena, and one that is most frequently used in Scripture to illustrate the Gospel. Speaking with direct reference to His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus said,

### **John 12**

<sup>23</sup> The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

<sup>24</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground in die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

There we have Christ's own illustration of His death. The seed that is sown never appears again. It does not go out of existence, but gives its life to produce a multitude of beings like itself. This, according to Christ's word, is the death of the seed, but it is also creation—the creation of a numerous seed. Thus it was with Christ, the Seed; creation is by His death, the imparting of His life. The death of the seed is the multiplication of its life.

This is the law of the universe. There was a period in the ages past when God was alone. There was no creature to share the joy of His existence. He was self-existent, but no other being has this attribute. Therefore God could have no company except by giving His life to bring others into existence. So, even before the worlds were made, in the creation of the...

### **Hebrews 12**

<sup>22</sup> ...innumerable company of angels,

—the sons of God—we have the demonstration of the words,

## **John 12**

<sup>24</sup> Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

Creation is by the Cross, and the Cross, as we see it, is but the manifestation of God's creative power.

### **Death the Life of the Bee**

This truth is emphasized in the case of the bee. It is a well-established fact that when the queen bee takes her "nuptial flight," the male bee that succeeds in distancing his companions and effecting a union with her, dies in the act. Henceforth he exists only in her and in the multitudes of other bees which she brings forth from the seed deposited by that one generative act. The seed, the essential part of the bee, remains alive in the body of the queen, rendering her perpetually fertile, and he yields up his life that it may be so. His death is the giving of life to a host of new creatures.

In this we have of course only a partial illustration of the great mystery of the cross; for although God gives His life for the production of new creatures, He does not cease to exist, because He is life itself. But no one thing in nature can fully represent God; each different thing represents some particular phase; and the case of the bee brings sharply to our notice the fact that life comes only by the giving of life, and helps us to see that the cross is the law of creation—a necessity growing out of the very being of God.

### **The Tree Bearing Fruit**

The same truth, the mystery of the cross, of life through death, through the giving of life, is taught by the fruit tree. The fruit is the life of the tree. In eating the fruit we eat the life of the tree, and thus receive of its strength. That the tree does actually give its life in bearing fruit, is well known to every gardener, who carefully guards his trees from over-production, lest they die.

I well remember a certain apple tree, when I was a boy, that in the first year of its existence was covered with blossoms, and, not being interfered with, brought thirty-five fine, large apples to perfection. But its first year was its last, for it gave all its life to the perfecting of that fruit. This was an extraordinary case, but it serves to set forth in clear and sharp lines the lesson that the producing of fruit is the giving of life.

The mature tree gives its life to the fruit that it bears, but does not die, because it has more abundant life, drawing, as it does, life from the Source of life. Thus the tree teaches us the same lesson that the bee does, but more perfectly.

## Saved by His Life

### Romans 5

<sup>10</sup> If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Christ came, that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.<sup>371</sup> Our salvation is simply the effect of the more abundant life of Christ through the cross. This was illustrated in His miracles of healing, which were recorded...

### John 20

<sup>31</sup> ...that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.

Healing is salvation. When Jesus had healed a person, he often said,

### Luke 7 [also 18:42]

<sup>50</sup> Your faith has saved you.

The word “heal,” meaning *to make whole*, comes often in the New Testament from the Greek word (*sozo*) *to save*. The healing of disease is by the giving of life, for disease is but the beginning of death. Whenever Jesus healed the sick or raised the dead, He did

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<sup>371</sup> *John* 10:10.

it by imparting His own life. He was the living bread that came down from heaven, to give His life for the life of the world.

The healing of the woman with the issue of blood<sup>372</sup> is a typical instance illustrating this truth. There was a poor woman with her life blood ebbing away. When she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press behind, and touched His garment;

### **Mark 5**

<sup>28</sup> For she said, If I may but touch His clothes, I shall be whole.

<sup>29</sup> And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

<sup>30</sup> And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue [power] had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

We see by this that the healing of the afflicted was a demand upon His life. In healing them He gave His own life to them. His fullness supplied their lack. This case of the woman was not an isolated one; for we read that when He came down from the mountain,

### **Luke 6 [RV]**

<sup>19</sup> All the multitude sought to touch Him; for power came forth from Him, and healed them all.

Since He felt the drain upon His life force when only one touched Him, think what it must have been when multitudes drew healing power from Him. What a great draft was made upon His life. It is evident that since life went from Him in response to each touch, the inevitable result of the touch of multitudes would have been His death, if He had not been in constant connection with the fountain of life. He gave His life, and yet He lived.

What have we here but the mystery of the cross before Calvary? As He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, He was laying down His life for the brethren,

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<sup>372</sup> *Mark 5:24-34.*



just as truly when He breathed out His life on Calvary. So also He did when after His resurrection He breathed on His disciples, and said,

### **John 20**

<sup>22</sup> Receive the Holy Ghost.

It is all so simple, and yet so wonderful. We see the cross at work giving life, and recognize that it is in the cross that we live, and move, and have our being; for the cross is the revelation of God creating all things, and upholding and restoring the things created.

## **Personal Application of the Lesson**

### **Romans 1**

<sup>16</sup> The Gospel...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes;

### **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>18</sup> [And] the preaching of the cross is to...us who are saved, the power of God.

But the cross means more than simply our own salvation; it means our union with God, the Giver of life, to be partners with Him in its bestowal on others; for, said Christ,

### **John 7**

<sup>38</sup> He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

The stream of life which flows from God to us is not to be dammed up in us; that means stagnation and death. We have done it already, to our great loss. Therefore Christ is lifted up before us on the cross, that, seeing Him, we may be drawn to Him, and come into harmony with the soul, the law, of the universe. We are to learn that life means giving. We are to allow the obstruction which our selfishness has interposed, to be removed, so that, as the life flows out to others, new life from God may flow in.

## **1 John 3 [RV]**

<sup>16</sup> Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

He laid down His life, that He might take it again. By giving it, He retained, thus showing us that whoever will keep his life shall lose it, and whoever will give up his life shall save it.

## **Proverbs 11**

<sup>24</sup> There is that scatters, and yet increases; and there is that withholds more than is meet, and it tends to poverty.

This is the lesson taught by the cross. The seed that is stored away, abides alone. More than this, if it be kept by itself too long it loses the power of reproduction. We sometimes hear of wheat found in the hand of an Egyptian mummy, which, after having been hundreds of years in the grasp of death, was sown, and produced a crop; but the story is a fable, for no seed can retain its life-giving power so long. Some seeds retain it longer than others; but the longest period that any known seed will retain its vitality if not used is thirty years. If it does not fall into the ground and give its life before that time, it must abide alone.

So we, if we would live, must give our lives. By yielding up the best we have we obtain more. The reward of service is the power to do greater and better service. The grace of God brings salvation,<sup>373</sup> not only to us, but through us to others. The Apostle Paul said,

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>10</sup> By the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

## **2 Corinthians 6**

<sup>1</sup> We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

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<sup>373</sup> *Titus 2:11.*

## 106. A Cry for Help

Present Truth, June 19, 1902

WE GIVE place here to the following sincere cry of a soul in distress, believing that many readers of the *Present Truth* will find their own experience and longing expressed in it; and I trust it will also touch a responsive chord in the hearts of many others, who know the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and who will join in prayer that the answer that follows may be blessed to the deliverance of souls from the snare of the enemy.

I venture to approach you as my friend, and as I am in great trouble I have taken the liberty of asking you to help me. During the past few months I have given way to a black sin, that is slowly but surely dragging me down, away from the Saviour. I am a Sunday-school teacher and Christian worker, and have known what it is to enjoy fellowship with God; but at the time of writing I feel the worst of sinners. Will you tell me *how to overcome?*

First, please note these facts: every time I am tempted I yield, and soon after I am filled with sorrow; I go on my knees and implore God's forgiveness; I realize that He has forgiven me, and I promise Him that I will never do it again; but, alas, after a few days the temptation comes again, and again I yield, and so I go on.

I have prayed and prayed, but I really cannot resist, much as I wish to do so; for I may tell you that I detest myself for the shameful way I treat my dear Saviour; it seems no use making resolutions, no use asking God's help.

Oh! do tell now what I am to do. I feel like giving up altogether, but no! I cannot do that; I must conquer. I cannot, dare not, go on in such a life of sin and misery. It is impossible to remove the cause of temptation; what I want to know is, when I am greatly tempted, how may I *stand and conquer?*

Please help me. I do so want to be a real, true Christian. Yours in great distress.

**I** AM very glad that you have had confidence enough to make the request for help that you have, and thankful that the Lord has provided the answer for you. There is help for you, and abundant victory; the Bible was written for no other purpose than to afford help to people in just your condition; for there is no temptation come upon you but such as is common to man; and:

### **1 Corinthians 10**

<sup>13</sup> God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

It is a glorious thing to know that even the weaknesses of our flesh are, through Christ, made stepping stones to infinite power. One of the brightest passages to me in the whole Bible is the expression in the eleventh of *Hebrews*, concerning the men of faith who...

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>34</sup> ...out of weakness were made strong.

So the Apostle Paul said,

### **2 Corinthians 12**

<sup>10</sup> I take pleasure in infirmities, for when I am weak, then am I strong;

—for God said to him:

<sup>9</sup> My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore, instead of losing heart, we can say,

<sup>9</sup> ...Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Instead of becoming despondent, we are to...

### **James 1**

<sup>2</sup> ...count it all joy when we fall into diverse temptations.

This shows that the very temptation itself, instead of being against us, is a means of grace, if we look at it from God's point of view. All power in heaven and earth belongs to Christ<sup>374</sup>; and so even Satan, with all his wrath against the Lord, is but an instrument to carry out His purposes.

#### **Psalm 124**

<sup>8</sup> Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Nothing is too hard for Him. Your trouble, in short, is this: You are trusting to yourself rather than to the Lord. I know it does not seem so to you, because you pray earnestly, and implore God's forgiveness, and believe and even realize that He has forgiven you. Yet the fact that you invariably fall when the temptation comes, shows that you are not trusting the Lord for salvation; for we read,

#### **Psalm 9**

<sup>9</sup> The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble;

<sup>10</sup> And they that know your name shall put their trust in You; for You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You.

#### **Psalm 125**

<sup>1</sup> They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides for ever.

### **Not Our Promise, but God's**

The secret of your failure is revealed in one sentence, which I repeat from your own words:

I go on my knees and implore God's forgiveness; I realize that He has forgiven me, and I promise Him that I will never do it again; but alas, after a few days the temptation comes again, and again I yield.

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<sup>374</sup> *Matthew 28:18.*

Your experience is that of many thousands of sincere Christians; but it is not real Christian experience, because it is not the experience of Christ.

#### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>15</sup> [He] was tempted in all points like as we are, *yet without sin*.

It was not because He was of a different nature from us, for inasmuch...

#### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>14</sup> ...as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same,

And,

<sup>17</sup> ...in all things...[was] made like unto His brethren.

Like you He,

#### **Hebrews 5**

<sup>7</sup> ...in the days of His flesh,...offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, [and He] was heard, in that He feared.

He trusted in God, not in himself. His words were:

#### **Psalms 16**

<sup>8</sup> I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

And again:

#### **Isaiah 50**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

<sup>8</sup> He is near that justifies me; who will contend with me? let us stand together; who is my adversary? let him come near to me.

<sup>9</sup> Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that will condemn me?

And then we have the words:

## **Isaiah 50**

<sup>10</sup> Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

Instead of promising the Lord that you will not yield again, you must take His promise that you shall not. Your mistake has been in trusting your own promises instead of the Lord's promise. It is by the...

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...exceeding great and precious promises...

—of the Lord that we are made...

<sup>4</sup> ...partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

## **Hebrews 10**

<sup>23</sup> He is faithful that promised...

## **2 Corinthians 1**

<sup>20</sup> [For] all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

## **1 John 5**

<sup>4</sup> This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

Our promises can add nothing to God's promise; they are not only wholly unnecessary, but they are a hindrance. We promise that we will not do the evil thing anymore; but that very promise implies the supposition of strength on our part, whereas power belongs only to God,<sup>375</sup> and our strength is in recognizing that.

Remember that Jesus died for our sake, not for His own. He did not need to come to this earth and be tempted, to prove His own loyalty to the Father. He came to declare the Father's name unto His brethren.<sup>376</sup> He came to show that by the faithfulness of God

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<sup>375</sup> *Psalm 62:11; Romans 13:1.*

<sup>376</sup> *Psalm 22:22; John 17:26.*

all flesh can be saved.<sup>377</sup>

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> In Him is no sin;

—but He was made to be sin for us, in that He bore our sins.<sup>378</sup> The flesh that He took was our flesh; the sins that He overcame were our sins; and He did really overcome them. When He cried, He was heard in that He feared.<sup>379</sup> And He still bears our flesh,—a High Priest...

## **Hebrews 4**

<sup>15</sup> ...touched with the feeling of our infirmities,

## **Hebrews 5**

<sup>2</sup> [He] can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, [because] He himself also is compassed with infirmity.

Our oneness with God comes through the recognition of the fact that Jesus Christ is in the flesh. When strong temptation comes to us, our victory lies in recognizing that it has already been overcome. Then in the face of it we can say,

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>57</sup> Thanks be to God which gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **2 Corinthians 2**

<sup>14</sup> Thanks be unto God which always causes us to triumph in Christ.

Do you desire deliverance from the temptation? That desire is the enmity which God has put in you against Satan<sup>380</sup>; it is the evidence of the presence of Christ in you; for:

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<sup>377</sup> *Psalm 40:10; Psalm 89:1-8; Lamentations 3:22-23.*

<sup>378</sup> *1 Peter 2:24.*

<sup>379</sup> *Hebrews 5:7.*

<sup>380</sup> *Genesis 3:15.*



### **Deuteronomy 30**

<sup>14</sup> The Word is very nigh unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.

Know that it is Christ in you, longing for freedom from that sin for His own sake, and then you will know that just as surely as He overcame in the flesh eighteen hundred years ago, so surely will He overcome in the same flesh today; for Jesus Christ is...

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

### **The Power of Forgiveness**

I see by your letter that you are well enough acquainted with Christ to know the *fact* of forgiveness; but what you have not yet learned is the *power* of forgiveness.

### **Psalms 130**

<sup>4</sup> There is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared.

### **Job 28**

<sup>28</sup> The fear of the Lord is...to depart from evil.

When God forgives our sin, that forgiveness is the power by which we resist in the future. The life that cleanses from the sin abides with us to withstand it. Christ is a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; but His priesthood is according to...

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>16</sup> ...the power of an endless life.

So the faith that overcomes the world is the faith that grasps the fact that Jesus Christ, with His endless, incorruptible life, abides in us to save us from sin which brings corruption and death. Then we say,

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life that I now live in a flesh I live by

the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Mark the expression, “I live by the faith of the Son of God.” The faith that Jesus Christ had in the Father, by which He resisted sin in the flesh, is given you for the same purpose in your flesh.

It was to teach us this, that the miracle of healing the palsied man was recorded. This man was helpless, and could not move, but had to be carried. When he was let down in the presence of Christ, Jesus said to him,

### **Matthew 9**

<sup>2</sup> Son, be of good cheer, your sins be forgiven you.

Comfort and good cheer came to the poor palsied man with those words. He knew that he was forgiven, but neither he nor the men that sat by knew the power that was in that forgiveness. So, in order that they might...

<sup>6</sup> ...*know* that the Son of man [had] *power* on earth to forgive sins,

—and that they might know the power that was in that forgiveness, He said to the palsied man:

<sup>6</sup> ...Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house.

And in the strength of that word he rose and walked. His rising up and going to his house was the visible manifestation of the forgiveness of his sins.

### **The Powerlessness of Human Resolutions**

The same thing is shown in the healing of the man at the beautiful gate of the temple. See how perfect an illustration this is of your condition: a man who was impotent in his feet, and never had walked, having no power to stand alone! He might have promised the Lord every day of his life that he would walk, but that would have done no good. Resolutions to walk would never have helped him. But when Peter said:

### **Acts 3**

- <sup>6</sup> In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk,  
—and his faith laid hold of that name,  
<sup>7</sup> ...immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength,  
<sup>8</sup> ...and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

The name by which he was made to stand up, was the name by which he continued to stand, for the next day; and as he stood in the midst of the council, Peter said:

### **Acts 4 [RV]**

- <sup>10</sup> In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in Him does this man stand here before you whole.

And it is in this name and in this way, that we are saved.

- <sup>11</sup> He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner.

- <sup>12</sup> And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

## **Grace Greater Than Sin**

### **1 Peter 4**

- <sup>1</sup> Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin;  
<sup>2</sup> That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

### **Titus 2 [RV]**

- <sup>11</sup> The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,  
<sup>12</sup> Instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.

This grace is given to us all freely,

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>7</sup> ...according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

## **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> Where sin abounds, there does grace much more abound.

Do you find sin in your flesh, asserting itself and claiming the mastery? Know, then, that the more abundant grace is there, and that if from it you learn to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,

## **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.

How are you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts? By confessing Christ has come in your flesh;

## **Romans 10**

<sup>10</sup> For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Thus: sin comes like a slave driver, claiming you as its victim; but you say,

“I am dead; it is not I who live here any longer, but it is Christ, over whom sin has no power.”

Do you not see at once that your victory is gained through your faith in Him? The old slave master may crack the whip to frighten you into submission, but you say with glad confidence,

## **Psalm 116**

<sup>16</sup> O Lord, truly I am your servant;...You have loosed my bonds.

It is impossible for a man to be overcome while holding fast this confidence.

## **Not an Experiment**

Let me impress this thought upon your mind: You are not to try experiments with the Lord. You must not wait to see if you have the victory, before you claim it. *That* is not trust in the Lord. You must have confidence enough in the Lord to *know* that He has

gained the victory over everything for you, and must live and rejoice in the strength of it. It is the victory that gains the victory. If this message comes to you in the very moment of defeat, you can assert your liberty, saying,

### **Micah 7**

<sup>8</sup> Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall arise.

Then begin at once to thank the Lord for the wonderful deliverance that He has given you. Do not doubt, for it is doubt that brings defeat. Do not resolve what you will do, but keep your mind on what God has already done, and you cannot help singing for the joy of it. I can assure you that while you are in this state of joyful confidence in God, having no confidence in your own flesh, but...

### **Romans 4**

<sup>20</sup> ...strong in faith, giving glory to God,

—temptations will have no power.

### **Philippians 4**

<sup>6</sup> Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

## **Purity and Simplicity of Life**

I might go on indefinitely in the same line, for the Bible is a vast storehouse full of the riches of God's grace,—an armory with all the armor of God, ready for our use. But I cannot close without offering some practical suggestions which I am sure you will find useful, whatever the temptation may be that besets you. We are exhorted to:

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>11</sup> Abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul,

—and in order to do this, we are told to:

## **Romans 8**

<sup>14</sup> Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

Many sincere souls, earnestly longing and praying for deliverance from sins inherent in the flesh, are unconsciously working against their prayers, and providing for the fulfilling of those lusts, by their habits of life. We may cooperate with the life of Christ within us, or we may work against it and hold it down.

Our business in life is to learn the secret of that life, that we may fall in line with it, and not in any way oppose its action. That life is purity and simplicity: which teaches us that all our habits should be simple, and our food and drink and air, by which life is conveyed to us, should be as pure as possible.

The man who drinks intoxicating liquor cannot help becoming intoxicated. So the person who through improper diet generates poisons in his system, cannot help being irritable or passionate. These things are as really the manifestation of intoxication as is the staggering of the drunken man. We know that God can release the drunkard from his bondage, but He cannot keep him from becoming intoxicated if he drinks. So God saves us from fleshly lusts, by instructing us concerning the things that beget those lusts, and saving us from them.

I cannot now go into all the details concerning the right way of living, but I shall be glad to answer any further questions you may have on this subject. I only wish to call your attention to the fact that we have victory and salvation in our own hands, for God's divine power...

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup> ...has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

## **Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

## **Jude**

<sup>24</sup> Who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

<sup>25</sup> To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

# 107. The Lost Tribes of Israel

Present Truth, June 26 & July 3, 1902

Included in: *The Everlasting Covenant* (1900), ch. 40, "The Lost Tribes of Israel" which in turn was taken from an earlier article, "The Promises to Israel. The Lost Tribes of Israel," in *Present Truth*, May 13, 1897

Reprinted: *Advent Review*, August 19, 1902

What do you think of the idea that the Anglo-Saxon are the lost tribes of Israel?

**T**HERE is a popular, almost universal, idea that at the time of the Babylonish captivity, ten of the twelve tribes were wholly lost, and that only two tribes could be mustered to return to the land of Palestine at the close of the seventy years. So deeply rooted is this notion, that almost everybody knows at once what is referred to whenever the expression, "the ten lost tribes," is used. How this idea came to be, we shall not now stop to inquire, but shall content ourselves with ascertaining what the Bible has to say upon the subject of the lost Israelites.

## Judah and Israel

First, however, it may be well to note a common misconception concerning the terms "Judah" and "Israel." When the kingdom was divided, after the death of Solomon, the southern portion, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, was known as the kingdom of Judah, with Jerusalem as its capital; while the northern portion, consisting of the remaining tribes, was known as the kingdom of Israel, with headquarters at Samaria. This northern kingdom it was that was first carried captive, and the tribes that composed it are the ones supposed to be lost.

## Jew and Israelite the Same

The misconception is that the term "Jew" is limited to the people of the southern kingdom, namely, to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and that the term "Israelites" signifies only those tribes composing the northern kingdom, supposed to be lost. Going on in the line of this supposition, "the warm, ungoverned imagina-



tion” of some speculative theologians has fancied that the people generally known as Jews are from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin alone, and that the Anglo-Saxon race, or more specifically, the people of Great Britain and America, are the Israelites, or, in other words, “ten lost tribes” discovered.

### **Character, Not Nationality**

It is easy to see how this originated. It originated in an utter failure to comprehend the promises of the Gospel. It was invented in order to bring in the Anglo-Saxon race as inheritors of the promises to Abraham, the fact having been lost sight of that those promises embrace the whole world, without respect to nationality, and that:

#### **Acts 10**

<sup>34</sup> God is no respecter of persons,

<sup>35</sup> But in every nation he that fears Him, and works righteousness, is accepted with Him.

If men had believed that...

#### **John 1**

<sup>47</sup> ...an Israelite indeed, [is one] in whom is no guile,

—they would have seen the folly of the idea that no matter how wicked an unbelieving people may be, they must be Israelite simply because they are part of a certain nation. But the idea of a national church and of a national religion is wonderfully fascinating, because it is so much more pleasant for people to suppose that they are to be saved in bulk, regardless of character, rather than through individual faith and righteousness.

### **Scripture Use of the Terms**

A few texts of Scripture are sufficient to show that the terms “Jew” and “Israelite” are used interchangeably, each being applicable to the same person. For instance, in *Esther* 2:5 we read that:

## **Esther 2**

<sup>5</sup> In Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.

But in *Romans* 11:1 we have the Apostle Paul's statement,

## **Romans 11**

<sup>1</sup> I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin;

—and the same Apostle said,

## **Acts 21**

<sup>39</sup> I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus.

Here we have one man of the tribe of Benjamin, a Jew, and another man of the same tribe, an Israelite, and at the same time a Jew.

Again, Ahaz was one of the kings of Judah, and reigned in Jerusalem.<sup>381</sup> He was a descendant of David, and one of the ancestors of Jesus according to the flesh.<sup>382</sup> Yet in *2 Chronicles* 28:19, in an account of the invasion of “the south of Judah” by the Philistines, we are told that:

## **2 Chronicles 28**

<sup>19</sup> The Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord.

When the Apostle Paul had returned to Jerusalem from one of his missionary tours,

## **Acts 21**

<sup>27</sup> ...the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

<sup>28</sup> Crying out, Men of Israel, help!

## **One Common Ancestor**

The reader can readily see the naturalness of this, when he remembers that all the twelve tribes were descended from one man,

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<sup>381</sup> See *2 Kings* 16:1-2; *Isaiah* 1:1.

<sup>382</sup> *2 Kings* 16:2; *Matthew* 1:9.

Jacob, or Israel. The term “Israel” is therefore applicable to any or all the tribes; while, because of the prominence of Judah, the term “Jew” came to be applied to any of the children of Israel, regardless of their tribe. In speaking of the covenants God says that He will...

### **Hebrews 8**

<sup>8</sup> ...make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

—in order to make it unmistakable that the new covenant is to be made with the entire, undivided people, just as the old covenant was.

Thus we see that the term “Jews” is rightly applied to the same people as is the term “Israelites;” but we must not forget that, strictly speaking,

### **Romans 2**

<sup>28</sup> He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

<sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The reckoning of the tribes has been lost among the people called Jews, but that makes no difference; they may be called Israelites just as properly as Jews; but neither term is in strict propriety applicable to any of them except to those who have real faith in Jesus Christ: and both terms are, in the strictly Scriptural sense, applicable to any who have such faith, though they be English, French, Greek, Turk, or Chinese.

### **None of the Tribes Lost**

That the ten tribes were no more lost after the close of the Babylonian captivity than they were before, is as plain from the Scriptures as that the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were not lost. How does anybody know that these ten tribes were not lost, that is, lost to sight? By the simple fact that we find reference to them

after the captivity; individuals belonging to those tribes are mentioned by name. In the same way we know that the other tribes existed as distinct after the captivity as before.

Not all the people of Israel were carried away to Babylon; the poorest and least prominent were left in their homeland. But the majority of all tribes were taken away, and so in the royal proclamation at the close of the seventy years, the permission to return was universal, as follows:

### **Ezra 1**

<sup>1</sup> In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

<sup>2</sup> Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He has charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

<sup>3</sup> Who is there among you of *all His people?* his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (He is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

The permission to return was unlimited, but not all of any tribe took advantage of it. All the tribes, however, were represented; but those that remained were not thereby necessarily lost. A family cannot be said to be “lost” because they live in a foreign country. Later on Artaxerxes in his commission to Ezra wrote:

### **Ezra 7**

<sup>13</sup> I make a decree, that *all they of the people of Israel*, and of His priests and Levites in my realm, which are minded of their own free will to go up to Jerusalem, go with you.

## **All Israel Represented**

Immediately following the proclamation of Cyrus we read,

### **Ezra 1**

<sup>5</sup> Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and *the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised*, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.

We know that the services of the sanctuary were re-established, and none but Levites could be employed in them; and in *Ezra 3:10-12* we read that when the foundation of the temple was laid,

### **Ezra 3**

<sup>10</sup> ...they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with symbols to praise the Lord.

Even after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, we read of Barnabas,

### **Acts 4**

<sup>36</sup> ...*a Levite*, and of the country of Cyprus.

In *Luke 2:36-38* we read of...

### **Luke 2**

<sup>36</sup> ...Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, *of the tribe of Asher*,

—who recognized the infant Jesus as the Lord,

<sup>38</sup> ...and spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Here we see representatives of two of the ten tribes that are supposed to have mysteriously disappeared, expressly mentioned by name as dwelling in Jerusalem. It is most certain that a thing cannot be lost when you know exactly where it is.

The other tribes are not specified, but in *Ezra 2:70* we read,

### **Ezra 2**

<sup>70</sup> So the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and *all Israel in their cities*.

## The Twelve Tribes

When the Apostle Paul was on trial for his life, before King Agrippa, he said,

### Acts 26

<sup>6</sup> Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

<sup>7</sup> Unto which promise *our twelve tribes*, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.

Here we find that the twelve tribes were in existence in the days of the Apostle Paul, and were looking forward in hope to the fulfillment of the promise which God made to the fathers. Again, the Apostle James addressed his Epistle...

### James 1

<sup>1</sup> ...to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.

We have here sufficient evidence that no one tribe of Israel was ever lost more than another. All tribal distinctions are now lost, and no Jew can tell to which of the twelve tribes he belongs; and so in that sense, not merely ten, but all of the tribes are now lost, although all the twelve tribes are represented in the Jewish people scattered over the earth.

God, however, keeps the list, and in the world to come will put every person in his proper place; for the city for which Abraham looked, the capital of the inheritance promised to him and his seed, the New Jerusalem, has twelve gates, and on the gates are...

### Revelation 21

<sup>12</sup> ...the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

## Whom the Lord Counts an Israelite

The last two texts suggest another fact, namely, that God's reckoning of the tribes is not after man's reckoning.

### 1 Samuel 16

<sup>7</sup> Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the heart;

–and,

### **Romans 2**

<sup>28</sup> He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly;...

<sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart.

All those who are saved will...

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>14</sup> ...enter in through the gates into the city,

–but each of those gates has the name on it of one of the twelve tribes, showing that the saved compose the twelve tribes of Israel. This is evident also from the fact that “Israel” means an over-comer. The Epistle of James is addressed to the twelve tribes, yet there is not a Christian who does not know that its instruction and promises are for him.

### **All Gone Astray**

And this brings us to the fact that in reality all the tribes are lost,

### **Romans 3**

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have burned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all;

–therefore when the Lord Jesus came, He said,

### **Luke 19**

<sup>10</sup> The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

At the very moment when He was about to confer a blessing on a poor, despised Canaanitish woman, a descendant of those heathen who inhabited the land before the days of Joshua, He declared,

## Matthew 16

<sup>24</sup> I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Here at last we have located the lost tribes of Israel. Not ten only, but all of the tribes are lost, so completely lost that the only hope of their salvation is in the death and resurrection of Christ. In this condition we find ourselves, and therefore we can read with delight, as pertaining to us, the promises concerning the gathering of Israel.

Whoever acknowledges himself *lost*, and depends wholly on Jesus for salvation, will surely be saved, and will be numbered among the twelve tribes.



# 108. The Law Unchangeable

Present Truth, July 10, 1902

A minister recently told me that the Fourth Commandment is not in force now, because when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the tables of the law in his hands, and saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, he threw the tables down, and broke them in pieces. What do you think of this?

**I** THINK that the minister stopped reading the Bible too soon. He should have read at least two chapters farther before he stopped. It is to *Exodus* 32:12 that we read that:

## **Exodus 32**

<sup>19</sup> It came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount.

But in *Exodus* 34:1-4 we read:

## **Exodus 34**

<sup>1</sup> And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which you broke.

<sup>2</sup> And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me in the top of the mount.

<sup>4</sup> And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

In *Deuteronomy* 10:1-5, we have the story told more in detail, thus:

## **Deuteronomy 10**

<sup>1</sup> At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make an ark of wood.

<sup>2</sup> And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which you broke, and you shall put them in the ark.

<sup>3</sup> And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in my hand.

<sup>4</sup> And He wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spoke unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the Lord gave them unto me.

<sup>5</sup> And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.

The fact that men of intelligence are driven to put forward such “arguments” against the Sabbath, as the one referred to, speaks volumes. From that objection, which is by no means a new one, we can see the necessity of knowing *all* the Word, and not merely a few detached fragments of it.

As a matter of fact, however, the breaking of the tables of the law by Moses had not the slightest effect on the law itself, and would not have even if the Lord had not written the law again on other tables.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>13</sup> For until the law sin was in the world; and sin is not imputed when there is no law.

The law of God existed in full force before it was spoken from Mount Sinai, just as much as it did afterward. God did not at that time tell the people anything new, but only...

### **1 John 1**

<sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning.

God is not making, and has never made, new laws for His people. Nay, more. He has never *made a law* at all. The law that He has commanded—for there is really but one,—is only the declaration of His own eternal, unchangeable life.

## **1 John 4**

<sup>16</sup> God is love;

—that is His life; and His law is love; consequently His law is His life. Now God is; His name is I AM; and therefore His law is from everlasting to everlasting. He does not arbitrarily impose laws on men.

It is not with God's Government as with earthly governments. Earthly law-makers get together and devise and plan, and with much discussion make and issue laws, which never do and never can work equal and exact justice to all, and which afterwards must needs be revised and amended, or even abolished.

But God is not a law-maker; He is the law-giver. He does not devise laws, but simply commands that which is, and gives it to men, putting it into their hearts. He does not require His subjects to conform their lives to a law which He has arbitrarily fixed; but He makes known to them the conditions on which life depends; in short, He tells them what life is, setting before them life itself, that they may take it.

Thus there can be no talk about changing or abolishing God's law.

## **Luke 16**

<sup>17</sup> And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail,

—said Christ. Men have thought to stamp God's Word out of existence, by burning all the Bibles; but their efforts have been as effective as if they had tried to blot the sun out of existence by putting blinds before their windows, or to abolish the weather by breaking all the thermometers and barometers. The weather does not depend on those instruments, which simply make its state known; and God's Word does not depend on any written statement of it. It existed before there was any Bible, and it will remain, for ever exalted in heaven, when all the books on earth, in-

cluding the Bibles, shall have been burned up in the fires of the last day.

Christ is the living Stone, and in His heart is the law of God. Only a shadow of the law appears in books or on tables; the real law is alive. The two tables of law—the heart of Christ—were also broken; but even that did not put an end to the law, for He died only to live again. His heart on which the law is written, was broken, in order that the law might issue forth to us in a stream of life. This is the real law-giving.

Thus by His stripes we are healed from all sin,—transgression of the law,—because the Sun of righteousness never sets, but arises with healing in His wings.<sup>383</sup> His life, as we accept it and yield to it, works in us the righteousness of law<sup>384</sup>; and because the law of life is eternal we also have life eternal.

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<sup>383</sup> *Malachi 4:2.*

<sup>384</sup> *Romans 8:4.*

# 109. The Privileges and Possibilities of Humanity

Present Truth, July 17, 1902

Why did God create me, that I should come into the world to be lost, if I do not obey His laws? Why are all the millions brought into the world to suffer and be lost? Why did God create the angels so that they could sin?

**I** APPREHEND from these questions that you think you would much prefer that God had brought you into this world incapable of sinning; but I am sure that when you give the matter real thought you will be perfectly satisfied that it is as it is.

God could have made you so that you could not sin, but it would not have been you; it would have been something else far different. God has made many things that cannot sin, as, for instance, trees and stones; would you prefer to be like them? Would you not rather be a thinking man than an inanimate thing? Would you not far rather be a human being, with all the responsibilities of a human being, than to be even the most intelligent beast?

There are wonderful possibilities in humanity,—wonderful privileges,—but there is never any great gift without corresponding responsibility. One does not commit priceless treasures to irresponsible creatures. But know, and let everybody else know, that God never created anybody to sin. He never brought anybody into existence to be lost. Read the following words every day, until they are so firmly fixed in your mind that you could not forget them if you should try:

## **Ephesians 1**

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

<sup>4</sup> According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

<sup>5</sup> Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

<sup>6</sup> To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

### **1 Thessalonians 5**

<sup>9</sup> God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **2 Thessalonians 2**

<sup>13</sup> We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

And,

### **Acts 10**

<sup>34</sup> [He] is no respecter of persons,

—singling out some to be saved, and others to be lost; but:

### **1 Timothy 2**

<sup>4</sup> [He] will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

If God's purpose were carried out, not a soul would ever be born into the world, except with the certainty of everlasting life. It never was, and is not now, His will that children should be brought into the world for destruction, although since the base and profligate, as well as the righteous, have the power of reproduction, there are millions brought into the world, who would have been better off if they had never been born; yet even these have an equal chance for salvation with the children of godly parents.

God's laws are not arbitrary; they are not rules which He has thought out, and then imposed on His creatures; they are simply His life—His nature. Would you prefer to live in a world of chance? a world where no one could ever tell beforehand what would be the result of any act? Would you like, for instance, to

have the world so ordered (or, rather, so disordered) that fire would be as likely to freeze your potatoes as to bake them? Would you like to have it so that you could never know when you stepped on the ground whether it would bear you up, or let you drop into the abyss below? Do you not think that it is a great advantage to have things so regulated that you can know what to depend on, and can always be sure that definite results will follow certain causes?

You wonder why God made you so that fire would give you pain if you thrust your hand into the blaze; well, suppose it would not; would you like to have it so that it would not warm you? Will you blame Him because you are ill if you overeat? Would you ask,

“Why does He give us things to eat, so that we can thus injure ourselves?”

You do not need to overeat, and it is certainly a great blessing to be allowed to enjoy food.

Can you not see from these questions that law is that by which the universe exists?—that it is simply life? and that the possibility of deliberately choosing to dispense with life, by going contrary to it,—which is transgression,—means also the possibility of infinite and ever-increasing bliss with God? The fact that we have been created with the possibility of sinning, shows that we have been created to be companions of God himself, and sharers of His Government. We share with God the Divine right of choice,—of perfect freedom of will. It is a glorious heritage.

It is an indescribably blessed privilege, to be linked with Divinity by living cords—to be children of the Highest. It is with the deepest reverence, and with a heart too full of gladness for utterance, that I say that we have equal privileges with God. I do not say that we have equal wisdom and power, but that we—all mankind—have equal privileges. God has not reserved anything for himself exclusively, but has made us sharers of every blessing

in equal measure with himself; and though we are necessarily inferior to Him in power and wisdom, all His wisdom and power are at our service; for He lives only for us; and Jesus Christ, who is...

### **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>24</sup> ...the power of God, and the wisdom of God,

<sup>30</sup> ...[is] of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

When you feel like complaining because you were born a child of Adam, subject to sin, remember that the genealogy of Jesus Christ as the Son of God is traced through Adam.<sup>385</sup> Read that list of names, and then look up the characters of some of the men in the list. They were the ancestors of Christ, yet He preserved His soul pure, because He kept in immediate touch with the Father of all. We may do the same; for He has taught us to say,

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>9</sup> Our Father, which is in heaven;

—and we know that as...

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> ...we are His offspring,...in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

He is able to do for us...

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> ...exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that works in us.*

### **2 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup> His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

When you are considering your ancestry, and mourning because you were born of sinful parents, do not leave out of the account the fact that God is the first of your line, and that He is in-

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<sup>385</sup> *Luke 3:23-38.*



finitely greater than all your other ancestors combined; and that His life is infinitely more powerful than theirs. Then why not rejoice that the righteous God, the everlasting King, the Almighty Creator and upholder of the universe is your ancestor, rather than mourn because there are a few feeble, sinful mortals in the line? You can inherit from God direct, without any reference whatever to your earthly parents, if you choose.

Have you never heard of what is called “atavism”? If you have not heard the word, you have certainly seen the thing. It means, literally, “pertaining to a great-grandfather,” and is used to describe the skipping of several generations in the transmission of family characteristics. Thus, a child may have a great gift for music, although the parents know nothing of it, and have no appreciation of it; but it will be found that some more remote ancestor was a musician. The child inherits some things directly from his grandfather or great-grandfather, and not at all from his parents.

Well, everything in nature is but an illustration of some phase of grace; and here we find that our heirship from God is part of that natural order of things of which we sometimes so thoughtlessly complain. The new birth is, if you please, an example of atavism—all the generations between us and God are skipped, and we are made...

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

God, however, is not by any means a “remote ancestor.”

## **Acts 17**

<sup>27</sup> ...He [is] not far from every one of us.

He is our immediate Parent, nearer to us than those we call our parents on earth; for a mother can forget even her sucking child, but He cannot forget us.

## **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live.

Is it not simply glorious, and gloriously simple? Come, let us rejoice together that God has made us just as He has, and that even our heaviest affliction is light and...

## **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...but for a moment, [and] works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

—for nothing can be against us, since God is for us.

## **James 1**

<sup>18</sup> Of His own will He begat us with the words of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

# 110. Can a Sinner Pray?

Present Truth, July 24, 1902

Can a sinner pray an acceptable prayer to God?

ASSUREDLY; else no soul of mankind could be saved;

## **Romans 3**

<sup>28</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

## **Romans 5**

<sup>12</sup> [Death has] passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

## **Isaiah 53**

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.

But God has devised means...

## **2 Samuel 14**

<sup>14</sup> ...that His banished be not expelled from Him.

The *Gospel of Luke* gives us two striking answers to this question. The first is the unconscious tribute which the Pharisees paid to Christ, when, thinking to cast the worst reproach upon Him, they said,

## **Luke 15**

<sup>2</sup> This man receives sinners.

The second is in the account of the two men who went into the temple to pray. The Pharisee told the Lord about his own goodness, with which he was well satisfied; while the other, not able to lift his eyes upward, smote upon his breast, and said,

## **Luke 18**

<sup>13</sup> God be merciful to me a sinner.

Jesus said,

<sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.

Here is the Lord's own call to the sinner:

### **Hosea 14**

<sup>1</sup> O Israel, return unto the Lord your God; for you have fallen by your iniquity.

<sup>2</sup> Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.

Do you think that God will refuse to hear and answer the prayer of one who comes to Him in response to His own call, and who prays the very prayer that God has told him to pray? Nay, verily. Jesus says,

### **John 6**

<sup>37</sup> Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

Again God says:

### **Jeremiah 3**

<sup>12</sup> Return, you backsliding Israel, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever.

<sup>13</sup> Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God.

God is "rich in mercy"<sup>386</sup> to sinners and...

### **Psalms 103**

<sup>10</sup> He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

No doubt you have in your mind the words of the young man who was born blind, to whom Jesus gave his sight. When the Pharisees were worrying him with questions, they said of Jesus,

### **John 9**

<sup>24</sup> We know that this man is a sinner;

—to which the young man replied,

<sup>25</sup> Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see;

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<sup>386</sup> *Ephesians 2:4.*

—and then he said, in defense of Jesus, whom he knew only as a stranger who had healed him,

### **John 9**

<sup>31</sup> Now we know that God hears not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God, and does His will, him He hears.

We might dismiss this statement by saying that it is simply what the untaught young man said, and need not be taken as expressing the mind of the Lord. Still we do have inspired words,

### **Psalm 66**

<sup>18</sup> If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

But this is no more than what we read in *James* 1:5-7, where, after being told that if any man asks the Lord for wisdom he will receive it, we read:

### **James 1 [RV]**

<sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting; for he that doubts is like the surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed.

<sup>7</sup> For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

The sum of it is, that whoever earnestly desires any good thing from the Lord will surely receive it; but the man who asks for righteousness while in his heart desires sin, need not expect anything. He doesn't really pray at all; for God looks at the heart, and not at the lips.

God gives every man just what he really desires. If he wants sin, he allows him to have it with all its fearful consequences, no matter what he may profess with his mouth; but whoever desires righteousness will receive it from the Lord, no matter how great a sinner he may be.

Sing it o'er and o'er again;  
Christ receiveth sinful men;

Make the message clear and plain:  
Christ receiveth sinful men.<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> Erdmann Neumeister (1718); translated by Frances Bevan (1899); Hymn:  
*Christ Receiveth Sinful Men.*

# 111. Hardened Through Rejection of Mercy

Present Truth, July 31, 1902

I have three object-lessons before me.

First, out of the mass of the people at the time of the flood. Christ was preached to them, only to be scoffed at.

Second, that of Pharaoh when he hardened his heart, was softened, hardened and softened, yet hardened again; so that we are reminded of the proverb: "He that being often re-proved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."<sup>388</sup>

Third, that of the children of Israel, of whom God said: "Forty year was I grieved with this generation."<sup>389</sup> "Harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation and temptation in the wilderness."<sup>390</sup>

My question is, Where, then, was the influence of the great compassionate love and work of the Spirit, which is shed abroad in the hearts of men, and melts the hearts of the hardest sinners? Having hearts like stone, we are softened and subdued by grace, through the Holy Spirit, according to the promise, "I will take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh."<sup>391</sup>

**I**F WE read the Scriptures aright, we shall see in every occurrence,

## **Psalms 107**

<sup>43</sup> ...the lovingkindness of the Lord,

—and that...

## **Psalms 136**

<sup>1</sup> ...His mercy endures for ever.

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<sup>388</sup> *Proverbs 29:1.*

<sup>389</sup> *Psalms 95:10.*

<sup>390</sup> *Hebrews 3:8.*

<sup>391</sup> *Ezekiel 36:26.*

### **Psalm 103**

<sup>17</sup> The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

### **Psalm 111**

<sup>4</sup> The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

And the instances that you have referred to show it. Take the case of the people before the flood. The compassion of the Lord was shown in that He strove with them by His Spirit,<sup>392</sup> to turn them away from iniquity, so that they might be saved. Moreover, the Lord tells us that:

### **Luke 17**

<sup>26</sup> As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

It is true He refers specially to the wickedness of the people; but that shows also that the mercy of the Lord is the same. The people before the flood were no worse than the people will be in the last days, when “the everlasting Gospel”<sup>393</sup> will, we know, be preached in its fullness; so that there is no occasion for asking where the compassion of the Lord was then, than for asking where it is now.

We must not get the idea that if people are defiantly wicked, and are destroyed, it is because God is lacking in mercy, or that His patience has become exhausted and worn out. We are called on to:

### **Psalm 136**

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endures for ever;

<sup>15</sup> [Who] overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; for His mercy endures for ever;

<sup>17</sup> To Him which smote great kings; for His mercy endures for ever;

<sup>18</sup> And slew famous kings; for His mercy endures for ever.

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<sup>392</sup> *Genesis* 6:3.

<sup>393</sup> *Revelation* 14:6.



The Lord did this while He was in mercy leading forth His people whom He had redeemed from the enemy; and He was just as merciful in the overthrowing of Pharaoh and his host as in protecting those who trusted Him. Both things were parts of the same act. God never lays aside His mercy, to take up the sword of justice. His strict justice is but the evidence of His everlasting mercy.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>9</sup> He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

Your own statement of the case sets forth the fact that the compassionate love of God was at work upon Pharaoh, melting his heart into submission to God. True, he became hardened time after time, and at last rushed defiantly forth to destruction; but that very thing shows that a man cannot be lost without first rejecting and trampling upon the mercy of the Lord that is drawing him to salvation.

Unwillingness to give up one's way, and to acknowledge the hand of the Lord, must always tend to harden one; and the more that spirit is cherished, the more is one hardened. Thus it appears that the greatest manifestations of wicked rebellion are where God's loving mercy is most plainly revealed.

So in the case of the children of Israel, who stand as a warning to us, that we do not harden our hearts as they did. They hardened their hearts even while seeing His gracious work.

### **Isaiah 63**

<sup>9</sup> In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old.

He bore them...

### **Deuteronomy 1**

<sup>31</sup> ...even as a man bears his son.

He says:

## **Hosea 11**

<sup>1</sup> When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

<sup>4</sup> I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.

Just as one takes a little child gently by the arms, to teach it to walk, so the Lord bore His people of old; but they were too proud-spirited to acknowledge that they could not walk alone; and there is nothing that will harden one's nature so much as failure to recognize and acknowledge kindness shown.

The fact that people reject the mercy of the Lord is an evidence of their high calling in Christ,—that they are allied to Divinity, in that they can act for themselves. The inanimate earth acts automatically, and cannot choose but receive and show forth the goodness of the Lord. Even the beasts, who have reason, do not know enough to resist the influence of God's Spirit, and are all passive to His will.

Now it is not the part of wisdom for man to resist God; but the fact that he can refuse to be led by Him shows that God has in His great love endowed him with His own attributes; and so, when man is as passive to the will of God as the beasts and the inanimate creation, that is counted to them for righteousness; it shows that they are worthy to rule with God on His throne.

So it is because...

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>4</sup> God is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

—that God makes us sit together with Christ. Verse 6. And it is only this crowning mercy rejected that results in the destruction of anybody.

## **Psalms 119**

<sup>64</sup> The earth, O Lord, is full of your mercy; teach me your statutes.

# 112. The Coming in of the Gentiles

Present Truth, July 31, 1902

The Almighty swore to Abraham and his seed unconditionally; has He kept His promises, or has He broken them, by taking them from Israel and giving them to the Gentiles?

**A**LL the promises of God, how many soever they be, are yea and amen in Christ;<sup>394</sup> they cannot be broken. But here is a thing that many of our friends forget, and that is, that all God's promises are in Christ, and that the rejection of Christ cuts one off from the promises.

## Galatians 3

<sup>16</sup> Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of One, and to your Seed, which is Christ.

Therefore,

<sup>29</sup> If you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

<sup>7</sup> Know you therefore that they which be of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

<sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed.

In the face of this, and with the record before us, that the promise of God to Abraham was,

## Genesis 22

<sup>18</sup> In your seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed,

—and even more emphatically,

## Genesis 12

<sup>3</sup> In you shall all families of the earth be blessed,

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<sup>394</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:20.

—it is strange beyond all comprehension, that anybody should think that God's promise to Abraham is broken by being bestowed on the Gentiles. The only way it can be fulfilled is by the gathering of the Gentiles; for it is written that:

### **Romans 11**

<sup>25</sup> Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

<sup>26</sup> And so shall all Israel be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

Abraham was himself a Gentile, born and reared in heathenism.<sup>395</sup> Thus we see that the gathering of the Gentiles in fulfillment of the promise is no new departure, but the consistent carrying out of God's original purpose.

This appears throughout the whole history of Israel. Did God break His word to Abraham when the harlot Rahab, a Canaanitish woman, was counted among His people? Was He unmindful of it in accepting Ruth the Moabitess as an ancestor of the Messiah? The fact that both these women, taken from among the heathen, were ancestors of Christ, shows that God's promises and purposes and plans, have from the beginning embraced all people.

So James had a clear and accurate perception of the truth when he said:

### **Acts 15**

<sup>14</sup> Simeon has declared how God at the beginning did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.

<sup>15</sup> And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

<sup>16</sup> After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

<sup>17</sup> That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who does these things.

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<sup>395</sup> *Joshua 24:2.*

<sup>18</sup> Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.

Instead of God's promise to Israel being broken by the coming in of the Gentiles, it is only by the preaching of the Gospel to them that the house of David is built up.

Take another case. Jesus went up into the region of Tyre and Sidon, seemingly for the express purpose of healing the daughter of a Syro-Phoenician woman; for He went back as soon as He had performed that deed.

### **Mark 7**

<sup>26</sup> The woman was a Greek,

—or a Gentile, as the margin has it. When she preferred her request, He seemed to be indifferent, and unwilling to grant it, but it was only to try her faith. He said,

### **Matthew 15**

<sup>24</sup> I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,

—and then He responded to the woman's faith, and healed her daughter. Thus He showed that this Gentile woman was one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to whom He was sent.

To limit the promises of God to any one of the nations of this earth, is to limit the Gospel of the grace of God. Christ was made a curse for us, in hanging on the cross,

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>13</sup> That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

In the Gospel there is no distinction of nationality, for in Christ Jesus those who...

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>13</sup> ...were far off are made nigh by His blood;

—and thus the Gentiles who...

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>12</sup> ...were without Christ...and without God in the world,...being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,

<sup>19</sup> ...are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

Let us not waste time in seeking to circumscribe and narrow the promises of God, thus narrowing our own minds, but allow our hearts to be enlarged by the contemplation of His boundless promises, so as to be able to...

## **Ephesians 3**

<sup>18</sup> ...comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

<sup>19</sup> And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, [and] be filled with all the fullness of God.

## 113. The Resurrection of the Body

Present Truth, August 7, 1902

It surprises me to find that you lay so much stress in your teaching, on the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. It seems to me that neither of these events is of primary importance to Christians. Since we are “present with the Lord”<sup>396</sup> as soon as the body dies, it seems to me that to be reunited with this body of dust after experiencing the untrammelled freedom of existence without it, is not something to be looked forward to with pleasure.

**W**E LAY stress upon the coming of the Lord and resurrection, simply because the Bible does. Nothing else is so prominent in all God’s Word. The coming of Christ is the bringing of...

### **Acts 3 [RV]**

<sup>21</sup> ...the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began.

Even in Eden, before Adam had been driven forth because of sin, God told of the coming of the Seed of a woman, to bruise the serpent’s head. The bruising, or crushing, of the serpent’s head, is its destruction;

### **Revelation 12**

<sup>9</sup> ...that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,

–has not yet been destroyed; he still goes about like...

### **1 Peter 5**

<sup>8</sup> ...a roaring lion,...seeking whom he may devour;

–consequently we have yet to look for the fulfillment of God’s promise made in Eden. As it was the entrance of Satan into Eden that resulted in its withdrawal from the earth, so his destruction

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<sup>396</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:8.

will be the restoration of it. Is not that a thing worthy of having stress laid upon it? Peter, filled with...

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>17</sup> ...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God,

—said, as just quoted, that by the mouth of His prophets since the world began God has foretold the coming of Christ and the resurrection, which is the restoration. Let us take a very hasty view of their testimony.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning the wicked, standing by anticipation in eternity, and saying,

### **Jude**

<sup>14</sup> Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of His holy ones,

<sup>15</sup> To execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness.

Balaam, who wished to curse, but was forced to bless, prophesied of the latter days, saying:

### **Numbers 24 [RV]**

<sup>17</sup> I see Him, but not now;

I behold Him, but not nigh:

There shall come forth a Star out of Jacob,

And a Scepter shall rise out of Israel,

And shall smite through the corners of Moab,

And break down all the sons of tumult.

<sup>19</sup> And out of Jacob shall One have dominion,

And shall destroy the remnant from the city.

Job, of whom God said that he had spoken the thing that was right concerning Him said:

### **Job 14**

<sup>14</sup> If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

<sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You: You will have a desire to the work of your hands.



## **Job 19**

<sup>25</sup> For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

<sup>26</sup> And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

<sup>27</sup> Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

The Psalms are full of references to the coming of the Lord, and if we should try to print them all we should fill the paper with them. One or two specimens must suffice:

## **Psalms 50**

<sup>1</sup> The mighty God, even the Lord, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

<sup>2</sup> Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined.

<sup>3</sup> Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.

<sup>4</sup> He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.

<sup>5</sup> Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; for God is judge himself.

Again:

## **Psalms 96**

<sup>10</sup> Say among the heathen that the Lord reigns; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the people righteously.

<sup>11</sup> Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.

<sup>12</sup> Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

<sup>13</sup> Before the Lord: for He comes, for He comes to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.

## Psalm 97

<sup>1</sup> The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

<sup>2</sup> Clouds and darkness are round about Him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.

<sup>3</sup> A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.

<sup>4</sup> His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.

<sup>5</sup> The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

<sup>6</sup> The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory.

<sup>7</sup> Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship Him, all you gods.

<sup>8</sup> Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of your judgments, O Lord.

*Isaiah* might be said to be devoted wholly to the coming of the Lord, the Judgment, and the restoration. The book is so full of it, that we cannot quote, but must be content to ask you to read certain chapters.

- Begin, for instance, with chapter 11, and read through the 14<sup>th</sup>.

This does not mean that nothing is said about the coming of the Lord before the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter. Far from it.

- Read the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, especially.
- Then read the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

When you have done this, you will have only a beginning of what there is in *Isaiah* about this great theme. If you read the other prophets, you will find that it is the same.

The coming of Christ, and the end of the world, formed the burden of a great deal of Christ's own teaching. Note the parables recorded in the 13<sup>th</sup> of *Matthew*: nearly all of them are about the end. Chapters 24 and 25 are devoted to the same subject.

The apostles preached “Jesus, and the resurrection,”<sup>397</sup> and wrote of it. Every chapter of *Thessalonians*, for example, closes with reference to the coming of the Lord. It was with the promise that He would come again, that Jesus comforted His disciples, when He was about to leave them; and the words of comfort have been recorded for us.<sup>398</sup> The comfort is, that He will come again, and receive us unto himself, in order that where He is, there we may be also. That makes the coming of Lord the grand center of the Christian’s hope, since we know from it that we cannot be with Him unless He comes, nor until He comes. This is emphasized in:

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>13</sup> But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

<sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

### **Brought from the Dead with Christ**

The apostle says,

<sup>14</sup> Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

From whence will He bring them? From the grave. God brought Jesus again from the dead, and as surely as He did that, will He bring them that sleep in Him. The resurrection of the dead in Christ is just as sure, and just as necessary, as His own resurrec-

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<sup>397</sup> *Acts* 17:18.

<sup>398</sup> *John* 14:1-3.

tion. This is made very emphatic in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of *1 Corinthians*:

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

<sup>13</sup> But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

<sup>14</sup> And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

<sup>15</sup> Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

<sup>16</sup> For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised:

<sup>17</sup> And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.

<sup>18</sup> Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

<sup>20</sup> But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

And still further:

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

### **The Resurrection Necessary to Future Existence**

Now all these Scriptures set forth the resurrection at Christ's coming as a most necessary thing. It is the consummation of the Gospel. It is that which is set before us in the Lord's Supper, and in which we show our faith every time we celebrate that ordinance intelligently; for, we are told,

## **1 Corinthians 11 [RV]**

<sup>26</sup> As often as you eat this bread, and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

And why is it so important? Simply because there is no being with Christ except by His coming to raise the dead, and take His people to himself.

It is wholly an assumption, unwarranted by the Scriptures, that we are present with the Lord as soon as the body dies. Such an idea is entirely opposed to the teaching of the Bible. This you can see by the Scriptures just cited. As a matter of fact, there is not, and cannot possibly be, any conscious existence for any man when the body is dead. It takes the body to make the man. If the body is dead, the man does not exist any more than water exists when the hydrogen has been separated from the oxygen.

You will doubtless remind me that consciousness depends upon the spirit. You will quote that:

### **James 2**

<sup>26</sup> ...the body without the spirit is dead,

—and,

### **Job 32**

<sup>8</sup> There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.

You may also recall these words:

## **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>11</sup> For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?

—and will say:

“Since it is upon the spirit of man that the body depends for consciousness, how can it be dependent on the body for its consciousness? Why can it not retain all its knowledge when it is separated from the body?”

This is no new proposition. It is as old as Plato, who was consistent in his use of it; for he taught that the spirit had all its knowledge before it came into the body. Indeed, it was this theory that was the foundation of the other; for his argument was that since the spirit knew all things before it came into the body, it must retain its knowledge after it departed; and it was he that taught that the body is a clog, a hindrance to the spirit existence.

Do you not see that you cannot possibly hold to the consciousness of the spirit apart from the body, without admitting its conscious pre-existence? This is the basis of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and of all the false theories that have blinded men to the truth of the Gospel that saves from sin.

It is true that at death the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God, who gave it; but it also returns as it was. The breathing of the spirit into the body makes man a living soul. The combination of body and spirit makes the soul—the man; and when the combination is broken up, the man ceases to be until he is restored.

### **The Spiritual Body not a Clog**

In a proper condition the body is no clog upon the spirit. At the resurrection,

#### **1 Corinthians 13**

<sup>10</sup> When that which is perfect is come,

—the body will be made spiritual,

#### **Philippians 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.

His body is no clog. After His resurrection He ate and drank with His disciples, yet He passed quickly from place to place; entered the house when the doors were shut; became visible or invisible at will; and finally ascended to heaven, in that same body, where He now sits at the right hand of God. "This same Jesus" shall come again, just as He went into heaven; with the same

body.<sup>399</sup> That is our hope for the future, and our inspiration for the present.

It is by the power of the resurrection that we become sons of God, and overcomers. We are to be quickened even now by that power; and as the Spirit of God is given full control of us, we become spiritual even now, so that the flesh does not hinder us in our Christian life.

It is true that while the flesh is yet mortal and corruptible, we are subject to certain limitations: and that is why we long for the redemption of our body, which will take place at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Then with bodies wholly spiritual, yet the very same bodies that we now possess, we shall know the fullness of joy that is in the presence of the Lord; and that is why we respond to His assurance, “Surely, I come quickly,”

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>20</sup> ...Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

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<sup>399</sup> Acts 1:11.

## 114. Salvation from Sin and Death

Present Truth, August 14, 1902

Being on my holidays, I have met with a few friends, who have given me certain numbers of *Present Truth* to read, in which, among other questions, you have answered a question concerning the nature and destiny of man. I am greatly interested in the subject, and as an earnest seeker for truth I humbly ask you to oblige me with answers to the following questions:

Is natural death, or what we term the first death, the result of sin? If it is, why could not belief in Christ remove it, since it removes the second death, or what we term eternal death? I shall be obliged for help out of the difficulty.

**Y**OUR question goes to the root of the matter, and touches the very heart of the Gospel, and I am glad to help you with the testimony of God's Word. Let us start with the apostle's statement that:

### **Romans 5**

<sup>12</sup> By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

This is sufficient to establish the fact that death is indeed the fruit of sin. But for sin, there never would have been any death in the world. Just here you may perhaps ask the question that so often is asked,

“What kind of death is it that is the result of sin?”

The answer is simply, *death*. There are not two kinds of death, any more than there are two kinds of life. True, the Bible speaks of the first death, and the second death; but these are not two kinds of death, but death at two different times.

What is life? No answer can be given to this question, except the words of Christ, recorded in:



## **John 14**

<sup>6</sup> I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

Or,

## **Romans 8**

<sup>10</sup> The Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Life is the being of God, and is manifested through Christ the Son.

## **1 John 5 [RV]**

<sup>12</sup> He that has the Son has the life; and he that has not the Son of God has not the life.

From *Romans* 8:10, just quoted, we might derive the definition that righteousness is life. So it is. There is no righteousness but God's righteousness; and His righteousness is everlasting. Perfect righteousness is invulnerable; from its very nature—perfect purity—it is incorruptible; it can never know anything of decay or death. It was because Christ maintained perfect integrity, absolute holiness, that no man could take His life from Him, and that He laid it down of His own free will<sup>400</sup>; and it was because of this that God raised Him up,

## **Acts 2**

<sup>24</sup> ...having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be held of it.

It was “according to the Spirit of holiness” that He was raised from the dead.<sup>401</sup> The conclusion of the statement that...

## **Romans 5**

<sup>12</sup> As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,

—is that:

<sup>18</sup> ...even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

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<sup>400</sup> *John* 5:17-18.

<sup>401</sup> *Romans* 1:4.

<sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

This righteousness of One,—Christ,—by which we are made righteous, is the righteous life of Christ in us; for we are...

### **Romans 5**

<sup>8</sup> ...saved by His life.

### **Romans 8**

<sup>2</sup> The law of the Spirit of life in Christ...

—is that which makes us...

<sup>2</sup> ...free from the law of sin and death.

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>17</sup> [Christ is] a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;

—and His priesthood is...

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>14</sup> ...after the power of an endless life.

Thus we see that it is only by the power of an endless life,—a life that is endless because sinless,—that we are saved from sin. Now there is but “one Lord,” as there is but “one faith”<sup>402</sup>; and Christ is not divided.<sup>403</sup> He gives the whole of himself to everyone who receives Him.

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>7</sup> Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Therefore it follows that, having received Christ for salvation from sin, which is accomplished by His life, we can just as well as not have the full benefit of His sacrifice, appropriating, if we will, all that there is in His life. He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us, in order...

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<sup>402</sup> *Ephesians* 4:5.

<sup>403</sup> *1 Corinthians* 1:13.

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> ...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Even so,

## **Matthew 8**

<sup>16</sup> ...himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses,

–in order that we might be delivered from them. The life of Jesus may be manifest...

## **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>11</sup> ...in our *mortal* flesh,

–and that can be only by its power over mortality. Let us now read a few passages bearing directly on this subject. The first will be the familiar call to bless the Lord,

## **Psalms 103**

<sup>3</sup> Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;

<sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

<sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Next let us compare *Acts* 3:26 and *Psalms* 133:3. The first tells us that God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless us, in turning away every one of us from his iniquities. The blessing of God is salvation from sin, and the blessing which He has commanded is...

## **Psalms 133**

<sup>3</sup> ...life for evermore.

## **John 12**

<sup>50</sup> His commandment is life everlasting.

## **Lamentations 3**

<sup>22</sup> It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

<sup>23</sup> They are new every morning,

–and are...

### **Psalm 103**

<sup>17</sup> ...from everlasting to everlasting.

### **Psalm 33**

<sup>18</sup> The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon, them that hope in His mercy;

<sup>19</sup> To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine;

—and we receive this mercy just to the extent that we hope in God, and appropriate it.

And now let us have some practical examples of this truth,—some illustrations of the working of it. The most noted is that of Enoch.

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.

Note that it was not by accident, but by faith. He was translated by faith, because He lived wholly by faith.

<sup>5</sup> ...before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Elijah also was taken to heaven without dying. Now God is no respecter of persons<sup>404</sup>; and what He did for those men, He is certainly willing to do for all who have their faith. We know that there will be many who at the coming of Christ will be taken to heaven without dying.

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

Read also *1 Thessalonians* 4:15-17. There are no accidents in God's dealing with men. Those who are taken to heaven without dying, when Christ comes, will not be translated simply because they *happen* to be living at that time; but they will be living at that time simply because their faith in Christ, and their knowl-

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<sup>404</sup> *Acts* 10:34.

edge of His life, and so their appropriation of it, will be so great, disease or death will have no power over them. Thus we read of that terrible time of trouble, when “the seven last plagues” devastate the earth:

### **Psalm 91**

<sup>1</sup> He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup> I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in Him will I trust.

<sup>3</sup> Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

<sup>4</sup> He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

<sup>5</sup> You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day;

<sup>6</sup> Nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noon day.

<sup>7</sup> A thousand shall fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come nigh you.

<sup>8</sup> Only with your eyes shall you behold, and see the reward of the wicked.

<sup>9</sup> Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, your habitation,

<sup>10</sup> There shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come nigh your dwelling.

Nothing could be plainer than this. There is such a thing as victory over disease and death, through Christ. The flesh is corrupt and sinful; but Christ has “power over all flesh,”<sup>405</sup> so that His life can repress sin even in “sinful flesh,”<sup>406</sup> and by the same power He can resist the encroachments of disease even in our mortal flesh.

But we must have a wide and deep and intelligent faith in Christ. We must have our eyes open to see the life, and give ourselves diligently to study its manifestations, and then yield to it in every particular. It is just for this reason that now, as we are ap-

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<sup>405</sup> *John* 17:2.

<sup>406</sup> *Romans* 8:3.

proaching the time when the end cannot be delayed, God is giving a flood of light upon how to live.

### **Matthew 24**

<sup>14</sup> This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

And it must not be overlooked nor forgotten that it was by the healing of all diseases and all weaknesses, that Christ demonstrated the kingdom of God at hand.

This is the special message for this time and next week we shall, God willing, present a few additional thoughts, which may clear away some difficulties that will possibly present themselves to the mind of some readers.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> The next issue of *Present Truth*, which was August 21, 1902, did not have any “Editor’s Private Corner” articles. The next edition after that, August 28, did have an article on the state of the dead, “Saul and the Witch of Endor” (which is the next article). As well, over the next year, there were a number of other “Editor’s Private Corner” articles dealing with the state of the dead. So perhaps one of these was the article Waggoner was referring to.

# 115. Saul and the Witch of Endor

Present Truth, August 28, 1902

Being a reader of *Present Truth*, and reading in it about the state of the dead, I do not understand about *1 Samuel* 28:3, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19. How could Samuel be brought back from the grave, or the dead?

## 2 Corinthians 11

<sup>14</sup> Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light

**I**F YOU remember this, it will help to remove the difficulty from your mind. Since he can transform himself into an angel of light, and even impersonating Christ himself, so as almost to deceive the very elect,<sup>408</sup> it is no marvel that he could assume the form of Samuel so successfully as to deceive Saul, who had forsaken God, and who was wholly given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind.

Let us take a view of the situation as set forth in the chapter referred to. Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, was dead and buried, so that Saul could no longer consult him. Indeed, long before Samuel died there had been no communication between him and Saul, because Saul had rejected his counsel from the Lord. Moreover,

## 1 Samuel 28

<sup>3</sup> Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land,

—according to the commandment of the Lord:

## Deuteronomy 8

<sup>10</sup> There shall not be found among you anyone that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

<sup>11</sup> Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

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<sup>408</sup> *Matthew* 24:24.

<sup>12</sup> For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord your God does drive them out from before you.

## **Exodus 22**

<sup>18</sup> You shall not suffer a witch to live.

## **Exodus 19**

<sup>31</sup> Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after them, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God.

But now Saul was in sore distress, and when he inquired of the Lord,

## **1 Samuel 28**

<sup>6</sup> ...the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

<sup>7</sup> Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor.

This woman was a spiritualist medium, and her “familiar spirit” was the demon with whom she was in constant communication. Thus Saul had rejected God, and had turned to the devil, applying to one of the mediums whom he had banished.

The woman practiced her incantations, and the familiar spirit assumed the appearance of Samuel, and talked with Saul. Now the question is,

“Was it really Samuel, or was it not?”

That it was not Samuel, is evident from the fact that God alone has power to raise the dead, and He had ceased to communicate with Saul. It is not consistent to suppose that when God had refused to answer Saul by His own appointed means, He would communicate with him through a way which He himself had forbidden.



## 2 Timothy 2

<sup>13</sup> [God] cannot deny himself,

—and therefore He had nothing to do with the woman with the familiar spirit; so it is evident that He did not raise up Samuel; and it is still more evident that the woman could not; therefore the real Samuel was not present at all, but only an evil spirit who is called Samuel because he pretended to be Samuel, and Saul thought that he was Samuel.

Note, however, that Saul himself did not see the apparition at all, but had only the woman's statement that she "saw gods coming out of the earth,"<sup>409</sup> and that his form was that of an old man covered with a mantle.

Thus the case is very easily disposed of. We might call attention to one other feature, for the benefit of any who think that the dead are in heaven, and that is that this being whom the woman saw came up out of the earth. He did not come from heaven, but from beneath. In the woe pronounced upon Ariel, we read:

### Isaiah 29

<sup>4</sup> You shall be brought down, and shall speak out of the ground, and your speech shall be low out of the dust, and your voice shall be as of one that has a familiar spirit, of the ground, and your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

This tallies exactly with the case before us. The sum of the matter is, therefore, that Saul, who had rejected God, and appealed to the devil, was led captive by him at his will,<sup>410</sup> and made to believe that which was not true, and which he ought to have known was not true, since truth is found only with God.

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<sup>409</sup> 1 Samuel 28:13.

<sup>410</sup> 2 Timothy 2:26.

## 116. Was Abraham a Jew?

Present Truth, August 28, 1902

I am a constant reader of *Present Truth*, and there is a good portion of truth in it; but it seems to me that you are too positive over every disputed point of doctrine.

However, what I want just now is for you to explain how Abraham became a Jew, if, as you say, he was first a Gentile. Mind, this is not meant as sarcasm, by any means. You remember the Jews quoted Abraham as their father, and the Saviour said in reply, "Your father Abraham," etc.

**B**EFORE I answer this question let us consider this matter of being "too positive." Let me ask you,

"What would you have when you ask a question?"

If you are lost and enquire the way, you certainly want positive direction; you do not wish your professed informant to be undecided, or to guess at the answer he gives you.

If you find two or three men who are disputing over the way, you will turn with eagerness to the man whose quiet, confident assurance begets confidence in you. So when you ask me a question about the way of life, it is because you want a positive answer, because you want to know.

The matters with which we are dealing are vital, and it will not do to be uncertain; if we do not *know*, then we must keep still; but we need not keep still, for we may positively know the truth. The Word God makes the way plain, and:

**Hebrews 11 [RV]**

<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand;

—therefore we speak because we believe. We may have the...

**Hebrews 10**

<sup>22</sup> ...full assurance of faith.

Now about Abraham. You ask,

How did Abraham become a Jew, if, as you say, he was first a Gentile?

Let me ask you, Is there any doubt about it? Is it simply I who say that Abraham was a Gentile at first? The Bible says that Terah, the father of Abraham,

### **Joshua 24**

<sup>2</sup> ...served other gods.

We know that he came from Ur of the Chaldees. He was a Chaldean. How then did his descendants become Jews? I might ask you,

“How did some of his descendants become Arabs?”

“How did the descendants of Adam become, some black, some white, some yellow?”

Do you not remember that the promise to Abraham was that he should be the “father of many nations”<sup>411</sup>?

But this question admits a still more positive answer. In the ordinary use of the word, Abraham never was a Jew. The Jews, as well as all other nations, sprang from Adam, and Adam did not belong to any nationality now on earth.

In the truest sense, however, Abraham was a Jew, and he became one in just the same way that every other real Jew becomes one, namely by faith.

### **Romans 2**

<sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh;

<sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, and in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.

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<sup>411</sup> *Genesis 17:4-5.*

## 117. The Blotting Out of Sin

Present Truth, September 4, 1902

Reprinted: Advent Review, September 30, 1902

I read with pleasure your article in a recent number on "The Meaning of the Cross." It certainly opens up the subject in a wonderfully clear light, and enables one to read the Gospel message for himself in all creation.

I should be very glad if you would write further with regard to the cleansing power of the blood of Christ as applied to the heart of man, and tell us what is meant by the "blotting out" of sin. Has it not a deeper meaning than the destroying of the record of the sin? Or rather, is not each individual in himself the record of his own past? Must not the "blotting out" therefore be a work wrought in the individual, and not something apart from or outside of him?

**I**T IS part of fallen human nature to make religion consist of forms and ceremonies, formulas and doctrines. Sacerdotalism is not peculiar to certain denominations; it is inherent in fallen human nature and just to the extent that one loses sight of God, that formalism will manifest itself even in those who are most sincere.

There are just as sincere souls among those whose religion consists of forms as among any people on earth. I have seen among Roman Catholics as much devout sincerity as among any people. Our danger lies in thinking that the truth consists of certain statements—of losing sight of the distinction between *truth* and the *statement* of truth. There is just as much difference between these two as there is between the law and the writing out of the law. The real law is living; the writing of it in the book is only a shadow. We are in danger of making a creed, and thinking that that is the truth. No human words can express the truth of God.

### 1 Corinthians 2

<sup>9</sup> Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him.

<sup>10</sup> But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.

The fullness of the truth of God cannot be stated in human language; otherwise it could be heard by the ear. It cannot be framed in human thought; otherwise it could enter into the heart of man. Truth can be revealed to man only by the gift of the Spirit of truth.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>5</sup> This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

<sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;

<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanses us from all sin.*

Just forget the division of this epistle into chapters, with which John had nothing to do. This was a letter, containing but few sentences, not so long as we ourselves have sometimes written. At the beginning of the letter he makes this statement of what his message is, and a little later he writes about the end of the world.

### **1 John 2**

<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

<sup>17</sup> And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

This then is just the message for the last days, that which will make people stand when the world passes away. Then the Apostle speaks of...

<sup>27</sup> ...the anointing that you have received of Him [so that] you need not that any man teach you.

No man can teach you the truth; the things which God has prepared are revealed only by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>27</sup> ...and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.

<sup>28</sup> And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

So this is the message that will give people boldness at the coming of the Lord, so, that they will look up and say,

### **Isaiah 25**

<sup>9</sup> Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>5</sup> This then is the message,...that God is light,...

<sup>7</sup> [And] if we walk in the light,...the blood of Jesus Christ...cleanses us from all sin,

—blots out all iniquity. The proof of whether or not we have the truth is in the effect that that which we have has upon our lives. Does it cleanse us from unrighteousness?

<sup>7</sup> If we walk in the light,...then the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us.

Light is the flowing forth of God's life, which cleanses, and blots out sin. We need to be on our guard against the idea that the blotting out of sin is merely as the passing of a sponge over a slate, or an entry in a ledger, to balance the account. This is not the blotting out of sin. An ignorant man who saw a thermometer for the first time thought to lessen the heat by breaking it. But how much effect did this have upon the weather? Just as much as the wiping out of the record of his sin has upon the sinner.

The tearing of a leaf out of a book, or even the burning of the book containing the record, does not blot out the sin. The sin is not blotted out by blotting out the account of it, any more than throwing my Bible into the fire abolishes the Word of God. There was a time when all the Bibles that could be found were destroyed; but the Word of God—the truth—remained just the same, because truth is God himself; it is His life.

Truth is implanted in the heavens and earth, it fills the stars, and keeps them in their spaces; it is that by which the plants

grow, and the birds build their nests; it is that by which they know how to find their way across the sea. When Moses broke the tables of stone, the law was just as steadfast as it was before. Just so, though all the record of all our sin, even though written with the finger of God, were erased, the sin would remain, because the sin is in us. Though the record of our sin were graven in the rock, and the rock should be ground to powder—even this would not blot out our sin.

## **No More Consciousness of Sin**

The blotting out of sin is the erasing of it from the nature, the being of man.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>7</sup> The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanses from all sin.

Our bodies are but the channel, the border, the sand upon the shore, of the cover of life. Impressions have been made upon us by sin.

At the sea-shore, when you see a smooth piece of sand, your first impulse is to make some mark on it, to write the characters upon it. Then the sea comes up, and each wave that passes over it helps to obliterate the impression until it is entirely blotted out. Even so the stream of life from the throne of God will wash away and blot out the impressions of sin upon us.

The erasing of sin is the blotting of it from our natures, so that we shall know it no more.

### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>2</sup> The worshipers once purged,

—actually purged by the blood of Christ,

<sup>2</sup> ...have no more conscience of sin,

—because the way of sin is gone from them. Their iniquity may be sought for, but it will not be found.<sup>412</sup> It is for ever gone from

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<sup>412</sup> *Jeremiah 50:20.*

them,—it is foreign to their new natures, and even though they may be able to recall the fact that they have committed certain sins, they have forgotten the sin itself—they do not think of doing it any more.

This is the work of Christ in the true sanctuary, which the Lord pitched, and not man, the sanctuary not made with hands, but brought into existence by the thought of God.

### **Our Birthright Inheritance**

The most discouraging and depressing thing that comes to our minds when we think of the possibility of overcoming sin is our heritage. We think,

“I was born with these crooked, perverse tendencies; I was born in sin, and it is a part of myself; how then can I escape from it?”

We all know the effect of this thought. It works in two ways:

a) Sometimes it makes us careless and self-satisfied, and we say,

“I was born thus, and the Lord knows it; therefore He will make allowance for it.”

But this never really satisfied our conscience.

b) Then on the other hand we think,

“Well, I cannot help it; there is no hope for me; I cannot overcome.”

And so we settle down in despair.

But the Lord gives us abundance of hope. We are told to:

**1 John 2** [KJV & RV]

<sup>28</sup> Abide in Him; that, when He appears, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

The Bible teaches us that our inheritance from our parents is only incidental; our inheritance goes back to God; our parents are only incidental links in the chain. They, with all that we receive



from them, may pass away, but God, with all that we get from Him, abides for ever.

### **Our Genealogy**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of *Luke* gives us the genealogy of Christ. You may have thought that this is only a long list of names, containing no help or strength for us, but it is really one of the most comforting chapters in the Bible, and we might do a great deal worse than to read it for morning worship, if we read it understandingly.

We trace through the list until we come to the familiar name of Noah,

#### **Luke 3**

<sup>36</sup> ...which was the son of Lamech,

<sup>37</sup> Which was the son of Methuselah, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Mahalaleel, which was the son of Cainan,

<sup>38</sup> Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, *which was the son of God.*

Jesus, “the Son of man,” traces His ancestry back to God through man. He is the Son of God because He was the son of Adam, “which was the son of God.” We also are sons of Adam, for Eve was...

#### **Genesis 3**

<sup>20</sup> ...the mother of all living.

Jesus, because He was the Son of Adam, is the Son of God; therefore we also, being sons of Adam, are sons of God, and may become all that Jesus was as the Son of man and Son of God. Every son of man—both father and son—are alike sons of God. We may leave out all the intervening links, and draw our strength, our life, our birthright inheritance, day by day direct from God. He wants us to know that we are the children of the Highest, that we may abide in Him, and study the working of His life, not only in the Bible, but in the book of creation.

In the Word we read that Jesus “went about doing good,”<sup>413</sup> and that is a very necessary thing to study; but we see His life working in the same way just as clearly in all creation.

- The grass grows not for itself, but to give life;
- The corn does not flourish for itself, but to impart life;
- The trees put forth their blossoms, and bring fruit to perfection, not for themselves, but in order to give their life to others.
- The sun shines not for itself, but to give the light of life to the world.

This teaches us that no man is to live for himself, but for others. Jesus the Son of God went about doing good, because *God was with Him*. Man got out of touch with God’s purpose and life, but in the book of creation we read that it is the nature of God to give His life for the salvation of His creatures.

We cannot waive our God-given rights and be guiltless. The sin of that is shown in the case of Esau, who sold his birthright.<sup>414</sup> We might think that he had the right to do what he would with his own; but when he held it lightly, and sold it for a mess of pottage—bartered it for a supposed present necessity—he was counted a “profane and wicked person.” So the rights that God has given us we must maintain and keep, and value them as we do God himself. We cannot carelessly ignore them without showing that we despise God, even as...

### **Genesis 25**

<sup>34</sup> ...Esau despised his birthright.

The world has despised and forgotten its birthright,—sold it for a mess of pottage, for the gratification of appetite; but our mission is to let them know their high calling.

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<sup>413</sup> *Acts* 10:38.

<sup>414</sup> *Hebrews* 12:16.

## 118. Unity and Uniformity

Present Truth, September 11, 1902

Originally published: Present Truth, April 20, 1893; Present Truth, July 29, 1897

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Now that the church is extending its missionary operations into all the world, and the different beliefs that divide it into sects must be a great stumbling-block to the heathen and extremely puzzling to the converts, does it not seem that it would be well if all could agree as to the essential doctrines to be taught, and thus present a united front to the heathen world? Did not Christ say that when His disciples are one, then the world shall believe?<sup>415</sup>

**W**ITHOUT the slightest approach to unity, there may be the most perfect uniformity. A lot of marbles may be exactly uniform as regards size and shape and color, but there is no unity among them. So there may be uniformity among people without unity.

Since the days of Constantine strenuous efforts have been put forth by the ecclesiastical politicians to produce uniformity, and these efforts have been thought to be in the interests of Christian unity. In some cases uniformity has been attained, but there has been no more unity than there is in a gross of buttons fastened together by a string.

The Bible is full of the idea of unity in the church of Christ, but we do not read so much about uniformity. This unity is to be the unity of life and growth, and not a mere outward connection. In Christ's prayer to the Father for His disciples, He said,

### **John 17**

<sup>22</sup> And the glory that You gave me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

<sup>23</sup> I in them, and You in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

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<sup>415</sup> *John* 17:21.

Here we see that the glory of the Lord is to effect the union of believers, and the union is to be that of the Father and the Son. The union of the Father and the Son is a union of spirit. We cannot comprehend this union, but we may know that it is not a forced union, but that it results from their very nature. They have *one life*. Their thoughts and purposes are the same, not because they come together and compare notes and agree to be alike, but because one life is in them both.

So the union of believers is to be a vital union, or it is not any union at all. It is not accomplished by strife and debate and decisions of majorities, but by yielding the mind to Christ and hearing His voice. They are to be united by the mind and spirit of Christ. The life the Father and the Son in each member of the church will produce the most perfect union in the whole body.

For the human body is the most perfect example of unity, and it is the example that the Bible gives us. Christ is the Head of the body, the church.

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>22</sup> And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church,

<sup>23</sup> Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>18</sup> And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>12</sup> For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

<sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup> For the body is not one member, but many.

In the human body there are many members, and each member has a different office from the rest; there is not uniformity of action among the members, but there is the most perfect unity. All work together in perfect harmony for one object. So it is in the body of Christ.

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>6</sup> There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all.

This gives no ground for the idea that there may be divisions in the church of Christ, one division believing one thing, and another division believing and practicing another thing. God has tempered the body together,

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>25</sup> That there should be no schism in the body.

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>4</sup> There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling;

<sup>5</sup> One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

<sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The apostle's exhortation is:

### **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>10</sup> ...that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

But let it be borne in mind that this union is not artificial, but natural; not the human nature, however, but the divine nature. The unity of belief in the church is not performed by the church coming together and the majority defining the creed to be believed. The church cannot define doctrine, nor make laws for itself or anybody else.

The church of Christ is made up of all who obey the Lord's commands, not a body to issue commands. The Head directs, the

body obeys. God speaks; each one must listen to His voice, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and no man can give faith to another.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>8</sup> It is the gift of God.

# 119. The Tithing Question

Present Truth, September 18, 1902

I read a piece in *Present Truth* last week on giving a tenth to God. Now I should like to know if I am to give a tenth of all I receive, or to take out first the cost of materials used, which I have to pay for. If you can help me in this matter I shall be pleased. Also, how am I to give this? I am not a member of any chapel. I go to the Baptist meetings and Bible class, and the adult school on Sunday mornings.

**A** LITTLE consideration of what the Scriptures say about the tithe will make this matter clear, and the question and answer may be of benefit to many others, whose minds are not clear on this subject. Let us read the first,

## **Leviticus 27**

<sup>30</sup> All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord.

That this was not a mere ceremonial regulation, that was local and temporary, is evident from two things:

- a) We find the tithe paid by Abraham and Jacob as a matter of course, long before there were any Jewish ceremonies, or even any Jewish nation. See *Genesis* 14:17-24 and 28:20-22, which we shall talk about presently.
- b) We have the words of Christ, plainly stating that the tithe ought to be paid:

## **Matthew 23**

<sup>23</sup> Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

The Saviour did not pronounce a woe upon the scribes and Pharisees for being strict in the payment of tithe, but for neglecting the vital principles of the Gospel. He said that they ought not

to have left undone the payment of tithe, even upon the smallest bunch of herbs in their garden, and that they ought at the same time to have kept judgment, mercy, and faith. Therefore we know that the tithe is not a ceremonial, local, and temporal regulation, but that it applies to all time. It also concerns all people, for...

### **Leviticus 27**

<sup>30</sup> ...the tithe...is the Lord's,

—and one class of people has no more right to appropriate what belongs to the Lord than another class has.

Now let us note the first recorded instance of the payment of tithe. It is that of Abraham, when he was returning with all the goods of the city of Sodom which he had received from the kings who had carried it away. The king of Sodom went out to meet him, and Melchizedek, also, king of Salem, or Jerusalem, and priest of the most high God, met him, bringing bread and wine. Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and to him, as God's priest, Abraham gave tithes of everything. Note the words:

### **Genesis 14**

<sup>20</sup> He gave him tithes of all.

Then the king of Sodom said to Abraham,

<sup>21</sup> Give me the persons, and take the goods to yourself.

But Abraham would not seem to be under any obligation to the king of Sodom, and he said,

<sup>22</sup> I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

<sup>23</sup> That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich.

Of the young men who were with him, however, he said,

<sup>24</sup> ...let them take their portion,



That is, they were entitled to what they had eaten while engaged in the work. From that we learn:

- a) That Abraham tithed all that he captured from the kings, giving the tithe to the Lord's representative;
- b) That he did not recognize the tithe as belonging to the king of Sodom at all; for he was not taking anything from him, in paying tithe on the property. When the king of Sodom's property came into the hands of Abraham, and belonged to him by right of capture, he used his right to give to the Lord that which belonged to Him, and then returned the rest to the original owner.

We learn, in short, that one is in duty bound to tithe the whole of his income—all that comes into his hands so as to be called his own; but it is also self-evident that the amount necessarily expended in securing that income must be deducted from it. Thus, if a man's income during the year is £200, and he has had to expend £50 for help and materials for his work, it is plain that his real gain is only £150. A strict tithe does not demand that he should tithe the £200, but only the £150, since it is to be supposed that he had already paid tithe on the £50 which he paid out.

This is really the sum of the matter, technically considered; the religious significance will be considered in the article just following. The question, however, remains,

“To whom the tithe be paid?”

The answer is, to those to whom is especially committed the charge of the Lord's work. The church of Christ is a body existing solely for the purpose of doing the work of the Lord; and if one is connected with any branch of the church he will naturally pay his tithe to the one who has charge of the funds used in carried on the Lord's work. A general rule, which would cover all, whether professedly members of any church or not, would be this: Pay your tithe to those who, the most fully of any that you

know, stand as the Lord's representative in spreading the knowledge of His truth.

It must be recognized that the tithe is entirely separate and distinct from offerings for the support of the poor, or other special purposes; but of this we shall speak in the consideration of the question which follows.

## 120. Our Debt to the Lord

Present Truth, September 18, 1902

I was very much pleased with the article in your paper on the giving of the tenth; but would it not be more correct to render it *paying*, since we know that God has reserved to himself the tenth of man's income and the seventh of his time? These two things belong to God, and whoever keeps back the same is so much in debt to Him. Man has the liberty to *give* offerings in both money and time; but how much better would his offering be, if he had already paid that which he owes.

Just let me tell you what I once heard a servant of God say about his own experience in paying the tenth. He, like the writer of the article, never knew any one turn back from serving the Lord on account of paying tithe; but I know that his experience was that a great many ran back, afraid of trusting the Lord; but his own experience was that since he had begun to pay tithe his master had sent for him to come into the office no fewer than eleven times, to raise his wages, without ever having been asked for an advance.

He told me about a lady whom he knew, that was in business, who was bold enough to try the Lord in this matter, whose takings never exceeded £70 per week; but on paying her first tithe she drew over £400 the following week.

Now who will dare to trust the Lord even with His own? Oh, these sins of omission, how heavily they weigh upon us! We seem to realize the sins of *commission* more easily; but I am afraid that the sins of *omission* will rise up still higher, if possible, to condemn us in the end.

**I**T IS REALLY not a matter of much importance which term one uses concerning the tithe, provided one recognizes the true principle in it; although we ought always to endeavor to use correct terms, since names and words have a great influence on our actions.

But as a matter of fact, either word, pay, or give, is correct as regards the tithe, since both are used in the Bible. In *Genesis* 14 it is said of Abraham that he gave Melchizedek tithes of all; but in Paul's reference to the affair, in *Hebrews* 7:9, it is said that Levi paid tithes in Abraham. The tithe does indeed belong to the Lord, and is due Him, so much so that those who withhold it are declared to be robbing God<sup>416</sup>; but we often in common language use the word "give" in connection with the payment of debt. Thus, one might say, "I gave the man his money," although the money was due him.

Perhaps, however, if we studied the matter very closely, we might see that, while the tithe belongs to the Lord, and is paid to Him, we give it to those who are set over His work, that they may use it in His service. Thus in the 7<sup>th</sup> of *Hebrews* it is made evident that Christ,

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>8</sup> ...of whom it is witnessed that He lives,

—is the real receiver of the tithe; men are but His stewards.

Some people hesitate to speak about the payment of the tithe, lest it should repel the hearers; and we often find people speaking against it as a harsh, arbitrary requirement. They seem to regard it as a tax, and if they render it to the ministry at all they do it grudgingly, as though the receivers of it were tax collectors.

Now all this comes from an utterly false and narrow view of the matter. There is a rich blessing connected with the payment of tithe; and in asking people to do it, we are doing it for their own good—that they may receive a blessing. To all the requirements of God, the words of Christ are applicable:

### **John 13**

<sup>17</sup> If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

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<sup>416</sup> *Malachi* 3:8-9.

A blessing comes in the doing; for all the commandments of God are promises.

No one should pay tithe with the idea that he is thereby contributing something to God or His cause, and therefore entitled to something in return. All should do it as a matter of simple justice, and loving and joyful recognition of God as the Creator and upholder of all—the great Provider. The constant recognition of God keeps us in continual, conscious touch with Him, and thus ensures His guidance and protection.

### **Proverbs 3**

<sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

And this acknowledgment has special reference to the devoting of money to His service; for immediately we read:

<sup>9</sup> Honor the Lord with your substance, and with the firstfruits of all your increase:

<sup>10</sup> So shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses shall burst out with new wine.

I have known men who would say,

“Why cling to the old, narrow, Jewish ordinance of the tithe, when all that we have belongs to the Lord?”

—and while excusing themselves from paying tithe, on the ground that all belongs to God, they would avoid giving anything. It is true that all we have and are belongs to God, and that is the basis of our offerings of money and service; but the tithe is a special test of faith, and so brings a special blessing. It is God’s appointed means of supporting those who devote their entire time and strength to Gospel work, making no provision whatever for themselves. And those who minister faithfully, and receive their support from the Lord’s treasury, are not to be counted paupers or pensioners any more than those who labor for wages in shop or field; for they also are supported out of God’s storehouse.

## 1 Corinthians 9

<sup>13</sup> Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

<sup>14</sup> Even so has the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

Our friend has told of material blessings that have accompanied the payment of the tithe. That is what the Lord promises. He says,

## Malachi 3

<sup>8</sup> Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings.

<sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation.

<sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

<sup>11</sup> And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, says the Lord of hosts.

This is not a bribe, that the Lord offers; for He is not in need of anything, and we cannot give Him anything; but it is a statement of what will necessarily follow a complete and faithful recognition of Him. It cannot be otherwise, for the Lord is rich, and it would not speak well of Him to allow His faithful children to come to want.

“But why does not the Lord do just as much for us without our paying tithe?”

—it may be asked. He does indeed do all things for everybody; but it is faith that appropriates; and there is nothing except keeping of the Sabbath that tests one’s faith like the payment of tithe when one is hard pressed for the necessities of life. One reason why the blessing promised through the prophet Malachi is not more apparent is that few pay *all the tithe*. That blessing is contin-

gent upon nothing being kept back. Let each one examine his own course, and see if he is honest with the Lord. If he is not, what right has he to expect special blessings?

“But is it not cruel to ask the poor to pay tithe?”

Read *Malachi* 3:10-11 again, and then ask the question. Is it cruel to ask men to serve the Master who has “unsearchable riches,”<sup>417</sup> to whom the earth with all its fullness belongs, and who counts His servants as His own children?

“Would you receive tithe from the poor?”

Yes, certainly; with greater joy than from the rich; for they need the blessing more. As a matter of fact, it is chiefly those of small means who pay tithe, and who experience God’s blessing. The rich man, with a vast income, looks at the tenth of it, and thinks that it is too large a sum to part with, not considering how much he has left; but the poor man’s tithe is so small that it does not trouble him so much to part with it. In fact it is so small that he is often ashamed to give so little to the Lord, and so, like the poor widow, he casts in his whole living.

There is yet to be considered the question of debts owed to men,—whether one should pay tithe while he has other debts pressing,—and the devoting of the Lord’s money to one’s own personal use, under the pressure of great necessity; and next week, if the Lord will, we shall present a little historical incident which will show the shortsightedness of such a course.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> *Ephesians* 3:8.

<sup>418</sup> The promised article did not appear in the next week’s *Present Truth*. But in the week after that, the October 2, 1902 edition, an article appeared which matches this description, titled “Misappropriation of Funds.” Even though it was not published under the “Editor’s Private Corner” heading, I have included that article, just after the next one.

## 121. Are the Dead with Christ?

Present Truth, September 25, 1902

I was rather shocked to see the following in your paper, the *Present Truth*, page 502, August 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>419</sup>

“It is wholly an assumption, unwarranted by the Scriptures, that we are present with the Lord as soon as the body dies.”

May I ask you to kindly look at the following scripture:

*Job* 14:10: “Man dies....and where is he?”

*Acts* 7:57-60: “Stephen calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

*Acts* 8:2: “Devout men carried Stephen to his burial.” His spirit went up to be with the Lord, and his body went to the grave.

*Philippians* 1:23-24: “Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.”

*2 Corinthians* 5:5-8: “Absent from the body and present with the Lord.”

*2 Peter* 1:13-14: “I must shortly put off this tabernacle.”

*Luke* 16:19-31: “The rich man died, and was buried; and in hell,”—His body went to the grave, and his soul still lives. He could see, feel, remember, reason, and pray; but it was too late.

The second coming of Christ: *Acts* 1:9-11; *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18; *Revelation* 22:20: Soul and body reunited.

Believe me, yours faithfully.

OUR friend has imposed a large task on me; for to quote these texts in full, and so to open them up that each reader shall be able to see exactly what they say, and have his mind cleared of false conceptions concerning them, would take many hours' writing, and fill an entire number of the paper.

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<sup>419</sup> This is quoted from article 113, “The Resurrection of the Body,” from *Present Truth*, August 7, 1902.



Perhaps, however, he means only that the editor shall read them for his own private benefit. I thank him for his kindly effort to instruct; but must in turn ask him to read the article again, in the *Present Truth* from which he quotes; for in it several of these texts are quoted, and treated of at some length. I have myself read them all many hundreds of times; and though no one can ever study any portion of the Bible so much that he can learn no more from it, I know from my study of these that I shall never be able to find any indication in them of a conscious existence of the spirit or soul of man apart from the body. Such an idea is opposed to the very nature of man.

May I be permitted to say in all kindness, that the way in which my friend has thrown these texts together, and the statements he interjects about some of them, are clear evidence that he has not given them much thought; and so, although I have not space for any extended study of the scriptures cited, any one of which would furnish sufficient matter for one number of the paper, I will briefly note at least a few of them, for the benefit both of my correspondent and of many others who are feeling after the truth. I wish, however, they would first read again the article referred to in the *Present Truth* of August 7. A habit of careful reading would often save much misunderstanding.

### **Man Dies, and Where is He?**

To begin with the first text cited:

#### **Job 14**

<sup>10</sup> Man dies and wastes away; yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?

Yes; where is he? He is not. It is a striking instance of the power of theology to bias a man's judgment and perception, that a person can think he sees in this verse any argument for the conscious existence of man in death. We refer to theology in its ordinary signification—the study of sacred things from the basis of philosophy, and not of the Bible.

The patriarch answers his own question, “Where is he?” Read:

### **Job 14**

<sup>14</sup> If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

<sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You: You will have a desire to the work of your hands.

Read *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54 for a statement as to what the “change” is, of which He speaks, and when it will take place. It is at His second coming that Christ will call, and the dead will answer Him.<sup>420</sup> And where will they “wait” till their “change” comes? Here is the answer:

### **Job 17**

<sup>13</sup> If I wait, the grave is my house; I have made my bed in darkness.

<sup>14</sup> I have said to corruption, You are my father; to the worm, You are my mother, and my sister.

Let us go back to the beginning, and we shall be saved much confusion. The simple story of the creation of man helps us to unravel many a tangled web.

### **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

That is the making of man; here is his unmaking:

### **Ecclesiastes 12**

<sup>7</sup> Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Or this, spoken of God:

### **Job 34**

<sup>14</sup> ...if He gather to himself His Spirit and His breath;

<sup>15</sup> All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

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<sup>420</sup> See *1 Thessalonians* 4:16-17; *John* 5:28-29.

It is impossible for anybody to find in these scriptures anything else than that at death man is resolved into his component parts, each in the same state as it was before it was used in building the man. Whatever is true of the elements composing a man, after his death, was true of them before his existence; and there can be no argument for the conscious existence of man in death that does not just as fully prove his pre-existence.

Plato, to whom Christians are indebted for the doctrine of the so-called “immortality of the soul,” taught its pre-existence. Indeed, his argument for man’s natural immortality was based on his belief in the pre-existence of the soul. It is strange that men accept the structure that Plato built, and reject the foundation.

Let us proceed with our texts. We have the case of Stephen, calling on God, and saying,

#### **Acts 7**

<sup>59</sup> Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

But please notice that this intimates nothing as to the state of the spirit when the Lord receives it. The fact that the spirit returns to God, who gave it, is not in question. All that the *Present Truth* has taught is that when man dies, and the parts of which he is composed are dissolved, he no longer exists as man. The parts still exist just as they were before he was created; but *the man* has ceased to be. The Lord watches over the dust of His saints, to bring them forth from the grave; and He also keeps their spirit for them; for it came from Him, and was His all the time they had it. His receiving their spirit is simply the assurance that they shall live again.

### **Departing and Being with Christ Is Not Death**

#### **Philippians 1**

<sup>23</sup> For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

It is utterly impossible for anybody to understand these two verses without studying the connection. To snatch an expression here and there from the Bible, on the run, as it were, and then to build a theory upon it, from the mere sound of the words, is not Bible study.

Reading the context, we find that Paul says that he does not know which he would choose—life or death—if the choice were given him. His only desire was that Christ might be magnified, by his life or by his death; but by which means Christ would receive the greater glory, he did not know, and so he had no choice.

Now it is not crediting the apostle with good sense to say that he first says he does not know which he would choose, whether life or death, and that then in the very same breath he declares that he has an intense desire to die! That would be nonsense.

What he actually says is this: he had no choice between life here on the earth and death; but he had an intense longing for something else, namely, to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better than either of the other two. And this shows us most clearly that departing and being with Christ is something entirely different from death.

So the text which is commonly imagined to teach that men go to be with Christ in death, proves the exact opposite. If Paul continued on this earth, or if he died, he would not be with Christ, the thing for which he longed.

### **When We Are “Clothed” with Immortality**

Now we must place by the side of this text two others that have been referred to. The first is *2 Corinthians* 5:1-8. Here three states are referred to, as in the one just considered. These three states are:

- a) This present;
- b) Unclothed; and
- c) Clothed.

Let us read a portion:

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>1</sup> We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

<sup>2</sup> For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

<sup>3</sup> If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

<sup>4</sup> For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Noting the statements carefully, we see that to be “clothed,” or “clothed upon,” is to have mortality swallowed up of life. Between that and this present state there is a third condition possible, namely, “unclothed,” which the apostle did not long for. The thing desired was the swallowing up of mortality.

Now read *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54, and you will see that the swallowing up of death,—immortality,—and putting on of immortality is at the sounding of the last trumpet, when the Lord shall descend. Note the words:

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>53</sup> This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

You see we have here an exact parallel to *2 Corinthians* 5:2-4. The clothing to be desired is immortality,—the immortal body. If we die,—put off this tabernacle,—we are naked; but if we receive immortality, then we are clothed, and are present with the Lord.

How plain it is from the scriptures that death, instead of bringing us into the presence of Christ, is the widest possible separation from Him. Now read *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18. where it is stated when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, and with the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first, incorruptible, and the living saints will then...

## **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>17</sup> ...be caught up together with them,...to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

When the Lord comes, and not till then, all the saints of God, both living and dead, are changed from mortality to immortality. Then, and only then, both those who are still in this tabernacle, and those who have put off this tabernacle, and are dead, “unclothed,” will be “clothed upon” with immortality; and thus, not being naked, they will be fit for the presence of the King.

This covers the most of the texts referred to, and makes the subject under consideration very plain, and we will not take space for anything further at present. Remember, however, that there is no self-contradiction in the Scriptures, and every other portion exactly coincides with those that we have very briefly studied. They teach us that the Lord must come for us, if we are ever with Him, and that His coming is the one hope of the church.

## **The Truth That Saves**

What difference does it make, anyhow, whether we believe that we go to be with Christ in death, or not? It makes all the difference between truth and error; and nobody is saved by error. God has chosen us...

## **2 Thessalonians 2 [KJV & RV]**

<sup>13</sup> ...to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the word.

The Word of truth is the Gospel of our salvation. The theory that men go to be with the Lord at death, makes of no effect a large portion of the Bible, and makes useless the most precious promises of Christ. It nullifies the teaching of the resurrection, and causes people to lose sight of the coming of Christ; for if the dead saints were already with Christ, there would be no use for Him to come for them. Thus this theory makes nonsense of all the promises concerning the coming of Christ and the resurrection. Surely this is reason enough for making the truth prominent.

Again: Those who believe that the dead are not dead at all, but are with Christ, alive and conscious, have absolutely no safeguard against the deception of Spiritualism. It is the fact that cannot be controverted, that people have seen, and do see, bodies that exactly resemble their dead friends, and that profess to be such. Moreover these spirits, professing to come from the other world often show themselves accurately acquainted with the private life of those to whom they appear, telling things known only by the individual and the dead friend.

Now if a man believes that his friend is in heaven, conscious of all that is going on here below, such an appearance and communication would be sufficient to convince him that his departed friend had returned. And then, having gone that far, contrary to the Scriptures, it would be the most natural thing in the world for him to accept any statement that the spirit might make, however contrary to the Bible it might be.

But every one who adheres to the Bible statement that...

#### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not any thing,

—that...

#### **Job 14**

<sup>21</sup> His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them,

—cannot possibly be deceived by the false pretenses of Satan and his evil angels.

Still further: The doctrine of the resurrection is made a wholly unnecessary thing by the theory that men go to heaven at death. And when that is lost sight of, it is an easy step to lose sight of the power of the resurrection, by which we triumph over sin. And this is why Spiritualism inevitably tends to immorality. No man is able to save himself from sin; and so, no matter how well-meaning a person may be, if a person cut himself off from the truth that saves, he must sooner or later land in the pit of corruption.

## Back Page

Present Truth, September 25, 1902

**L**AST week we promised an article on the subject of people taking the Lord's money—the tithe or offerings—to help themselves out of difficulty. We are sorry that a press of other matter has crowded it out of this number, but it will keep till next week.

We sometimes receive letters asking us to explain entire chapters in the "Editor's Private Corner," a request which for obvious reasons cannot possibly be complied with. To say nothing of the space required, a general exposition might miss entirely the thing which the one making the request had in mind. Questions must have some definite point in view, and then they can be answered.

Whenever a man pays a debt, the creditor gives him a receipt. Even so does the Lord, but not as man does. God, as the Great King, cannot give in any ordinary way. His receipt, therefore, is not a mere slip of paper; He acknowledges the payment of a debt by giving the debtor far more than he paid. This makes the poor man's debt to God the greater, and as he seeks to discharge it, God again acknowledges by returning more. One can afford to be honest with God. Generous with Him we cannot be, for His generosity to us makes that impossible.



## 122. Misappropriation of Funds

Present Truth, October 2, 1902<sup>421</sup>

### 2 Chronicles 16

<sup>1</sup> In the six and thirtieth year reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

THAT was a critical situation,—worse than any amount of private debt,—for it threatened the very existence of the nation. If the king of Israel succeeded in building and holding Ramah, then he could command the whole of the kingdom of Judah and put it under tribute. All the traffic of the kingdom would be stopped, or be exclusively in the hands of the king of Israel; no one, from the king to the peasant and tradesman, could have anything that he could call his own. It was a desperate case, and called for desperate measures,—at least the king of Judah thought so,—and that promptly.

### 2 Chronicles 16

<sup>2</sup> Then Asa brought silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

<sup>3</sup> There is a league between me and you, as there was between my father and your father: behold, I have sent you silver and gold; go, break your league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

<sup>4</sup> And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-main, and all the store cities of Naphtali.

<sup>5</sup> And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

<sup>6</sup> Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Asa was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.

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<sup>421</sup> This was not an “Editor’s Private Corner” article, but I’ve included it because it was promised in the last paragraph of a previous article. It is article 115 in this collection, “Our Debt to the Lord.”

So the kingdom of Judah was delivered from the king of Israel, by the prompt action of Asa. At least it seemed to be delivered. Asa had done all that he could do, and the general opinion would be that he could not have done any less. He not only stopped the plan of the king of Israel and drove him away, destroying the city that was to command the commerce of Judah, but he guarded against any future danger by building Geba and Mizpah, or to translate the words, a hill and a water tower. To be sure he used the Lord's money with which to do it; but what else could he do? Perhaps he intended to pay it all back again with returning prosperity.

That is the way man looks at the case; now hear the truth of the matter from God:

## **2 Chronicles 16**

<sup>7</sup> And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord your God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of your hand.

<sup>8</sup> Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because you did rely on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand.

<sup>9</sup> For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. Herein you have done foolishly: therefore from henceforth you shall have wars.

This was not a case of pique on the part of the Lord. He did not propose to punish Asa with wars, because he had relied on the king of Syria, instead of on Him, but He merely told him, through His prophet, what would be the inevitable result of his foolish course, which to human shortsightedness seemed so wise and politic.

Asa did not stop to consider that in bribing Ben-hadad to break his league with Baasha, so that Baasha would be compelled to cease operations against him, he was simply placing means in the hands of the king of Syria, wherewith to attack him at some fu-

ture time; for Ben-hadad could break his league with Asa as readily as he had broken his league with Baasha. King Asa had simply postponed his trouble, but had by no means ended it.

Here we have an exact parallel to the case of many who are in debt, and sorely distressed, perhaps not knowing even how to supply the wants of their family, to say nothing of paying their debt. Or it may be that they are not in debt, but they are in exceedingly close circumstances; and they can see no way out except to take the Lord's tithe, or other money belonging to Him, and use it for their pressing necessities. They may say that they will pay it back as soon as they can, but even if they cannot, they must live; they cannot let their family starve.

The case resolves itself into this:

“Shall we trust the Lord to use His own unlimited resources in His own way for our deliverance, or shall we seize upon a portion of His property, to help ourselves?”

Enlightened judgment would say that the former was the wiser course. The one who takes the Lord's tithes to pay his own debts, or to keep himself out of debt, as he imagines, does not accomplish his purpose. He succeeds only in putting off the trouble, and the last case will be worse than the first.

If Asa had trusted the Lord, and depended on Him for deliverance from the king of Israel, he would have been delivered; for God has never forsaken those who seek Him.

### **Psalms 9**

<sup>10</sup> And they that know your name will put their trust in You: for You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You.

His promise is,

### **Joshua 1**

<sup>5</sup> I will not fail you.

And the deliverance which the Lord wrought would have been decisive, as it was when the Ethiopians came against him, to

which the prophet referred. See what took place then. An overwhelming force came against Asa.

## **2 Chronicles 14**

<sup>11</sup> And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with You to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on You, and in your name we go against this multitude. O Lord You are our God; let not man prevail against You.

Now what was the result of Asa's trust in God?

<sup>12</sup> So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

<sup>13</sup> And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the Lord, and before His host; and they carried away very much spoil.

What a pity that Asa did not remember that experience; and what a pity that we do not always remember and profit by the record of it;

## **Romans 15**

<sup>4</sup> For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

How many things were written aforetime concerning how God provided the necessities of life for His people! Think of the manna in the desert, and the water from the rock. Think of the widow's meal and oil,<sup>422</sup> and of the provision for the payment of the widow's debt, and for her future living, in the time of Elisha.<sup>423</sup> Think of the feeding of the multitudes in the wilderness in the days of Christ, and of many other miraculous interpositions on the part of God, as well as the miracle of our very existence day by day, when we are not conscious of want.

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<sup>422</sup> 1 Kings 17:12-16.

<sup>423</sup> 2 Kings 4:1-7.

The same God lives today, and He is our God. His resources are undiminished, and He is just as compassionate, and just as ready to help the needy. We have been taught to pray,

**Matthew 6**

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,

—and we profess to believe that all that we have comes from Him, and that our existence depends on Him; yet when trouble comes we are likely to act as though God did not exist, and everything depended on ourselves. Do you not see why these hard times are allowed to come upon us? They are to test our confidence in God. Shall we trust Him in the time of trouble, even to the last extremity, and experience a wonderful deliverance? or shall we trust in ourselves, and multiply our troubles?

## 123. The Personality of Satan

Present Truth, October 2, 1902

A lady supplies me with *Present Truth*, and during a little chat with her I was incited to write you, and asking certain questions I put to her in connection with Satan as the Devil of the Bible.

A lady left *Present Truth* of August 7, and I found on page 500 an article entitled, "Fallen Angels."<sup>424</sup> Can you tell me where in the Bible the fallen angels mentioned by Peter and Jude are defined as the Devil? and if they are in everlasting chains under darkness, reserved till a certain day, how can they be roaming about as a lion, seeking whom they may devour?

Next concerning *Ezekiel* 28:2 which says, "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus." Now if, as this chapter says, it is the king of Tyrus that is spoken of by God through the prophet, how do you reconcile your statement that he was a fallen angel, that is, the Devil and Satan?

The next passage is *Isaiah* 14. Is this not highly figurative language? and does not the context declare it to be spoken against the king of Babylon? I refer you to *Daniel* 4:30, for a literal fulfillment of this prophecy in the person of Nebuchadnezzar.

The next reference is *Revelation* 12:7-8. *Revelation* 1:1 says the revelation is signified, *i.e.*, given in signs, to John, to show things that must surely come to pass. I fail to see how you can say in the face of this, that this war in heaven occurred previous to Adam's temptation.

There are other difficulties, too, such as this: If sin originated in heaven, and its originator was an angel, I don't see what Paul's meaning is, when he declares that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; because if the angels that sinned were cast into the earth previous to

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<sup>424</sup> The article referred to appeared in the August 7, 1902 edition of *Present Truth*, and was written by Augusta W. Heald. I have placed it in the [Appendix](#).

Adam's sin, then it did not come into the world by man, but by an angel.

I believe that every man has an evil heart or mind naturally,—that he has himself to fear, and those of like nature, and not a supernatural, personal devil. Paul says that the devil is that which has the power of death (*Hebrews 2:14*); sin has that power; therefore sin in the flesh, *i.e.*, human nature unrestrained is in my opinion the Satan of the Bible.

### **Satan a Fallen Angel**

**I**T IS not at all necessary to be able to identify the fallen angels mentioned in Peter and Jude with the Devil, since he is but one, and there are many. There is but one being known as “the Devil and Satan”<sup>425</sup>; while there are many demons, or devils, who, like their leader, have fallen from heaven.

That Satan fell from heaven is plainly stated in *Luke 10:18* and *Revelation 12:7-9*; and in the last reference we are told that...

#### **Revelation 12**

<sup>9</sup> ...his angels were cast out with him;

—so we are not drawing on our imagination in the least, when we identify...

#### **Jude**

<sup>6</sup> ...the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,

—with the devils of which the Scriptures have so much to say, and that are the enemies of mankind.

A little more careful reading will show that it is not at all incongruous for things that have previously occurred, to be referred to in a revelation of things that must shortly come to pass. Indeed, we are plainly told that this is the case; for in *Revelation 1:19* we read this instruction to John:

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<sup>425</sup> *Revelation 12:9, 20:2.*

## **Revelation 1**

<sup>19</sup> Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

In order that the reader may understand the description of things that are to take place in the future, it is often necessary to introduce an account of things that have already occurred.

You say that you do not see how we can say that Satan's expulsion from heaven took place before Adam's temptation, when the description of it occurs in the revelation of...

<sup>1</sup> ...things which must shortly come to pass.

I have just shown from the same *Revelation* that John was to write some things that already were; and nearly a hundred years before John wrote, Jesus said,

## **Luke 10**

<sup>18</sup> I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,

—without indicating how long it had been since He saw him fall. This takes out all the force of your objection. Now when we know that Satan fell from heaven long before John's day, we are bound to identify the serpent that beguiled Eve, with...

## **Revelation 12**

<sup>9</sup> ...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world.

We are not for a moment left to conjecture, for the declaration that “that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceives the whole world,” necessarily includes the deception of Eve.

## **The Devil a Powerful Personality**

Now a few words concerning the idea that there is no devil except “human nature unrestrained.” Such an idea cannot be held by anybody who has read the Bible through, unless he paid no attention to what he read, or else did not believe it. Let me cite only one or two instances out of many.



In the 4<sup>th</sup> of *Matthew* we read that the tempter came to Jesus in the wilderness, that he took Him into the holy city, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and afterwards took Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and that...

#### **Matthew 4**

<sup>11</sup> Then the Devil left Him.

Do you think that all this was done by “human nature unrestrained”? No answer is necessary. Was it “human nature unrestrained” that went at the command of Jesus from the two men who dwelt in the tombs, and entered into the herd of swine?<sup>426</sup>

#### **The Devil Is Distinct from Men**

I might pursue this line further; but this is sufficient to show that a man’s opinion is very absurd when put in the light of Bible truth. It is impossible to read the numerous references to Satan and his angels, and what they did, believing the record, without knowing that they are real, personal beings, as real as men are. But that they are supernatural beings, and not men, is plainly declared in:

#### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

<sup>12</sup> For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [“wicked spirits,” margin] in high places.

But they are bound, you say, and so are harmless. Yes, they are bound to this world. They have not, as the unfallen angels have, the freedom of heaven, nor the privilege of visiting other parts of God’s universe. They are in bonds, under darkness so dense that no ray of heavenly light ever pierces it. This intense darkness

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<sup>426</sup> See *Matthew* 8:28-33.

they have plunged themselves into, through rejecting God, and so there is nothing for them to look forward to but...

### **Jude**

<sup>13</sup> ...the blackness of darkness for ever,

–utter extinction.

## **The God of This World**

We have now only the two texts referred to in *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel*, yet to consider; and these are so full of instruction that I am glad to notice them in particular. The first ten verses in *Ezekiel* 28 are addressed to “the prince of Tyrus,” and the language is such as could well apply to an earthly ruler having great riches, power, and wisdom. But from the eleventh verse to the nineteenth we have a “lamentation upon the king of Tyrus,” in language that could not possibly apply to any human being. Read:

### **Ezekiel 28**

<sup>12</sup> Thus says the Lord God, You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

<sup>13</sup> You have been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold<sup>427</sup>: the workmanship of your tabrets and your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.

<sup>14</sup> You are the anointed cherub that covers;<sup>428</sup> and I have set you so; you were upon the holy mountain of God, you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

<sup>15</sup> You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

<sup>16</sup> By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, and from the midst of the stones of fire.

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<sup>427</sup> Compare *Revelation* 21:10-21.

<sup>428</sup> Compare *Psalms* 80:1.

The reading of this is enough to show us that it never was true of any man on this earth; it applies to the highest being ever created in heaven—one of the cherubim overshadowing the throne of God in heaven. The question then comes,

“How is it that he is called the king of Tyrus?”

The answer is easy. Satan,

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>2</sup> ...the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience,

### **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>4</sup> ...[is] the God of this world,

—the chief of...

### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>12</sup> ...the rulers of the darkness of this world.

He is therefore the real ruler of every heathen nation that sets itself in opposition to God; while the nominal king is only his agent. So the visible ruler of ancient Tyre, that proud and wicked city, was in reality only the prince; the real ruler was the wicked spirit to whose control he had yielded himself, and whose designs he was carrying out.

This also applies in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Isaiah*. That is indeed in connection with prophecies of the destruction of the city over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled. Satan, who first brought sin into God's universe, by seeking to make himself equal with God, was the real ruler of ancient Babylon when its nominal ruler exalted himself against the God of heaven.

That the prophecies in *Isaiah* concerning Babylon embrace a great deal more than the city famed in history, and whose ancient site is noted in our maps, is evident when we read the New Testament. That city was utterly destroyed long before the days of the apostles; and the kingdom of Babylon had been succeeded by three other world powers; yet the book of *Revelation* abounds in

references to Babylon, and of prophecies of its fall. The very language of *Isaiah* is used by John.<sup>429</sup>

Babylon and its king exist as really today as they ever did, although the city and king known to secular history have long since ceased to be. In the destruction of Babylon of the Chaldees we have the type and the assurance of the destruction of Satan and his kingdom.

### **Satan Powerless Except with Man's Consent**

What about the statement that "by one man sin entered into the world"<sup>430</sup>? It is perfectly consistent with the statement that Satan sinned in heaven, and that he is the originator of sin; it must be so, since both statements are in Scripture. Satan introduced sin into the universe; but Adam introduced it into this world; for although Satan was permitted to come to earth after he sinned, Adam was the ruler of it, and nothing could be done here without his consent.

Satan might have roamed up and down on this earth without having the power to blight a single flower, or to cause a moment's pain or suffering to any human being, if man willed it to be so. Sin may crouch at the door, desiring to seize upon and ruin man; but it is powerless and harmless unless man consents; man may rule over it.

And herein is hope and comfort for us; for although man has proved recreant to his trust, God is faithful to His word, and He has never taken back the dominion which He originally gave to man. In Christ we are still kings, and if we resist the devil, he will flee from us, even as he did from Christ, when Christ said,

#### **Matthew 4**

<sup>10</sup> Get you hence.

And we have the assurance that:

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<sup>429</sup> Compare *Isaiah* 47:8-9 and *Revelation* 18:7-8.

<sup>430</sup> *Romans* 5:12.

## Romans 16

<sup>20</sup> The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

### Necessity of Knowledge Concerning Satan

Someone may ask,

“What difference does it make whether or not we believe that there is a personal devil? If we earnestly resist the devil that we find striving within us for the mastery, what difference does it make to us what its source is?”

It makes a great deal of difference whether we believe the Bible or not. The mere fact that the Bible tells us of a personal devil, and warns us against him, is sufficient evidence that it is a matter of vital importance for us to know the truth about him; for the Bible does not deal in trivialities.

Here is one all-sufficient reason for being well-informed concerning the devil and his devices: It is a sure safeguard against being led astray by that great delusion, Spiritualism. Without this knowledge, one is sure to fall into that horrible snare. If Satan can only persuade people that he and his host cannot exist, and that the Bible accounts of him are myths, then he has them at his mercy, which is cruel.

Then when they get messages purporting to come from their dead friends, relating incidents that no other human beings could know; and when they even see and converse with and handle things that have every resemblance of those dead friends, they will certainly fall into the trap, and believe that their friends have surely returned to visit them.

And when those supposed friends declare that they have just come from heaven, and that the things which they once learned from the scriptures they now know to be error, the poor dupes will inevitably throw away what hold they have on God and His Word. This is not fancy, for it has been done many times, and it will be done yet more.

Directly growing out of the fact that ignorance concerning Satan lays one open to the deception of Spiritualism, is the fact that disbelief in his existence naturally tends to disbelief in Christ and the atonement.

First of all, because Spiritualism itself is first and foremost of all a denial of Christ; and second, because that when a person believes that he has only himself to contend with, it is very natural for him to persuade himself that he can conquer by his own unaided power. Such a one will insensibly, no matter what his present belief in Christ, come to regard the power of the Lord working in him as proceeding only from himself; for that is a great temptation that continually besets all mankind. So from believing that he is his own tempter, he will come to believe that he is his own saviour.

Michael, the Archangel, contended with the Devil for the body of Moses. The mighty Prince was not disputing with His “human nature unrestrained,” but with a being as real as He himself.

And this brings us to the close, with the blessed knowledge that the battle with the hosts of darkness is not ours, but the Lord’s. The great controversy is between Christ and Satan, for the souls of men, and for the possession of the earth.

Thank God, Christ has conquered at every turn, in every conflict, and we have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 124. Help for an Overworked Mother

Present Truth, October 9, 1902

As a reader of *Present Truth*, I would like to ask you a question. A year ago I had a very severe illness, which brought me so low that I was given up to die; I recovered from it, but it has left me in a very melancholy way. I have no energy. I have nine children, and it is hard to feel as I do. The question I want to ask is this:

What would a Christian woman do under the circumstances? Is my family my first care? I want to serve the Lord; but how can I serve Him? Will you be my friend, and tell me, if you can? I forgot to say that I have such low, miserable thoughts; no ambition for anything. Is it right that I should allow such miserable thoughts in my mind?

WITH some variation in the number of children, that letter might have been written by any one of hundreds of women. It is a pitiful call for help; but there is help.

It must be recognized, however, that as the bodily condition has reacted on the mind, to produce a low grade of thought, so if the thoughts are ever elevated, it must be largely by improving the physical condition. Just what steps to take to do this cannot be told without a more definite knowledge of the previous illness, and what led to it, the present condition, and especially the habits of life.

A mother's first duty is undoubtedly to her family. Just as God, who has given us life, lives for us, so she must live for those to whom she has given life, and must give herself to them. But this means that she must have something to give to them, that she must always be receiving, in order always to be able to give herself; that she must actually live for them, and not wear herself out.

A mother's first duty to her family is to take care of herself. But God who gave her the children, is the living God, and His one

great gift is life; moreover He provides special help for those who have special need; so you may enjoy just as much life from the Lord as you will accept. But you must have your eyes open to see how His life is manifested.

It is safe to say that you use tea, that cheat that robs so many women of their strength, while making them believe that it gives them strength. Tea is not food, but poison; it stimulates, but does not strengthen; it does not build up, but wears down. The only good thing about a cup of tea is the water with which it is made. If the cup of hot water were taken at a proper time, minus the tea, it would be a real refreshment, helping to cleanse the system from the poisons produced by overwork.

If I am right in my supposition that you use tea, I have only to say, Leave it off, and do it at once. Take a rest for a day or two, if necessary, and take light, simple food, and your system will soon become accustomed to the change, and you will find yourself emancipated. You can drink hot water, either with or without milk, or, better still, hot gluten gruel; but do not drink anything at mealtime.

Eat preferably dry food, such as will require long mastication. An occasional meal of fruit alone, or better still, fruit alone for an entire day or two, will do wonders toward clearing out your clogged system. Do not take late suppers,—better no supper at all,—but if anything is taken in the evening let it be some plain fruit, not that indigestible compound of fruit and sugar, called jam.

The feeling that most people mistake for hunger in the evening is usually simple weariness, the call for rest, and not food. An already overworked stomach, or sluggish bowels will produce a sensation like hunger; but to take food is the worst thing that could be done in that state. Relieve the overloaded bowels; bathe the irritated nerves of the stomach with a draught of either hot or cold water, which will cleanse away the poison that is causing them to cry out; and in most cases the feeling of hunger will be gone, and both body and mind will be refreshed.



I have given only the very simplest directions, such as can be easily followed, for bringing the body out of its low, depressed state. Much more would be necessary for perfection; but this may do for a beginning. The sum of the matter is, Let the life of the Lord, fresh as it comes from His throne, have unobstructed course, and health and vigor must return.

You want to serve the Lord. Good! He wants you to serve Him, and when you two are thus agreed nothing can hinder you. But remember that...

### **Romans 12**

<sup>1</sup> ...your reasonable service [is to] present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

You can do no greater service to God than simply to let His life be manifested in your mortal flesh, so that through you those who see you may know His power. You do not need to go away from your own home in order to serve God acceptably.

...who best

Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best: His state

Is Kingly; thousands at His bidding speed

And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:

They also serve, who only stand and wait.<sup>431</sup>

But a mother of nine children has a more promising field for service than is granted to most people. How many ministers of the Gospel, do you suppose, are sure that they have been the means of bringing nine souls into the kingdom of God? Many go to foreign lands at great expense, and undergo the greatest hardships, to accomplish even less. Judson labored nine years in Burma before he saw a single conversion. The missionary knows not what may be the result of his work; but a mother has souls committed to her care, of whose salvation she may be as sure, as that they have been given her.

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<sup>431</sup> John Milton, Sonnet: *On His Blindness*.

## **Acts 2**

<sup>39</sup> The promise is to you, and to your children.

You may, and should, lay hold on life, that you may have fullness of life to give.

But you must be of good courage. You think that this is very easy for me to say, and that it is almost mockery to one in your condition. One in your state is just the one to whom it must be said. It would be mockery, if your courage had to come from yourself; but the source and ground of courage is the eternal, omnipotent, loving God. Your weakness is no bar whatever to the working of God; on the contrary, it gives Him an opportunity to show His power to the best advantage. He deliberately chooses the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty.<sup>432</sup>

Your unfavorable circumstances have nothing whatever to do with the case, and are not to be taken into consideration. You have only to think upon the love and power of God. Difficulties only provide a way by which He can lead His ransomed ones to victory. He says to you as to Joshua,

## **Joshua 1**

<sup>9</sup> Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage.

I say this deliberately, that to a person who believes in the promises and the power of God, there can be no greater blessing than to have burdens greater than he feels able to bear, and to be placed in a position where he cannot see any way out. The Lord is hunting for just such ones, to help them.

## **2 Chronicles 16**

<sup>9</sup> For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him.

And it is nothing for Him to help,

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<sup>432</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:27.

## 2 Chronicles 14

<sup>11</sup> ...whether with many, or with them that have no power.

Of course it is not right for you or anybody else to have such low, miserable thoughts; and it is not necessary. When you yield your body...

## Romans 12

<sup>1</sup> ...a living sacrifice...to God,

—for Him to manifest His life in it, you will be...

<sup>2</sup> ...transformed by the renewing of your mind.

## Proverbs 16

<sup>3</sup> Commit your works unto the Lord, and your thoughts shall be established.

And now I want to ask you to read the first article in this number of *Present Truth*,<sup>433</sup> for it all applies to such as you. Believe that the mighty God of Israel lives, and that you are one of His children;

## Isaiah 26

<sup>4</sup> Trust in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength;

—and you will find yourself lifted up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and your feet set on the rock, and a new song in your mouth,<sup>434</sup> which will be,—

## Psalms 103

<sup>2</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

<sup>3</sup> Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;

<sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies;

<sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

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<sup>433</sup> This article was titled, "The Taking of a City," and can be found in the collection, *Gospel Lessons in the Old Testament*.

<sup>434</sup> *Psalms* 40:2-3.

# 125. The Gospel Preached to Them That Are Dead

Present Truth, October 9, 1902

I have been very much interested in the line you take with regard to our departed friends,—that they are unconscious until the resurrection. I should like you to give an explanation of *1 Peter* 4:6, as I have been very much pleased with your answers in connection with other subjects in *Present Truth*.

The text in question reads thus:

## **1 Peter 4**

<sup>6</sup> For for this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

**I**T IS very evident that this is a conclusion from something that precedes, and that we must begin back a little way if we would understand what is here said. If we begin in the preceding chapter, verses 18-20, and get an understanding of them, we shall have no difficulty when we come to this. Let us read them:

## **1 Peter 3**

<sup>18</sup> For Christ also has once suffered in the flesh, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

<sup>19</sup> By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

<sup>20</sup> Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.

Let us take each clause separately, and find out exactly what the text says.

- a) Christ once suffered for us, that He might bring us to God.
- b) He was put to death in the flesh.
- c) He was quickened [made alive] by the Spirit.

- d) By this same Spirit He went and preached to the spirits in prison.
- e) They were in prison—“kept under the law, shut up”<sup>435</sup>—“when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.”
- f) It was in the days of Noah, while the ark was building, that Christ, by the Spirit preached to the wicked spirits before the flood. God’s long-suffering waited one hundred and twenty years, while His Spirit was working with that sinful generation; yet He said,

### **Genesis 6**

<sup>3</sup> My Spirit shall not always strive with man.

The instruction that we are to receive from this text is this, that the preaching of the Gospel is by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. His public ministry began with these words:

### **Isaiah 61**

<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and *the opening of prison* to them that are bound.

The captives in prison are the bondservants of sin,<sup>436</sup>

### **2 Peter 2**

<sup>19</sup> ...the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

## **Suffering and Living with Christ**

Now let us read the next text referred to, which is but a continuation of this, and read enough to get the full connection:

### **1 Peter 4**

<sup>1</sup> Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin;

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<sup>435</sup> *Galatians* 3:22-23.

<sup>436</sup> *John* 8:34.

<sup>2</sup> That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

<sup>6</sup> For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

Read also the following:

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>27</sup> As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment:

<sup>28</sup> So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

### **John 5 [RV]**

<sup>24</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my Word, and believes Him that sent me, has eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life.

Christ's sufferings in the flesh were for us. How much He suffered cannot be put into words, but it is certain that He suffered all that the wicked will have to suffer in punishment for their sins. This may be learned from *Psalms* 22:1, and especially from:

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>5</sup> He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Now we are to be armed with the same mind, sharing His sufferings. Joined to Him in...

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>10</sup> ...the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death,

—we live with Him; we have thus passed out of death into life, and so we do not come into Judgment. We enter with Christ into the heavenly places, experiencing the powers of the world to

come; and to us it is the same as though the Judgment were already past. He appears for us.

It was to this end that the Gospel was preached to them that are dead. Note well that the text does not say that the Gospel was preached to them that *were* dead, nor that it is preached to them that are dead, but that it is *was preached* to them that *are dead*. The reference is clearly to the time spoken of in *1 Peter* 3:19-20. The preaching was in the days of Noah, to those who were the captives of sin.

The latter part of *1 Peter* 4:6 itself shows most plainly that the preaching of the Gospel to them that are dead was while they were still living. The Gospel was preached to them, in order...

#### **1 Peter 4**

<sup>6</sup> ...that they might be judged according to *men in the flesh*, but *live* according to God *in the Spirit*.

The Gospel was preached to them for the very same purpose that it is now preached to us,—that while still in the flesh they might pass out of death into life, and thus pass the Judgment, and henceforth live in the flesh as though their bodies were already made spiritual.

#### **Romans 8**

<sup>9</sup> You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

The two texts together teach us a most precious lesson as to the power of the Gospel when it is received into the heart. They teach us to...

#### **Colossians 1**

<sup>12</sup> Give thanks to the Father,...

<sup>13</sup> Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son:

<sup>14</sup> In whom we have redemption.

## 126. The Perfect Life; and the Best Help to the Understanding of the Bible

Present Truth, October 16, 1902

I have a great, longing desire to be a true and perfect Christian; but when I look back on a day gone, I find several things done that ought not to have been done, and plenty of opportunities let slip. I often hear Salvationists give their testimony, saying that they have lived without sin; but I cannot understand it. I never feel satisfied with myself.

I also have a great desire to know more about God, and should so like to know about God's plan. What book would you advise me to get, that would help me? I should esteem it a favor if you would advise me about the books on God's plan; and also what books are best to help me to study the Scriptures.

THE best thing in the world to enable one to understand the Scriptures is the Bible itself. There are books that lead one to the Scriptures, opening them up to the understanding, just as it is the mission of *Present Truth* to do; and of these I cannot think of any that will help you to trace the one purpose running through the whole Bible better than the three following:

- *Patriarchs and Prophets*;
- *The Great Controversy*; and
- *The Everlasting Covenant*,

—all of which may be obtained at the office of the *International Tract Society, Ltd.*, 451 Holloway Road, London, N.

### The Bible Is the Source

But the Bible itself is the book that has to be studied in order to get an understanding of it; and these that I have mentioned are valuable simply because they lead the reader to the Scriptures as the source of all knowledge.



It is a mistake to suppose that the Scriptures are hard to understand. How can they be, when they give understanding?

### **Psalm 119**

<sup>104</sup> Through your precepts I get understanding.

The Scriptures are the Word of the Lord; and,

### **Proverbs 2**

<sup>6</sup> The Lord gives wisdom; out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

## **Patient Effort**

The trouble with most people is that they have not patience to study the Bible. They want to understand it without taking the trouble to become familiar with it. People will ordinarily spend five times as much time reading what somebody has said about the Bible as they will to learn what the Bible itself says.

You can see that this is unreasonable. How can one expect to understand the meaning of any book with which one is unfamiliar? It is self-evident that if you wish to know what anybody means, you must know what he says. Now I can assure you that if you will just give your attention in earnest to the Bible, reading it indeed, not merely pronouncing the words, you will understand it. But perhaps I should explain a little further.

## **One Piece at a Time**

In the first place, do not think to grasp the entire Bible at once. You cannot do it, anymore than you could pick up and carry ten thousand blocks of wood in your hands at one time. But by taking only one or two pieces at a time, you could move a whole timber yard; and so you can grasp the Bible.

By taking one step at a time one can go from London to Edinburgh; but no one can cover it all at one step. So the way for one to do, who really wishes to understand the Bible, is to start with some portion of it, and some book, to which one is especially attracted, and make a thorough study of it.

How shall you do this? You will say, as so many others do, that this is just what you want to know: How to study the Bible. Well, there is no magic, no mystery, in it. Simply go to work to store your mind with what it says. The Apostle Paul gives the rule, in writing to the young man Timothy:

## **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>6</sup> Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

This will require more close and careful reading than to master a newspaper article; just as a close-grained, hard piece of wood requires more strength to cut than a soft piece does; but you know from what you get the most service.

## **Seek for Understanding**

Having settled on the portion of Scripture to which you intend to devote special study, begin at the beginning, and read. Here I must explain what I mean by reading. As already stated, I do not mean merely to pronounce the words. There are some things that can be grasped at a glance; even some parts of the Bible can be understood (superficially, of course) by the most cursory reading; but whether it requires little or much time and application, real reading means the intelligent grasping of the thought expressed by the words.

Here is where reading becomes study, and not simple recreation or amusement. You must read again and again until you remember; for it must be evident to you that one reads to no purpose unless one remembers. To read that which one does not wish to remember is a waste of time, and mere intellectual dissipation, unfitting the mind to lay hold of that which is useful; just as the eating of that which does not build up the system, weakens the digestive powers, and makes one less capable of enjoying real food. So as we should not waste time reading what we do not wish to remember, when we read what is worth remembering we must read it so attentively that we shall certainly remember it.

## Reading to Obtain the Thought

This means repetition, but not slavish parrot-like repetition. Keep this distinction in mind: We read for the *thought*, and not for the mere words; but since the Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, the thought is put into language that will best express it (barring defects in translation); therefore in our effort to get the exact thought fixed in our mind, we insensibly get the exact form of words there also. In short, we simply more or less consciously analyze the sentences and paragraphs as we read them, thus perceiving the relation of each part to every other part, and do this so thoroughly that they stay with us by the power of association.

Read an entire book through in this way, until you can, without it, recall its entire contents in the course of a morning's walk,—until you can see it spread out as a whole before your mind's eye, just as you can the town in which you have lived for years.

Now you know what the writer *says*; you have it all in connection; and now you cannot fail to see that there really is a connection in it,—that there is a continuous thread running through the whole. The meaning reveals itself. Now you see that the reason why you did not understand the book before was that you did not really know what it said.

You can see, provided you believe what I have here written, that one must proceed with the Bible just as one would with a law book. The law student knows that there is but one way to an understanding of law, and that is by actual mastery of the contents of the law books; by close application to what they say.

Only there is no manner of comparison between the study of human law and Divine law. The same amount of study put on the Bible, that the law student puts on his text books, will yield infinitely greater returns. One can master the contents of a portion of the Bible in less time than is required for the same amount in any law book of purely human production; and then we have this advantage, that we are sure that everything we study does really

mean something. The Word of God is good seed;<sup>437</sup> it is pure life, that germinates and multiplies.

### **An Unfathomable Well**

I have several times spoken about mastering the Scriptures. I do not wish to be understood as conveying the idea that one can master them in the sense of knowing all that they have to reveal. That can never be done; and in another article in this number it is shown why this is impossible.<sup>438</sup>

The better acquainted one becomes with the Bible, or any part of it, the more will one see that only the outer edge of the surface of it has been touched. The Bible is a well of infinite, unfathomable depth,—an immeasurable expanse; but we can master it in this sense, that we have a clear and firm grasp of what it says, and may know that we know what we do know of it.

### **Understanding One Book Opens Up Others**

When you have done the work that I have indicated with a single book of the Bible, you will find to your delighted surprise that every other book of the Bible is more open to your understanding; for the Bible is one whole, having a single purpose, which may be likened both to a thread and to a broad, measureless plain; and the life and the fullness of the whole is in each part.

This study will have given you a love for Bible study, such as you never had before, and you will by far prefer to search out its treasures for yourself, to having somebody else dig them out and present them to you.

### **Dependence on the Holy Spirit**

I should not leave this subject without saying that in order to get the perfect understanding of the Scriptures one must continually seek and depend on the Holy Spirit, whose testimony they are.

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<sup>437</sup> Luke 8:11.

<sup>438</sup> This article is titled “The Unsearchable Riches of Christ,” and is contained in the Fragments Series, vol. 6, *The Bible*.

Without the Spirit's aid, all our zeal and application will be in vain.

### **Job 32**

<sup>8</sup> There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.

But while everything depends on the Spirit, we must work as though everything depended on us; for the Holy Spirit is not given to save people the trouble of making exertion, but, on the contrary, to stir them up to activity. We may, then, in a word, say that the helps to an understanding of the Bible are the Spirit of God and application.

### **A Longing for Perfection**

We come now to the consideration of the first part of your communication. You want to live the perfect Christian life, yet you can never be satisfied with yourself. That is good. It is good that you want to live a perfect Christian life, and it is good that you are not satisfied with yourself. May the Lord always keep that same longing and that same dissatisfaction always present with you.

A few words of Scripture will help you here. Righteousness comes from God, and not from ourselves:

### **Romans 5**

<sup>19</sup> As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.

### **Titus 3**

<sup>4</sup> ...the kindness and love of God our Saviour [appears to us],

<sup>5</sup> Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

<sup>6</sup> Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

<sup>7</sup> That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

## **Romans 9**

<sup>16</sup> So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy,

## **Philippians 2**

<sup>13</sup> For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

## **Psalms 18**

<sup>30</sup> As for God, His way is perfect, [and]

<sup>32</sup> It is God that girds me with strength, and makes my way perfect.

## **Romans 3**

<sup>27</sup> Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast;

<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them.

Therefore the true Christian must continually say,

## **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The apostle who was best acquainted with the Lord, and lived closest to Him, wrote these words:

## **1 John 1**

<sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;

<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

<sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

You see the point? We are sinners. The chiefest apostle counted himself the chief of sinners; and just because he was the chief of sinners, the grace of Christ was manifested in him in chiefest measure, in making him what he was, as an encouragement to others.<sup>439</sup>

We are to confess ourselves sinners, but to confess Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Sinners, yet kept from sin by the power of His grace. Sinners cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ. It is while we walk in the light, that is, in Him, that His blood cleanses us from all sin; the continual cleansing is necessary, in order to keep us free from the sin that is in us.

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>13</sup> Reaching forth...

<sup>14</sup> I press forward,

—is the Christian's motto. If he were satisfied with himself he would not do that. And yet he may all the time be living the perfect Christian life. Indeed, he would not be living it, if he were satisfied with himself:

### **2 Corinthians 10**

<sup>18</sup> For not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

### **1 John 1**

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins,—and we do so only as we confess the Lord's righteousness,—we are in accord with the Lord, and *He*

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<sup>439</sup> 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 1 Corinthians 15:10.

declares us righteous. He tells us that we are sinners; if we say that we are not, we make Him a liar, and our declaration of sinlessness is itself a proof of sin; but when we, looking at His cross, say that we are sinners, He says,

“You are right.”

Day by day as the Lord created the earth, He saw that “it was good;” yet it was not complete. The plant may be perfect at every stage of its growth; yet it must still keep on developing; for if at any stage it should become satisfied with its growth, and should cease developing, it would be imperfect. The problem, then, is, to keep sinful men free from sin. How can it be done? Only through the Word of God,—the life.

### **Psalm 17**

<sup>4</sup> By the word of your lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

### **Revelation 12**

<sup>11</sup> They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

### **John 15**

<sup>3</sup> Now are you clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And thus, remembering that it is by incorruptible seed, by the word of God which lives and abides for ever, that we are born again,<sup>440</sup> we come to the statement that:

### **1 John 3**

<sup>9</sup> Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

The shield of faith, which is by the Word of God, enables him to...

### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>16</sup> ...quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,

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<sup>440</sup> 1 Peter 1:23.



—and thus he...

### **John 5**

<sup>18</sup> ...keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.

### **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>7</sup> The treasure is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us.

Even in the world to come we shall be satisfied only in contemplating the virtue of Christ; and our songs will be...

### **Revelation 1**

<sup>5</sup> Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood.

## 127. This World and the World to Come

Present Truth, October 23, 1902

In reading the article in your paper on “The Earth’s Future Glory”<sup>441</sup> I noticed the statement that the lower animals will be affected by the restoration. This is not enough for me without a Scriptural sanction.

Can you give me any proof that animals will be living after the Judgment? Is there any promise that they shall have a future life and be raised from the dead, and their viciousness removed? Is it during the thousand years, or in the new earth, that the wolf, the lamb, the kid and the lion, shall dwell together, and a little child shall lead them?

Further, I find that houses are to be built. Shall we be men as we now are, and sow and plant and reap? Shall we need cattle to plow with, and shall we need the products of the earth to feed our spiritual bodies? We shall then be as the angels of God; what need will there be of houses to live in?

If you can make this subject more clear, you will greatly assist one of your readers.

I HAVE no doubt but that more than one of my readers will be helped by a clear exposition of the truth concerning the world to come; for there is nothing about which people in general have more hazy ideas. Indeed, very many even of the most noted religious teachers seem to accept it as a settled fact that we can know next to nothing about the future state, in spite of the fact that the Bible has so much to say about it, going into many of the most minute details.

Now it is not to gratify idle curiosity, that Bible makes these revelations; the Lord never reveals anything for that purpose; but it is that we may know how to use this world as a preparation for the world to come. I would not have you think that the whole subject can be made clear,—that is, that all that the Bible teaches

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<sup>441</sup> The article referred to was written by Wm. Covert, and was included in the *Present Truth* of August 14, 1902. I have included it in the Appendix.

concerning it can be set forth,—in a single article like this; but I do think that with the Lord's help, I can enable you to get hold of the truth of the matter. The fullness of it affords material for study all the rest of one's lifetime, both in this world and in the world to come.

In order to get an understanding of this subject, as of everything else, we must go back to the beginning. You can at once see that this is so, since that which the Bible speaks of as taking place at the coming of Christ,—that which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the beginning,—is the...

### **Acts 3 [RV]**

<sup>21</sup> ...restoration of all things.

Things are not now in this world as they were at the beginning. The third chapter of *2 Peter* sets this forth very clearly. It says that...

### **2 Peter 3 [RV]**

<sup>3</sup> ...in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts,

<sup>4</sup> And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

That this declaration of the mockers is self-evidently false, the apostle next proceeds to show, saying:

<sup>5</sup> For this they willfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God;

<sup>6</sup> By which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished;

<sup>7</sup> But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored with fire [marginal reading], being reserved for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

<sup>12</sup> ...[at which time] the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

<sup>13</sup> But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

Here several worlds are spoken of, but every reader knows that they are all this world, that is, this planet, under different conditions. There was the world in the beginning, so perfect in every respect that God himself could not see anything that it lacked.

Then came sin, and within a few hundred years the earth, which at the first was the home of peace, was corrupt and...

### **Genesis 6**

<sup>11</sup> ...filled with violence.

<sup>12</sup> ...for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

Then the earth was destroyed by the water that was stored within it, together with that which the firmament had separated from it; and from the waters of the flood there came another earth, oh, so terribly marred and changed from what it was before, yet cleansed from its defilement. That is the world that is now, and which is fast becoming as corrupt as it was before the flood.

### **Isaiah 24**

<sup>5</sup> The earth is also defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant,

—and therefore the curse will soon completely devour it. This time the work will be indeed complete, for a lake of fire, instead of water, will overwhelm it; but from the flood of fire another world will emerge, a renovated, purified earth, new as in the beginning, to be the eternal abode of righteousness, as it was designed to be.

Please go over this bit of history again, so that you can firmly grasp all the details of it. Now let us consider the relation of each one of these worlds to the others, so that we can at a glance take in the three views:

- a) The earth in the beginning,
- b) The present earth, and
- c) The new earth to come.

No one has any difficulty in connecting “the world that then was,”<sup>442</sup> as Peter designates the world before the flood, with the world that now is. It is far inferior in looks and productiveness now to what it was then, and the inhabitants are not now as strong or as long-lived as were the inhabitants of the earth before the flood; but nevertheless the same material is in this earth that was in that, and the inhabitants are the same order of beings.

Well now, let us take another step. Just as in the preceding case, nobody has any difficulty in connecting the world after the fall with the world before the fall. When Adam was driven out of the garden of Eden, he went out into this present world, as it now is, or as it was before the flood. It was the very same earth that God created and pronounced “very good,” only it had suffered a blight because of man’s sin; when Eve was tempted,

...her rash hand in evil hour  
Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck’d, she eat!  
Earth felt the Wound, and Nature from her seat  
Sighing through all her Works, gave signs of woe,  
That all was lost.<sup>443</sup>

It was the same earth after the fall as before, only marred, and man was the same creature, only weakened and susceptible to all sorts of diseases.

One step more takes us into the world to come; for that will be identical with that which was from the beginning; the new earth for which, according to God’s promise, we look is the result of...

### **Acts 3 [RV]**

<sup>21</sup> ...the restoration of all things,

—new as it originally came from the hand of the Creator; and the change from this earth to that will be no greater than the change from the new earth in the beginning to this present state.

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<sup>442</sup> 2 Peter 3:6.

<sup>443</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IX.

It will be exactly the same change, only in reverse order. That was degeneration; this is regeneration.

Can you not now see clearly that the world to come must be as real as this? To get a crude sketch of it, picture to yourself this present earth infinitely more fruitful than it now is, and bringing forth only perfect products, and the people on it free from every phase of selfishness, and all forms of disease; then think of them as going about all sorts of work that benefit mankind and glorify God.

Let me try to bring the immortal state a little more vividly home to you in another way. You know what it is for people to be very ill, and to recover. Men on the verge of the tomb have often been restored to what is termed perfect health in this world. Well now, just carry this restoration a little further; let the life that raised them from sickness to health be present in abundant fullness, transforming and glorifying the whole being, and let it be a permanent possession, and you have the new earth state, so far as man is concerned. In short, the world to come will be this present earth freed from all encumbrances, and its inhabitants freed from all disabilities.

Were there beasts and birds and fishes when the earth was created? Read the first chapter of *Genesis*. Then of course there will be all these creatures after the restoration. What would the world be without them? And, as in the beginning, they will be subject to man—his servants.

Then what was man's work in the beginning? To dress and keep the garden which God planted, and to fill and to subdue the rest of the earth. Even so in the world to come.

When the fires of the day of God have burned up all the corruption, the promise to the righteous is,

#### **Malachi 4**

<sup>3</sup> You shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.

Then will be the time when...

### **Amos 9**

<sup>13</sup> The ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that sows seed,

—for the captivity of God's people will be ended, and they shall be planted upon their own land, and...

<sup>15</sup> ...no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, says the Lord your God;

<sup>14</sup> ...and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine there of; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

### **Isaiah 65**

<sup>22</sup> They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and my elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

<sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.

This, as we see in verse 17, is when God creates new heavens and a new earth. And the fact that they do not build for another to inhabit, nor plant only for others to eat the fruit, shows that there is to be no death in that state. Will it not be glorious?

Just a word in closing this hasty outline. Do I need to tell you why it is that God has in His word set forth the conditions of life in the new earth so plainly before us? Do you not see for yourself that it is that we may know how we ought to live now? Is it not forcibly impressed on your mind that as we are to be the same people, going right on living as a real life as we do now, that, barring mortality, we are called on to live now the same as we shall live then. Our bodies only, not our characters, will be changed when Christ comes; and that change will only be the perfection of that which we now struggle and groan for.

Thank God the life to which the new earth invites us is not merely a pleasant dream in this mortal state; for Christ has power

over all flesh,<sup>444</sup> and the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.<sup>445</sup>

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

When this is true of all men on the earth (those who reject Christ having been destroyed), what more natural than that God should provide a place for them to live in, corresponding to their nature? So when all things are passed away, and all things are become new inside of men, the same thing will take place outside of them; and the righteous will go on living to all eternity, and after Christ's coming, just as they began to live before His coming, only under infinitely improved conditions.

In this assurance there is both infinite incentive and infinite help to...

## **Titus 2**

<sup>12</sup> ...live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

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<sup>444</sup> *John* 17:2.

<sup>445</sup> *2 Corinthians* 4:11.



## 128. Good and Bad Spirits

Present Truth, October 23, 1902

I am a reader of your paper, and I see in the number dated September 25 the statement that Spiritualists communicate with Satan or his evil angels.<sup>446</sup> One thing alone will prove that you are wrong; and you will see that the spirits will communicate, and show themselves to their friends. In *1 Samuel* 28 you will see that Saul recognized Samuel, and the spirit of Samuel was not Satan or one of his angels. From the days of Moses until now, there have been communications with the spirits. In *1 John* 4:1 we are told to try the spirits, whether they are of God.

**P**RECISELY; that is what we have been writing about. The fact that we are told to “try the spirits, whether they be of God,” is proof that there are spirits that are not of God; and whatever spirit is not of God is of Satan.

I have been struck with the fact that comparatively few people seem to understand the truth about angels,—that they are an entirely different order of beings from man. It is this confusion of ideas concerning the angels and the spirits of men, that makes so many an easy prey to Spiritualism. They read in the Bible about supernatural beings communicating with men, and straightway assume that the dead can and do communicate with their friends.

Some years ago I was talking with a very intelligent gentleman, the editor of an influential Spiritualist journal, who asked how it was that I, a believer in the Bible, denied spirit communication. Said he, wonderingly,

“Do you not believe that there are any such things as spirits at all?”

To him I replied, just as I say now to our inquiring friend:

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<sup>446</sup> See article 121, “Are the Dead with Christ?”

“Certainly I believe in spirits good and bad; and I believe that they can communicate with us. I believe this, because the Bible teaches it. They not only communicate with us, but good spirits have a great deal to do with us every day, and we are very dependent upon them. But these spirits are angels, and not men, and they never were men.”

In the first chapter of *Hebrews* we are told that:

### **Hebrews 1**

<sup>7</sup> [God] makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire;

—and that they are all...

<sup>14</sup> ...ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

God gives His angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways<sup>447</sup>; and,

### **Psalms 34**

<sup>7</sup> The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.

These angels, sons of God,<sup>448</sup> were in existence before there were any men; for when the foundations of the earth were laid they all...

### **Job 38**

<sup>7</sup> ...shouted for joy.

They could not possibly be the spirits of dead men; for they were all created not only before any man died, but before there was any man. But some of the angels...

### **Jude**

<sup>6</sup> ...kept not their first estate,

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<sup>447</sup> *Psalms* 91:11.

<sup>448</sup> *Job* 1:6, 2:1.

–and have given themselves up to try to thwart the purposes of God, and to lead men astray. This they do in various ways; but one of the boldest is to profess to be the spirits of good men who have died, and to have come direct from heaven with messages for men still on earth.

## **2 Corinthians 11**

<sup>14</sup> ...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

<sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.

Right here is where we need to heed the exhortation to...

## **1 John 4**

<sup>1</sup> ...try the spirits, whether they are of God.

How shall we try them?

## **Isaiah 8**

<sup>20</sup> To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Now it need not take us long to prove them thoroughly by God's Word. Indeed we may know them at the very outset; for when they come professing to be the spirits of the dead, we know at once that they are lying spirits, and we should have no further words with them. We know they are lying spirits, because...

## **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not anything.

A spirit's claim to be one of the dead returned, proves him to be of the devil.

But what about Saul and Samuel? That is easily answered. My friend says that...

“...the spirit of Samuel was not Satan or one of his angels.”

That is self-evident; but the spirit that talked with Saul on his night visit to the spiritualist medium was not the spirit of Samuel.

Read the account in *1 Samuel* 28. Verse 7 says that Saul said to his servants,

### **1 Samuel 28**

<sup>7</sup> Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor.

Note particularly that this woman had “a familiar spirit;” not many, but one; there was one spirit with whom she was in constant communication. Now will anybody claim that the spirit of Samuel held itself subject to the beck and call of a woman, who by the command of God was an outlaw? The idea is too absurd and repulsive to be entertained even by those who believe that Samuel was conscious after death. Note further that:

<sup>6</sup> When Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Because God would not answer Saul, he had recourse to the woman with a familiar spirit,—one who was...

### **Deuteronomy 18**

<sup>12</sup> ...an abomination unto the Lord.

This proves conclusively that God had nothing whatever to do with that interview. But since it was not of God, it was certainly of the devil; and we know that Samuel, who faithfully served the Lord all his lifetime, would not serve the devil when he was dead, even if he were conscious and able to serve anybody. Hence we know that neither God nor Samuel had anything to do with Saul's interview with the woman of Endor. The spirit with whom he talked was not the spirit of Samuel but the spirit of a demon personating Samuel.

Moreover, the Scripture does not say that Saul saw any spirit, but plainly indicates that he did not. When, as a result of the woman's incantations, the spirit appeared, Saul did not see it, but asked,

## 1 Samuel 28

<sup>13</sup> ...what did you see?

<sup>14</sup> ...An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle. Then Saul perceived that it was Samuel.

How did he perceive that it was Samuel? Solely by what the woman said. He wanted Samuel, and of course the evil spirit knew enough to personate him.

But it is thought that the fact that it is said that Saul perceived that it was Samuel proves that Samuel, although dead, was there. Not by any means. Read the account of the fall, in *Genesis* 3:1-6. God had said that death would surely follow eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan said,

## Genesis 3

<sup>4</sup> ...You shall not surely die:

<sup>5</sup> For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Then follows the statement that:

<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.

Are we to understand that the tree was really good for food, and to be desired to make one wise? Certainly not; It was deadly, and not at all good for food. The woman, hypnotized by the serpent,—Satan,—who is the author of all hypnotism, saw what was not so. Even so it was with Saul.

It is true that from the days of Moses, and long before his day, until now, there has been communication with spirits; and so there will be till the end. We are glad to know this, for so we know that we may be permitted, even as Abraham and Lot, to hold converse with angels who are sent forth to do service for us.

There is most certainly a reality to Spiritualism. Men do really communicate with real spirits; but never with the spirits of the

dead. And though the spirits of devils are continually on the watch to lure us to destruction, we need not fear them, so long as we hold fast to the shield of faith, and...

### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>17</sup> ...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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### **Notice to Correspondents**

Present Truth, October 23, 1902

**A**LTHOUGH we do not publish any names in the "Editor's Private Corner," we like always to have both the names and addresses of all who send questions; for sometimes a question cannot be answered through the paper; and whether it can or not, we wish to be able to communicate with the sender.

Quite frequently, however, the address is so indistinct that it cannot be made out; and we ask as a special favor that all correspondents will write their name and addresses legibly.

Will all who write asking questions, or making any reference to matter contained in the paper, please address their letters to the Editor of *Present Truth*, and not to the *International Tract Society*? Please do not fail to note this.

## 129. Satan's Offer

Present Truth, October 30, 1902

Was it possible for Satan to give Christ all the kingdoms of the world? If not, wherein was the temptation?

**W**E READ that Jesus was tempted by the devil, and that one of the temptations consisted in taking Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showing Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and saying,

### **Matthew 4**

<sup>9</sup> All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me;

—therefore there cannot be any doubt about the fact. We know that the offer was a temptation; and since it was a temptation, it is evident that Satan had something to offer. To find out just what it was, is not a matter of mere curiosity, or of trifling importance, for Christ suffered for us, being tempted, and His temptations are what we have to meet. He met them, and resisted them, in order that we might have the victory.

In *1 John* 5:19, we are told that:

### **1 John 5 [RV]**

<sup>19</sup> ...the whole world lies in the evil one.

In *2 Corinthians* 4:4, the one who...

### **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>4</sup> ...blinds the minds of those who believe not,

—who is certainly the devil, is called:

<sup>4</sup> ...the god of this world.

Hence it is evident that Satan has a very definite hold upon...

### **Galatians 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...this present evil world.

Indeed, he has full control of it; but he cannot keep it for ever; for:

## **1 John 2**

<sup>17</sup> The world passes away, and the lust thereof.

Satan could have given Christ just as much as he himself possessed, and no more,—that is, “this present evil world.” Do you say that there could be no temptation in that? Millions of men have bartered their souls for only a small portion of it. The temptation that came to Christ was exactly the same, except in degree, as that which caused Esau to sell his birthright,<sup>449</sup> and Balaam to try to curse Israel.<sup>450</sup> It is the temptation that comes to every man, to give up the unseen for the seen, the world to come for this world.

When the world was created, perfect and glorious, it was given to man. Man was made king—God’s viceroy on earth. But man proved recreant to his trust, and basely sold himself to Satan, who of course thereby gained possession of the dominion. Satan’s usurpation of the earth at once corrupted it; but God never acquiesced in the transaction. God, in giving the earth to man, did not give up His own right as Over-Lord, and therefore when Satan overthrew man, and seized his kingdom, he did not in the least degree diminish God’s right. Satan is indeed god of this world; but this present evil world is not the world that God designed for man’s dwelling-place, and it is not what Christ came to acquire for man.

No one can ever give a better title than he himself possesses. Now God is...

## **Genesis 14**

<sup>22</sup> ...the possessor of heaven and earth,

—and He alone can give a valid title. Satan is a thief, and therefore whoever receives goods at his hands must know that they

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<sup>449</sup> *Genesis* 25:29-34.

<sup>450</sup> *Numbers* ch. 22-24.



will sooner or later be confiscated. But this is just what the majority of men never think of. They grasp after the glittering prize that Satan holds out, not recognizing the difference between what only seems to be and what really is. Christ always had a clear perception of things that differ, and hence He was able to resist Satan's allurements.

The same temptation came to Moses, and was resisted.

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

<sup>25</sup> Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

<sup>26</sup> Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

So,

<sup>27</sup> ...he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

This temptation comes to every person in some form. Do you want to know something of the strength of that which Christ resisted? Then recall the times when you have had the choice between the gratification of appetite and passion—the things that pertain to this world—and the opportunity to develop mind and body, and to be of greater use in the world. Let every one think what opportunities for gaining knowledge he has let slip, simply through love of ease and selfish indulgence, and he will know something of what Jesus resisted for us.

But you will say that one really gets nothing in the end by this exchange. After we have gratified the flesh, we have nothing to show for it; there remains nothing but weakness, weariness, disgust, regrets, aches and pains, and the fear of death. Exactly, but the thing looked attractive enough before we indulged in it; and we may be sure that Satan made the kingdoms of this world look very attractive to Christ. He showed Him all the glory of them.

Do not imagine that there is no parallel between the lust of the flesh, and the kingdoms offered to Christ. To be sure there was no appearance of grossness in what was offered Him,—only the glory appeared,—but the grossness was all there, but concealed. And there was never evil thing held out as a bait to man, that was not made to appear good.

Think what the offer meant to Christ—to be the leader of the world having the ears of all the people. How it would be suggested to Him that here was the opportunity of His lifetime. For just one act of compromise He could get into a position where He could present the truth to the whole world, and thus, it would be argued, the end would justify the means. He could be lifted up above the world, without enduring the cross.

Ah, there was the secret of the temptation: the prospect of escaping the dreaded, cruel cross. Think how all men naturally shun the cross, and seek to escape it; think how many times you have neglected duty for pleasure,—the pleasure of sin,—and you will be able to comprehend a portion of the temptation that assailed Jesus.

But Christ, like Moses, had respect unto the recompense of the reward. With all the pomp and power, the glory and glitter of the world before Him, He deliberately turned from it to choose the cross of shame. The myriads of warriors moving at His command to overcome opposition to His will, He resigned for the company of twelve men of obscure birth. Through death He opened the way of life; whereas if He had yielded to Satan's temptation He would have had only the pleasures of sin "for a season,"<sup>451</sup> and then eternal death.

### **Isaiah 53**

<sup>11</sup> He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

In the way of self-denial and the cross there is everlasting satisfaction; while in the way of self-gratification there is emptiness.

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<sup>451</sup> *Hebrews* 11:25.

The earth desolate through the thousand years between the first and second resurrection, with Satan confined to it,<sup>452</sup> shows what the kingdom really was, which seemed so dazzling as Satan spread it out to the view of Christ. And that shows what everyone gets who chooses this world.

### **Proverbs 14**

<sup>12</sup> There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

## **Overcoming the World**

Christ conquered, in order that we might conquer. His victory is ours, if we fully accept Him.

### **1 John 5 [RV]**

<sup>4</sup> ...this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>7</sup> Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Therefore to meet the temptation of the small portion of “this present evil world” that is offered to us, we have the strength that met and conquered the whole of it. Thus we are...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>37</sup> ...more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Just one thought in closing,—a bit of practical help in resisting “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”<sup>453</sup> Let us say, for example, that you are very hungry, and that along with the simple, wholesome food that your system really requires, there is set before you some dainty, pleasing to the palate, but not helpful to one who strives for the mastery. Now stop a moment and consider the end. It seems at this moment as if you want that thing more than anything else in the world; but if you listen to wisdom you will know that if you will but wait a little while, until you

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<sup>452</sup> See *Revelation* 20.

<sup>453</sup> *1 Peter* 2:11.

have satisfied your legitimate wants with good food, you will not care for this tempting morsel.

In short, put yourself at once on the further side of the temptation, and you have won. You put it behind your back. We escape the sinful attractions of this world, by transporting ourselves by faith in the future, eternal world, laying hold of the power of the world to come.<sup>454</sup>

Let us ever pray that the god of this world may not have power to blind our eyes by the glitter of this present evil world, so that we shall not be able to discern the real good from the false show.

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<sup>454</sup> *Hebrews* 6:5.

## 130. Conversion and Falling Away

Present Truth, October 30, 1902

I am anxious to know what is really the teaching of Scripture concerning the falling away of the converted. It seems to me that in the Scriptures is clearly taught that a renewed man, while in this present imperfect state of existence, is not only subject to the allurements of temptation, but liable to lapse and gradually drift back, and ultimately find himself again in the depths of iniquity.

A truly converted person, according to the creed of the church in whose teachings I have been indoctrinated, can never ultimately be lost. He may fall into the water, but will never remain in it till drowned; he may make hair-breadth escapes, but escapes in every case are inevitable.

Such doctrine seems to me opposed to the clear teaching of Scripture, which never speaks of the faithlessness on the part of Christians as being due to a lack of genuineness in relation to their conversion.

On the contrary, such express utterances as, "Be faithful unto death,"<sup>455</sup> and, "It is impossible to renew such (as fall away) to repentance,"<sup>456</sup> of necessity involve the possibility of falling away from "the truth as it is in Jesus."<sup>457</sup>

**I**N DISCUSSING a question of this kind we need to guard against fine-spun theological theories, and to keep to simple, practical truth. The Scriptures set the truth forth very clearly, in the abundant warnings against being led away by the error of the wicked and falling from our own steadfastness.

We can settle this question at once by referring to the beginning, before there was sin. Of the god of this world, Satan, it is said:

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<sup>455</sup> *Revelation* 2:10.

<sup>456</sup> *Hebrews* 6:4-6.

<sup>457</sup> *Ephesians* 4:21.

## **Ezekiel 28**

<sup>14</sup> You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so; you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

<sup>15</sup> You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

If the pure and holy angels, even the chief of them all, the one who stood closest to God, and put the seal on perfection, could fall, it is evident that men who are walking with God can fall. Adam was the son of God, yet he fell; we also, although sons of God, are not any more beyond the possibility of falling again.

Those who claim that a saint can never fall away, always say, when a good man apostatizes, that he had never been truly converted. Thus they throw doubt upon the genuineness of everybody's conversion, and lead many timid souls to lose their confidence in God.

But this false claim can easily be met. It will be admitted that the just live by faith,—that the one who has faith is just before God. The claim, therefore, that a really righteous man cannot fall away, is the same as saying that it is impossible to give up his faith. Now take the case of Peter walking on the water. We know that he did actually walk by faith; yet he fell. Would anyone say that the fact of his fall shows that he had not really walked on the water, but only seemed to do so?

One writer is quoted as saying:

“One does not cross the bridge leading to life, and by-and-by return by another to the shores of death. Once passed from death to life, he is alive, and will never return into death.”

That sounds very fine; but it lacks proof. Judas, who at the last betrayed Jesus, was one of the twelve who received...

## **Luke 9**

<sup>1</sup> ...power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases,

—and who...

## Luke 9

<sup>6</sup> ...went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

A man cannot carry life to others unless he himself has it; yet Judas went at last to perdition. We must not flatter ourselves that a like thing cannot happen to us; for if we do we shall surely fall.

But what about Christ's statement that no one can pluck His sheep out of His hand? It is true; but they are in His hand only because they choose to be, and can leave of their own free will whenever they choose. Well, at any rate we know that...

## 1 John 5

<sup>18</sup> Whosoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God, keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.

Yes, it is true.

## 1 John 3

<sup>9</sup> Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

But note that it does not say,

“Whosoever *has been born* of God,”

—but,

“Whosoever *is born*.”

The Christian's relation to God is always that of a newborn babe no matter how much he may grow. The good seed is the Word of God; and it is only as this word abides in us that we live. If we neglect or reject the word at any time, we shall die as surely as if we stopped eating the food that nourishes our bodies. And here we have an exact parallel; for our daily bread is given us for the purpose of teaching us how to obtain life from the word; and it is just as reasonable to say that a living man cannot starve himself to death as to say that a live Christian cannot become dead in trespasses and sins.

## **Romans 11**

<sup>20</sup> You stand by faith; be not high-minded, but fear:

<sup>21</sup> For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He spare not you.

No one can question the genuineness of Paul's conversion; yet he declared that he was obliged to wage a continual warfare with himself, keeping his body under, and bringing it into subjection, lest he should become a castaway.

## **1 Corinthians 9**

<sup>24</sup> Know you not that they which run in a race run all, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain.

<sup>25</sup> And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

<sup>26</sup> I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air:

<sup>27</sup> But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Read the awful warning in:

## **Hebrews 6**

<sup>4</sup> It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

<sup>5</sup> And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

<sup>6</sup> If they fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

Surely there is no spiritual state possible in this life, higher than that here described; yet it is plainly indicated that men may fall from it. There would be no sense in saying, "If they fall away it is impossible to renew them again to repentance," if they could not fall away. And then the words,



## Hebrews 6

<sup>9</sup> But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you,

–show that it is possible for those to whom the apostle writes to have the same experience.

But is this possibility of falling away to perdition always to haunt the saints of God? Will the redeemed throughout eternity ever be in danger of losing their estate, as the fallen angels did? Not by any means; and the reason will be that before they reach that state, they will have been so thoroughly tested,—will have had such experiences with every sort of temptation, that nothing can come to them that they have not already met and resisted. When the restoration of all things is accomplished, rebellion will have been for ever wiped out of the universe.

And even here we are not to be “haunted” by the fear of falling away, although we are ever to keep in mind the possibility of it, and the danger that besets us. We are to know that we are safe in the everlasting arms<sup>458</sup> as long as we do not take ourselves out.

## Jude

<sup>24</sup> [God] is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy;

–and this suggestion of the possibility of falling is our assurance that we shall be...

## Ephesians 6

<sup>13</sup> ...able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

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<sup>458</sup> *Deuteronomy* 33:27.

# 131. The Rock of Our Salvation

Present Truth, November 6, 1902

Having been greatly helped by the answers given in the “Editor’s Private Corner,” I should feel obliged if you could help me with a little study of *Matthew* 16:18-19. My chief difficulty is this: “You are Peter, and on this rock will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” A little explanation would greatly oblige me and several other readers of *Present Truth*.

## The Church’s Foundation

LET us first read those two verses in their connection.

### Matthew 16

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

<sup>14</sup> And they said, Some say that you are John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

<sup>15</sup> He said unto them, But whom do you say that I am?

<sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>18</sup> And I say also unto you, That you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

<sup>19</sup> And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

In this sentence,

<sup>18</sup> You are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church,

—there is a play on words, which makes the statement very striking and clear, where it is recognized. The word “Peter” signi-

fies a *stone*. The word, however, is entirely different from “Rock.” The Greek word for “Peter,” *petros*, is masculine, while the word for “rock” is feminine, *petra*. This word signifies,

...not *loose stones*, but masses of live rock.<sup>459</sup>

It indicates rocks...

...such as run out from the beach; a ledge or shelf of rocks; [and] there is no example in good authors of *petra* in the sense of *petros*, a stone.

From this little study of words it will be seen that instead of a comparison between Peter and the rock, there is a sharp contrast. A loose stone, as Peter, *petros*, would not do for a foundation; nothing could be built on it; but the great ledge, *petra*, jutting out into the sea, against which the mighty waves dashed themselves and repair broken and defeated, is just the right foundation for a building.

Now who is this Rock? There is abundant answer in the Scriptures. The children of Israel in the wilderness...

### **1 Corinthians 10**

<sup>4</sup> ...drank of that spiritual Rock that followed [went with] them; and that Rock was Christ.

He it was who stood on the visible rock in Horeb when Moses smote it.<sup>460</sup> Again:

### **Psalms 18**

<sup>2</sup> The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer.

### **Psalms 89**

<sup>26</sup> He shall cry unto me, You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.

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<sup>459</sup> Liddle & Scott's Lexicon.

<sup>460</sup> Exodus 17:6.

## **Psalms 92**

<sup>15</sup> The Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Still more emphatic are the words of the Lord in *Isaiah 28:16-17*, to those who are making lies their refuge:

## **Isaiah 28**

<sup>16</sup> Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believes shall not make haste.

<sup>17</sup> Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the water shall overflow the hiding place.

Compare this with the assurance that those who come to God in Christ are...

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>19</sup> ...fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

<sup>20</sup> And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

<sup>21</sup> In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord.

This does not say that we are built upon the apostles and prophets (much less Peter), but on the same foundation on which they were built;

## **1 Corinthians 3**

<sup>11</sup> For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

There is more testimony; but nothing could make this more clear. You may ask why Jesus did not say plainly,

“I will build my church upon myself,”

—and thus make it impossible for anybody to mistake His meaning. So we might ask why when He stood in the temple, of which He had just driven the buyers and sellers, He said,

## John 2

<sup>19</sup> Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

He meant the temple of His body, yet the Jews thought that He referred to the building in which they were standing. They need not have been mistaken, however; and there is still less ground for misunderstanding His meaning in the verse that we are studying, for the words themselves, as I have pointed out, show the contrast between Peter and the Rock on which the church is built.

Peter's own testimony on the subject ought to be final, since he is the one about whom the controversy over Christ's words has raged. It was he who gave utterance to the conclusion of faith:

## Matthew 16

<sup>16</sup> You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,

—thus indicating, what he at another time plainly declared, that Christ has the words of eternal life, and has life to bestow.<sup>461</sup> Now let us turn to his epistle, written long afterwards, and we shall see that he recognized the difference between loose stones and the solid foundation. Speaking of Christ, he says:

## 1 Peter 2

<sup>4</sup> To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

<sup>5</sup> You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

<sup>6</sup> Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded.

Loose stones, such as Peter and all other men, are not the proper thing for a foundation, but they are just the thing with which to build a house on a foundation already laid; and the great Master Builder takes just such poor, weak, vacillating, rash, impulsive persons as Peter, and forms them on the True Foundation

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<sup>461</sup> *John* 6:68-69.

into a beautiful structure that will share the eternally enduring nature of the Foundation itself.

For the Rock on which we are built is a living Rock. He was dead, but He lives for evermore, and He has the keys of death and the grave.<sup>462</sup> The gates of hell (the grave) could not prevail against Him,—they were not strong enough to hold Him,—and so they will prove equally powerless against all who are built on Him. Yea, to those who are in Christ it is the same as though death even now did not exist, for:

## **2 Timothy 1**

<sup>10</sup> [He] has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

And since over even death itself,

## **Romans 8**

<sup>37</sup> ...we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us,

—it follows that in Him we are also victors over sin, for that is really the gate of the grave. Blessed are all they who, with Peter, recognize and continually confess this glorious truth in their lives.

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<sup>462</sup> *Revelation 1:18.*

## 132. Christ the Firstfruits

Present Truth, November 6, 1902

In your article, “Moses and Elijah,” in *Present Truth* of October 16,<sup>463</sup> I read that the saints who will be raised from the dead at Christ’s coming were represented by Moses, who had died, but who, raised from the dead, appeared in glory.

If that be so, how can Christ be “the firstfruits of those that slept”? *1 Corinthians* 15:20. Again, “Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.” Verse 26. See also *Revelation* 1:5, where we read that Jesus Christ is “the first begotten of the dead.”

I should like more light upon this matter, and I feel sure that all readers of your valuable paper will be interested in it. It does seem a mystery. May God grant you the light on this subject.

**A** MEN. It is indeed a mystery; for it is the very essence of the Gospel, which is the mystery of God. But we may be sure that God will give us the light; for since the mystery is...

### 2 Corinthians 4

<sup>4</sup> ...the glorious Gospel of Christ,

—it carries the light in itself.

You are not the first one who has been troubled over this matter. But why is it that you have never thought of the mystery until the resurrection of Moses is mentioned? Why should it seem more strange, or more in opposition to the texts you have quoted, that Moses should be raised from the dead before the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, than that others are raised?

- Elijah raised the widow’s son to life,<sup>464</sup> and

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<sup>463</sup> The article referred to, “Moses and Elijah,” was not written by E. J. Waggoner. I have included it in the Appendix.

<sup>464</sup> *1 Kings* 17:17-38.

- Elisha brought the Shunammite's dead child back to life.<sup>465</sup>

Besides these, the Gospels record many instances of the dead being brought to life by Jesus, before His own resurrection. Recall, for instance, the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus. These cases do not, of course, lessen the mystery, but they show that the fact that Christ is...

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>20</sup> ...the firstfruits of them that slept,

—is not incompatible with the resurrection of Moses.

I know that you will at once feel inclined to say that Moses appeared in glory, whereas the others, as far as we have any record, appeared only on this earth; but you must remember that the essential thing is the fact of the resurrection, and not where they appeared. A person who is brought to life from the dead, and who remains on this earth, is just as effectually raised to life as if he were taken to heaven.

Moreover, we have the cases of Enoch and Elijah, who were both taken to heaven alive, one of whom appeared with Moses in glory. Now the power of death was broken in these two cases, just as surely as if they had died and had been raised from the dead.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>12</sup> Death passed upon all men.

Exactly the same power is shown in the translation of the living as in the raising of the dead. The changing of the living from mortality to immortality, from corruption to incorruption, is precisely the same act as the raising of the dead to immortality.

These things only increase the mystery, yet they help to give us light in knowledge, as might be expected from a mystery which is itself glory. They suggest to us what is involved in the thought

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<sup>465</sup> 2 Kings 4:18-37.



that Christ is the firstfruits and the first begotten of the dead. *Romans* 1:4 will help us still further. Christ was...

### **Romans 1**

<sup>4</sup> Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

The resurrection did not add anything to Christ's power, but only showed the power that He had before. It did not establish any new relation between Him and God,—did not make Him the Son of God,—but made that relation manifest.

The power by which Christ was raised from the dead was the same power by which He was brought into the world. It was the same power by which He performed all His miracles, and, indeed, it was the power by which He lived His blameless life; for it was “according to the Spirit of holiness.”

The very same mystery that attends the raising of the dead before the resurrection of Christ, the firstfruits, is equally great in another connection, namely, that of holy living. Jesus Christ is the Author and Perfecter of faith.<sup>466</sup>

### **Philippians 1**

<sup>11</sup> The fruits of righteousness,

—with which we are to be filled,

<sup>11</sup> ...are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God;

—yet there were men of faith,—men who were righteous,—before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. There you have the mystery; can you explain it?

To come directly to the root of the matter, we have only to recall the statement that:

### **Revelation 13**

<sup>8</sup> [Christ is] the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

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<sup>466</sup> *Hebrews* 7:2.

## **1 Peter 1**

<sup>20</sup> Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

<sup>21</sup> Who by Him do believe in God.

Now since He was slain from the foundation of the world, it follows that He was also raised from that time, which is easy for us to believe when we grasp the fact that:

## **Colossians 1**

<sup>15</sup> [He] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

<sup>16</sup> For by Him [literally, “*in Him*”] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible;...

<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and by Him [in Him] all things consist.

A comparison of two or three texts will make it very plain that the resurrection of Jesus was a present reality in the days of Moses and David. First read *Ephesians* 4:8-10, where there cannot be the slightest doubt that the resurrection of Christ is spoken of:

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>8</sup> When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive [a multitude of captives], and gave gifts unto men.

<sup>9</sup> (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

<sup>10</sup> He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things).

This is a direct quotation from *Psalms* 68:18, showing that the power of Christ as the great Emancipator from the grave was the joy of the psalmist.

Now compare *Deuteronomy* 30:11-14 with *Romans* 10:5-9. We see that the latter is merely a repetition of the former. Moses, in *Deuteronomy*, was describing the righteousness which is by faith, and said, as quoted by Paul,

## **Romans 10**

<sup>6</sup> Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

<sup>7</sup> Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

<sup>8</sup> But what says it? The Word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the Word of faith, which we preach;

<sup>9</sup> That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Here we see it plainly set forth that the keeping of the commandments, the life of righteousness, was possible in the days of Moses, as in all other days, only by the presence of the resurrection life of Jesus in the heart. "The reproach of Christ,"<sup>467</sup> which Moses chose, is the cross; and he, as well as Paul, could say:

## **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Do you not now see light in the mystery? Do you not see that since...

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ He is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new;

–the power of the cross and the resurrection is the power of creation? Do you not see that:

## **1 John 1**

<sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning [was] the Word of life,

–and that this life has been the light of every man that has come into the world?<sup>468</sup> Do you not see that from Abel till our time the resurrection power is the only power by which men can

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<sup>467</sup> *Hebrews* 11:26.

<sup>468</sup> *John* 1:9.

be righteous? and does not this make you glad, in that you have the resurrection power to work righteousness in you?

#### **Romans 4**

<sup>17</sup> [God] quickens the dead, and calls those things which be not as though they were;

—because His Word is that which makes the things exist. Abraham saw and rejoiced in Christ's day,<sup>469</sup> and the power of the resurrection of the Messiah, who was to come through Isaac, was so really present in Abraham's time that it brought Isaac into being in order that He might be born of his line. Can you conceive of any greater mystery than that? And is it not a glorious mystery?

Since "Jesus, and the resurrection"<sup>470</sup> had such power in the days of old, before He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, what may it not accomplish in us and for us now?

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<sup>469</sup> *John* 8:56.

<sup>470</sup> *Acts* 17:18.

## 133. The Two Laws

Present Truth, November 13, 1902

Original Note: All communications intended for publication, and all questions, whether an answer is desired by letter or through the paper, should be addressed to the Editor of *Present Truth*, and not to the *International Tract Society*. Correspondents are requested in all cases to give the name and address, and to take pains to write them legibly. All questions are regarded as strictly confidential, and nobody but the Editor ever has any knowledge of the questioner's identity; but the Editor wishes always to be able to communicate with his correspondents. -E. J. Waggoner, *Editor*.

What was the difference between the moral and the ceremonial law?

**I**N DETERMINING the meaning of any term, the first thing to do is to collect all, or at least a large number, of the instances of its use, and set them before the mind's eye at the same time; and from the way in which it is used, we see its meaning.

Now when we begin to apply this method with the terms "moral law" and "ceremonial law," we straightway find that we have no Scriptural basis for determining their meaning, since they are not to be found in the Bible. To some it might seem that this increased the difficulty of our task; but in reality it removes it; for since the terms are wholly foreign to the Bible, it follows that they ought never to be used in religious conversation or writing.

Everything that needs to be known of God and the Gospel, and of the relation of man to God and his fellow-men, may be canvassed without ever once using those terms of human invention; and the less they are used, the less difficulty will people have in understanding the Gospel.

As a matter of fact, all the difficulties in understanding the Gospel are man-made. The Gospel itself is so simple that a child can comprehend it; and the more childlike one's mind and character are, the more easily will it be understood. It is by the inven-

tion and use of unscriptural terms, that men have obscured the gloriously simple truths of God's Word.

All the controversies that have disgraced the church, and confused the minds of believers and unbelievers, have been over terms and formulas which for the most part were unknown to those through whom God revealed His truth to the world. The confusion arose from the different meanings which different people attached to these terms; and there was no possibility of arriving in a perfect agreement, since there was no final court of appeal. The terms in use were not in the Bible, and therefore each person was warranted in putting his own construction upon them.

That being the case it is evident that a Pope or a council was the only means of allaying strife. But popes and councils are wholly unnecessary when we hold ourselves rigidly to Scriptural terms. It is for this reason that the expressions "moral law" and "ceremonial law" are never used in *Present Truth*.

It will not do, however, to leave the matter here; we must take a brief view of law in its various phases, or of the various laws spoken of in the Bible; for there can be no question but that the Bible does mention more than one law. If we understand the Bible use of the term "law," it is of little or no consequence of what men mean by the terms which they have invented.

Readers of the Bible will recall the fact that it speaks most frequently of "the law," indicating that there is in reality but one law worthy of the name. A few texts will enable us to see what this law is.

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>14</sup> All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

### **Romans 13**

<sup>10</sup> Love is the fulfilling of law.

## **1 John 4**

<sup>16</sup> God is love.

## **John 12**

<sup>50</sup> I know that His commandment is life everlasting.

## **John 17**

<sup>3</sup> And this is life eternal that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

These, taken together, show us that the real law is the life of God. There is nothing else that can be named in the same breath with it.

This is the universal law, the law for the universe—for man and beast, for plant and mineral. One life has created all, and one life pervades and upholds all. There is...

## **Ephesians 4 [RV]**

<sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all, who is over all, and, through all, and in all.

His life in each created thing, will, if given free course, bring that thing to perfection, “after its kind,”—will cause it to fulfill God’s purpose concerning it. The same life that causes the vine to twine round a support, always turning in one direction, causes the oak tree to grow upright. It is one life that makes each perfect after its kind. The same life brings the beasts to perfection after their kind, barring the curse brought upon them by man, making them fulfill the object of their existence. That same life in man, if wholly yielded to, will make him...

## **Hebrews 13**

<sup>21</sup> ...perfect in every good work to do His will.

Thus we see there is but one life, but an infinite variety of manifestations of it; one law, the law of life. Law is spiritual because it is the life of God, who is Spirit. People are accustomed to speak of “the laws of nature;” but these are but the working of God in the things that He has made. Drummond wrote of “natural law in the

spiritual world,” which is a complete inversion of terms; for the truth is that spiritual law reigns in the natural world.

But men have faculties that animals and plants have not. They are capable of committing sin or of doing righteousness, terms which cannot be applied to the lower creation; consequently the law which defines the righteousness for which man was created is sometimes called the moral law. This law, put into words, is the ten commandments, which God spoke from Sinai; wrote with His own finger on tables of stone, and delivered to Moses to be put into the ark, in the most holy place of the sanctuary.

These ten words are *the form* of knowledge and of the truth.<sup>471</sup> They are the statement of law on the Living Stone,—the Lamb slain,—which is in the midst of the throne of God, which is the source of the river of life. This law, “which was ordained unto life,”<sup>472</sup> is death to some. All depends on our relation to it. If we yield wholly to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” and it is righteousness and life to us<sup>473</sup>; but if we disbelieve, or doubt, even though we do our utmost to keep the law, it is death to us.

## 2 Corinthians 3

<sup>6</sup> The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The living law working in us and controlling us, is righteousness,—morals,—while the law only in outward form, in letter, is but form and ceremony.

Ceremonialism grows out of the absence of life power. Just to the extent that people lose connection with the life of the Lord, will they multiply forms and ceremonies. They will do as the Pharisees did, attempt to prescribe for every circumstance in life, laying down rules to guide in every detail. Thus while they think that they are enlarging the law, they are really narrowing it down from the infinite breath of God’s free life to the measure of their own mind. This is essentially the ceremonial law, if we allow our-

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<sup>471</sup> *Romans 2:20.*

<sup>472</sup> *Romans 7:10.*

<sup>473</sup> *Romans 8:1-4.*



selves to use the term; and it is the law in ceremonies, instead of in life.

It will be asked,

“Did not God himself give the people laws besides the ten commandments?”

—and the reply must be, Yes. He tells the story himself in *Ezekiel* 20. He says of His people:

### **Ezekiel 20**

<sup>11</sup> I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.

<sup>13</sup> But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.

<sup>25</sup> Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.

If the people had walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham, they would never have needed even the commandments spoken from Sinai, any more than he did. He lived by faith, and so God said,

### **Genesis 26**

<sup>5</sup> Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my commandments, my statutes and my laws;

—and they might have been equally righteous without the written law. But the same unbelief that made it necessary to give them a law on tables of stone,—the shadow of the real, living law,—made it necessary to give other precepts. Their unbelief was a veil interposed between them and the light of God, the law<sup>474</sup>; and that of course made a shadow.

It was bad enough for them so to reject the living, glorious law that God himself had to give them only a shadow; but it was much worse for them to increase the darkness by additions of

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<sup>474</sup> **Proverbs 6** <sup>23</sup> For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.

their own; yet this is always the result when man chooses to serve God in his own way.

Thus the two laws are the law of faith and the law works.<sup>475</sup> One is the law applied by the Spirit, and the other is the same law attempted to be applied by man, with or without the additions which he himself devises. The one is life, the other is death.

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<sup>475</sup> *Romans 3:27.*

# 134. The Purpose of Confession

Present Truth, November 13, 1902

A friend who has for years been a professor of religion, and a leader in the church, writes that for a long time he was secretly indulging in sin, which now by the grace of God he has overcome. But he feels as though he had been a hypocrite, and wishes to know if he ought, in order to get the favor of God, to confess publicly what a sinner he has been in secret. To his enquiry the following reply, in substance, has been sent, which is here reproduced for the benefit of others similarly situated.

**I**F I understand your question correctly, you wish to know what is your duty as regards confession, and whether or not you have forfeited the favor of God. Now as to the last, I can speak without hesitation.

## **Psalm 136**

<sup>1</sup> His mercy endures for ever.

## **John 6**

<sup>37</sup> Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

## **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.

## **Lamentations 3**

<sup>31</sup> For the Lord will not cast off for ever.

Read the book of *Hosea* through and note the sins that are there recorded against Israel. It is a terrible picture is it not? After noting carefully the fallen condition of the people, pay particular attention to the close of the book. Read the last chapter, keeping in mind all that precedes. The Lord says to them that have fallen by their iniquity,

## **Hosea 14**

<sup>2</sup> Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously;

—and then He says,

<sup>4</sup> I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for my anger is turned away from him.

And then note how tenderly and beautifully the chapter closes. How can you have any doubt as to the Lord's acceptance of you, in view of these words?

But you say you have often failed after repenting and promising to reform, and that you therefore doubt if God can have patience with you. Remember then that God is...

## **Romans 15**

<sup>5</sup> ...the God of patience and consolation.

## **2 Peter 3**

<sup>9</sup> [He] is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Now recall what He says about our forgiving one another:

## **Matthew 18**

<sup>21</sup> How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said unto him, I say not unto you, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

And still further:

## **Luke 17**

<sup>4</sup> If he trespass against you seven times in the day, and seven times in a day turning unto you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.

That is what the Lord expects of us; and can you think that He expects us to be better than He is? or to do more for one another than He does for us? We cannot have any virtue that does not come from Him; therefore we know that as He expects us to be...

## Colossians 1

<sup>11</sup> ...strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience,

—we cannot tire out His patience; and that knowledge is what inspires us with hope and courage, so that we can resist evil. I might quote much more; but you are certainly acquainted with the Scriptures, which teach that...

## James 5

<sup>11</sup> ...the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Now as to confession. A little consideration of what confession is will help you to see your duty in the matter. The word means literally, “saying the same thing; agreeing with.” When we confess our sins to God, we simply agree with Him that what He says of us is true. He says that we are sinners; but we say the same thing. He says that a certain thing that we have done is wrong, and we agree with Him that it is so. We do not tell Him anything that He does not already know.

The case is not exactly the same when it comes to confession to men; because they do not always know, as God does. Yet in general the same principle holds good. The object of confession is not humiliation, but the clearing away of the wrong. Sometimes the wrong against a person is of such a nature that it cannot be put away without telling him about it, even if he knew nothing about it before. But in general we are to acknowledge to others only the things of which they are cognizant in our lives, or which affect them.

For example: If we have robbed another, confession means restoration, and that of course means the acknowledging of the sin. A life of open sin, or even a single act of sin, which is well known to others, and which may have been very apparent to others even before we ourselves were convicted of it, naturally calls for open and public confession. Such confession cannot fail to have a beneficial effect on all who hear, and of course it is, if sincere, a blessing to us.

But if we have only thought evil of another in our hearts, or even if we have spoken evil of him, we have no confession to make to him, but only to God and to the one to whom we said the sinful things. It could not do the man himself any good to learn that someone had been thinking or speaking uncharitably of him, and it might cause him much pain to learn it. We have not injured him by our evil thoughts, but only ourselves; and our confession is to be made to God alone.

Now take the case of one who through sin has injured his own body. It does not concern anyone except himself and the Lord. Since nobody knows it, nobody has been led astray by it. To tell the public of it would not help anybody, and might be productive of harm. The very telling of it might put evil thoughts into the minds of some who were previously ignorant of such things.

Now it is not God's plan that sin shall be published; but rather that it shall be hidden and destroyed. It is not to be concealed and practiced in secret, but to be covered up and buried—blotted out.

### **Proverbs 25**

<sup>2</sup> It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.

### **Micah 7**

<sup>18</sup> He retains not His anger for ever, because it He delights in mercy.

<sup>19</sup> He will turn again, He will have compassion on us; and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

God does not wish evil to be spread abroad and made known. His work is to hide it out of sight, and to get rid of it as soon as possible. So He sets before us a way by which our sins may be covered up and blotted out so effectually that though they be sought for they cannot be found. He tells us that if we will but acknowledge our sins to Him, so that He can remove them from us, He will undertake that nobody shall ever learn of them. He will not betray the confidence that we repose in Him. Our secret sins

are set before Him, in the light of His countenance,<sup>476</sup> but He does not reveal the secret to anybody else; and by the light of His countenance they are destroyed.

### **Psalm 89**

<sup>15</sup> Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of the your countenance.

<sup>16</sup> In your name shall they rejoice all the day: and in your righteousness shall they be exalted.

If we walk in the light of His countenance,

### **1 John 1**

<sup>7</sup> If we walk in the light as if He is in the light,...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Then to all eternity nobody but the Lord and we ourselves will ever know our sins; and He himself will forgive them, and we also shall have no more consciousness of them. Is it not gloriously simple and comforting?

So, my brother, as you have already confessed your sin to the Lord, and know that He abundantly pardons, you have only to rejoice in His mercy. Remember that it is not in our own goodness, but in the multitude of His mercies, that we approach to Him<sup>477</sup>; and it is according to the multitude of His mercies that He blots out our transgressions.<sup>478</sup>

Another thing that I must remind you of is that it is not your promises that save you, but the Lord's. We do not have to make promises to Him, but only to plead His promises to us. He makes the promises, and our part is to believe them; and by His...

### **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...exceeding great and precious promises,

—which we receive in full and unwavering faith,

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<sup>476</sup> *Psalm* 90:8.

<sup>477</sup> *Psalm* 5:7.

<sup>478</sup> *Psalm* 51:1.

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...we are made partakers of the Divine nature.

I cannot close without seeking to impress very sharply on the mind the practical working out of this lesson. Confession, the saying of the same thing, means that sin is not to be mentioned except to those who already know of it, and for the purpose that they, as well as the one confessing, may be benefited. That effectually shuts off all scandal and all gossiping about the sins and errors of others. We are to avoid either speaking or thinking of what is evil, and diligently to cultivate the good. The less one thinks about evil, even his own, the less he will do wrong; therefore:

### **Philippians 4**

<sup>8</sup> Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.



## 135. Roman Catholics and the Bible

Present Truth, November 20, 1902

Is it true that the Catholics gave us the Bible? If not, what are we indebted to for our present Bible? Are there any *original* manuscripts to prove the authenticity of the Scriptures?

**I**T IS certainly not true that the Catholics gave us the Bible. Only a very slight acquaintance with history and with present conditions is necessary to make this apparent. For example, in countries wholly under Roman Catholic influence, as Spain, Mexico, and some parts of South America, the Bible is unknown.

The Bible was a forbidden book in Italy, and was totally unknown in Rome, until Victor Emmanuel freed the country from Papal domination. Even in Catholic Germany today, it is almost impossible to procure a copy of the Bible. I am well acquainted with a young man who tried in vain to purchase a Bible in Cologne. There are places in France where even the booksellers do not know the Book by name.

Every reader of history knows at what they cost the Bible was given to the English people. The translators had to do their work in secret, and it was only at the risk of his life that anybody had anything to do with circulating the copies that were printed. Catholic prelates, acting under the Pope's orders, burned the Book singly and by whole editions, wherever they could find it; and solely because of his zeal to give the Bible to his countrymen, Tyndale was burned at the stake.

These things being so, how absurd to claim that the Catholics gave us the Bible! When they have taken, and still take, every means possible to keep it away from their own people, who can think that it was they who gave it to Protestants? Not only did they keep it away from the common people, but, at least before the Reformation, the priests themselves were totally ignorant of it. Luther had been a priest for a long time before he had ever

seen a copy of the Bible; and he actually supposed that the few extracts in the Prayer Book were all the Scriptures there were, until he accidentally found a chained copy in the library.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church claims that the Bible is not by any means a sure or even a safe guide in matters of religion, and uses only such portions as can be made to appear to support its pretension, while it boldly contradicts others. Now, since it claims to be superior to the Bible, and urges its own change in the matter of baptism and the Sabbath, as proof that the Church, and not the Bible, is the sure guide, it is evident that if it had been left to Roman Catholics, the Bible never would have been translated into the language of the people. I was about to write that if it had been left to them it would never have been written; but that is self-evident, for the Bible carries its own proof that it did not come by the will of any man. It is its own unimpeachable testimony to the fact that it is of Divine inspiration.

I have already indicated to what we are indebted for our present Bible. John Wycliffe and William Tyndale in England, Martin Luther in Germany, are the names that stand most prominent in Bible translation. They prepared the way for others. A little book entitled, *How We Got Our Bible*, by Prof. A. H. Sayce, published by the Oxford Press, gives briefly, but very clearly, and in simple language, the fascinating story of Bible translation. Everybody could procure it and read it with profit.

There are no "original manuscripts" in existence, but there are some very ancient copies. The manuscripts written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, etc., are not to be found; but our knowledge of the correctness of the Bible as we have it translated is not lessened by that fact; for the substantial agreement of the numerous copies makes the case far more sure than it could be if we had only the original copy of each writer's manuscripts. The one copy might lie under the suspicion of having been tampered with, and changed; but when we have many manuscripts, copied by different persons, and at different times, there can be no doubt

that we have the Bible substantially as written by the men were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Now the question remains,

“How do we know that the Scriptures as we have them are authentic? How may we know that they are indeed the word of God?”

As to the first part of the question, there is the same proof that there is of any other ancient book. All the books of the Old Testament were in use in the time of Christ, as the New Testament and the controversial writings of heathen authors show; and this is in itself a further proof that we are not indebted to the Catholic Church for the Bible. It was in existence in its entirety, before that church had any existence.

The manuscripts that are now in existence, from which present translations are made, were copied at different places and at different times from the originals, and their agreement in all essentials is proof that the Bible has not been corrupted to any appreciable extent; while the variations, due to slips of the pens of the copyists, show that there was no collusion, and thus make us more sure than if all were exactly alike.

But when all has been said that may be said as to the authenticity of the documents, we have still to answer the question as to how we know the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. Here, as in the case of Jesus, no testimony can be received from man. It carries its credentials in itself. When God spoke from Mount Sinai, the people who heard did not need anybody to tell them whose voice it was. Even so it is today.

Men may scoff at the Bible, and deny the validity or perpetuity of the law; but when the Spirit sends the arrow of conviction into their hearts, they know that the law is of God, and that it is of everlasting force. The best, therefore, and the surest proof that the Bible is really the Word of God, is personal acquaintance with its

Author. As the officers who were sent to take Jesus, came back and said,

### **John 7**

<sup>46</sup> Never man spoke like this man,

—even so those who read and hear the words of the Book are constrained to admit that they are not the production of man. When the conceited young man flippantly remarked to the College Professor that the book of *Proverbs* did not show much skill, the old man silenced him with the sententious reply,

“Make a few.”

The Bible shows us ourselves, not only as nobody on the earth could do, but as we ourselves could not. Hidden things are brought to light, which we recognize as pertaining to us as soon as we see them, but which no man could know. The Scriptures reveal the presence of One who can discern the thoughts and intents of the heart; and not only do they lay open human nature, but all creation as well. Through them we get understanding of nature both seen and unseen. All that is needed to convince anybody that the Scriptures are indeed the living word of the living God, is close acquaintance with them.

### **Psalm 34**

<sup>8</sup> Taste and see.

There never was a time when the Scriptures were so easy of access, and it is no doubt for this reason that Satan is using every means to undermine its authority over the minds and hearts of the people. The Catholic Church kept the Bible away from the people as long as it could, and now the Protestant Church, through its foremost men, is laboring to make it of none effect. Precepts and miracles are being set aside as mere fabrications, and the prospects are that it will not be long before those who follow the “leaders” will be wholly deprived of the light of life.

But God never leaves himself without witness which the poorest and most illiterate can understand.

**John 7 [RV]**

<sup>17</sup> If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.

Then let every lover of truth,—every one who sincerely wishes to know the right way,—give diligence to become acquainted for himself with the Sacred Book, and he will have proof of the saying,

**Psalms 119**

<sup>130</sup> The opening of your words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple.

## 136. The Times of the Gentiles

Present Truth, November 27, 1902

What is meant by “The times of the Gentiles,” in *Luke* 21:24? This period seems to begin at the destruction of Jerusalem. Is there any thing in the Scriptures to show when it ends?

**L**ET us note for a moment the period devoted to the Jewish people. Was it a time in which God would be partial, in that He would not regard the salvation of any other people? Impossible; for:

### **Acts 10**

<sup>34</sup> God is no respecter of persons.

It was simply an evidence of the longsuffering of God, in that He would wait yet so many years on the people of Israel, to give them an opportunity to accept their high calling as priests of God, to make the promise known to the world. But they would not. On the contrary, they themselves so far forgot it that when the Messiah came they rejected Him.

So from being the center, they ceased to have any distinctive place in the promise. Individuals of the race may be saved by believing the Gospel, just the same as other persons; but that is all. The desolate temple, with the rent veil revealing the fact that the glory of God no more dwelt in its most holy place, was a symbol of that people's standing in connection with the covenant. As individuals they may be grafted into the good olive tree, the same as any Gentiles, thus becoming Israel; but their position as leaders, as the religious teachers of the world, is forever gone, because they did not appreciate it.

### **Luke 19**

<sup>44</sup> [They] knew not the time of [their] visitation.

Jerusalem was destroyed, and its inhabitants carried captive to Babylon, because of the rejection of the word of the Lord by the

mouth of His prophets. The city was, however, restored, and the people allowed to return in fulfillment of the promise of God, made before the captivity. To the rebuilt city and restored people came the Word of God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and was again rejected. For this cause the city and people were again left to the prey of the heathen. In foretelling the miseries that should befall the Jews in the destruction of the city by the Romans, the Saviour said:

### **Luke 21**

<sup>24</sup> And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

<sup>25</sup> 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;

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

### **The Coming of the Lord**

From the text it is evident that "the times of the Gentiles" reach to the coming of the Lord to judge the world. In announcing this second destruction of Jerusalem, the Lord told, as at the first time, what would take place at the end of the period of desolation.

The Jews had their time in which to accept the position and work to which God had called them, and had misused it, not knowing the time of their visitation. Then came the times of the Gentiles, when the Gospel was not simply to be carried to them, but committed to them, for them to carry to the world. The Gentiles comprise all nations, so that the termination of their time must necessarily be the end of the world. That is the coming of the Lord,

### **Revelation 22**

<sup>12</sup> ...to give to every man according as his work shall be.

## The Fullness of the Gentiles

We read:

### Romans 11

<sup>25</sup> Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

<sup>26</sup> And so all Israel shall be saved.

“The fullness of the Gentiles” is the complete restoration of the house of Israel. All Israel will be saved when all who will hear the voice of the Lord shall have been gathered out. The “lost sheep of the house of Israel”<sup>479</sup> are among all the nations of earth,—the Gentiles after the flesh,—and when they are found and gathered, there will be no more necessity for the preaching of the Gospel.

### Matthew 24

<sup>14</sup> This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

The ending of the times of the Gentiles is the ending of the accepted time, the day of salvation.<sup>480</sup>

## The Time Not Revealed

### Matthew 24

<sup>36</sup> But of that day and hour knows no man.

It is a sad fact that many, in the face of these words of the Lord, have presumed to fix the date of His coming. Every attempt of that kind is both vain and wicked. The longest period named in prophecy is long since passed, and all that anybody can know of the time of the Lord’s coming is that...

<sup>33</sup> ...it is near, even at the doors.

And that is enough to know.

It is true that some have thought to evade the charge of setting time for the Lord to come, by fixing a date for the termination of “the times of the Gentiles;” but that, as we have just seen, is the

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<sup>479</sup> *Matthew* 10:6; 15:24.

<sup>480</sup> *2 Corinthians* 6:2; *Isaiah* 49:8.



same thing. Besides, there is not the shadow of an indication in the Bible as to how long the times of the Gentiles are, nor when they begin. Consequently it is absolutely impossible to say when they will end.

The term “times of the Gentiles,” occurs but once in the Bible namely, in *Luke* 21:24, and all that we there learn of it is that the times end at the coming of the Lord. But,

#### **Matthew 24**

<sup>44</sup> ...in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes.

Therefore one thing is certain, and that is, that whatever date any man may fix upon as the time of the coming of the Lord, that will be the time when He will not come.

<sup>42</sup> Watch therefore.

### **No Secret Coming**

In this connection it will not be amiss to call attention to the fact that the coming of the Lord “as the thief in the night”<sup>481</sup> relates simply to the unexpectedness of His coming, and not to the manner. He will return just as He ascended.

#### **Acts 1**

<sup>9</sup> While they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

<sup>10</sup> And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

<sup>11</sup> Which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

So,

#### **Revelation 1**

<sup>7</sup> He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him.

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<sup>481</sup> 1 *Thessalonians* 5:2; 2 *Peter* 3:10.

## 1 Thessalonians 1

<sup>16</sup> The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.

## Matthew 24

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> For as the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The text in *Luke* tells us that the times of the Gentiles are to be terminated by the coming of the Lord “with power and great glory,”<sup>482</sup> and that the people shall see it, and shall be terrified even to death by the terrible commotion in heaven and earth in connection with that event.<sup>483</sup>

## The Idea of a Millennium

The idea of a millennium of peace on this present earth, to be brought about by alliances and confederations, whether religious or purely civil, is a delusion of Satan, to lull men to sleep concerning the coming destruction, that they may be swept away by it. People talk about crowning Christ as King of this earth, and look forward to a time when all nations shall own His sway; but all such teaching is simply a preparation for the general worship of antichrist.

When Christ assumes the authority over this earth, the first thing He will do will be to break the nations in pieces and to gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and all that do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire; and:

## Matthew 13

<sup>43</sup> Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

When men, assuming that the looked-for millennium has come, shall say,

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<sup>482</sup> *Luke* 21:27.

<sup>483</sup> *Revelation* 6:15-17.

## **1 Thessalonians 5**

<sup>3</sup> ...Peace and safety; then sudden destruction shall come upon them,...and they shall not escape.

The last general revolution will be at the coming of...

## **Galatians 3**

<sup>19</sup> ...the Seed to whom the promise was made,

—who will then take the kingdom to himself. Yet a little while are these terrible judgments delayed, that all may have opportunity to exchange the weapons of the flesh for the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, which is...

## **2 Corinthians 10**

<sup>4</sup> ...mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;

<sup>5</sup> Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

This captivity is freedom. By God's Word we come from the Babylonian bondage of pride and self-confidence to the freedom of God's gentleness. Who will heed the call to come out, and exchange the bondage of human tradition and speculation for the freedom which God's eternal Word of truth gives?

## 137. Baptized for the Dead (1902)

Present Truth, December 4, 1902

Note: This topic is also covered in the *Present Truth* of April 23, 1903, found later in this collection.

A friend of mine is troubled over *1 Corinthians* 15:29. She has been reading the enclosed tract, and would like to know if they did really baptize another for the dead, or how should she understand the above passage. If it is not taking up too much of your valuable time to answer, I believe you can help her in this, as the remarks in the "Corner" have been a great help to her.

**M**Y TIME is valuable only as I am doing just such work as this, and it is therefore never an intrusion or imposition, to ask such questions. It is my business to set forth the Scriptures in answer to them, and I am most happy when I have the privilege of so doing.

Perhaps I should first quote from the tract referred to. The following two paragraphs cover the item in question:

The seeker after truth may properly inquire: "If it is necessary for men and women to be baptized, what will become of the good people who have died without that privilege?" To this the reply of the Scriptures is that the dead who died without hearing the Gospel will have it preached to them. They who obey it will be saved, but they who reject it will be condemned, as though they were in the flesh. "For this cause was the Gospel preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit."

"But a dead person cannot be baptized," says one. Very true; but God is just. He who has provided a way in which the dead can be baptized for, by the living, as shown by the Apostle Paul in his questions: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not of all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" Paul referred to baptism for the dead as a proof of the resurrection, his questions showing plainly that baptism for the dead was both believed in and practiced by the early Christians.

A little study will suffice to show that this is altogether a fallacy; but we study the Scriptures, not for the purpose of disproving these unwarranted assertions, but in order to be strengthened by the truth that is in them.

In the first place we need to recall and hold to the fact that...

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not anything.

### **Job 14**

<sup>21</sup> His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

These are simple statements of a truth that involves the very heart of the Gospel, which teaches that there is no life apart from Christ; but we have not time or space at present to go further into a consideration of it. These two Scripture statements are certainly sufficient to show that the dead can be baptized just as easily as they can hear and believe, and no more.

### **Mark 16**

<sup>16</sup> He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,

—not he that believes and has another baptized for him. Having settled it by incontrovertible proof that might be multiplied indefinitely, that it is utterly impossible for the dead either to believe or to be baptized, we must consider the significance of baptism, for the answer to the question depends wholly on that. Whoever knows the real meaning of baptism can never have any trouble over baptism for the dead.

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>27</sup> As many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ.

It is only in Christ that we can be saved.

### **Acts 4**

<sup>12</sup> Neither is there salvation in any other.

Therefore since we put on Christ, or come into Him, by baptism, it is easy to see how...

### **1 Peter 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...baptism does now save us.

It is...

### **1 Peter 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.

But,

### **Romans 6**

<sup>3</sup> So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

In His death Christ gives His life for us,—that eternal life which He could lay down and take again, and which He laid down that He might take it again,<sup>484</sup> and us with it. If we consent to die with Him, we shall surely live with Him. And this must take place now. The new life which believers live by the power of the resurrection of Jesus, is the proof of His resurrection, and the pledge of the final resurrection of all the righteous.

But this new life is wholly Christ's life.

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live

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<sup>484</sup> *John* 10:17-18.

by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Putting on Christ and abiding in Him, we are thenceforth wholly swallowed up, immersed, in His life; and it is of this reality that baptism in water is a figure.

Thus we have before us the meaning of being baptized for the dead. It is to be baptized into the crucified Christ; but the efficacy depends wholly on the resurrection of Jesus. It would be useless to be baptized for a dead Christ, or into His death, if He were not also raised from the dead. This is the significance of *1 Corinthians* 15:29.

Please take special notice that the baptism is to be *into Christ*. A person may be baptized, plunged, into water, a thousand times without having once being baptized into Christ. That means a new creature—a life as new as though it were wholly another person now living. Of this living wholly in Christ, the burial in water, and rising again, is but a figure. Now while the figure amounts to nothing without the fact, the thing itself, the real putting on of Christ by faith in His death and life, is valid without anything else.

God is indeed just, and therefore although He gives us emblems, figures, setting forth Gospel truth, He does not make salvation dependent on those emblems. None can be saved without faith in Christ; but it is possible to be saved without having been baptized in water. Therefore it is that when Jesus said,

**Mark 16**

<sup>16</sup> He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,

—He added only,

<sup>16</sup> ...but he that *believes not* shall be damned,

—and did not say that he that is not baptized is damned.

The dead will never have the Gospel preached to them; and the Bible nowhere says that they will. It does indeed say that the

Gospel *was preached* to them that are dead; and that relieves God of all responsibility. All who have lived and died have heard the Gospel, and consequently they do not need to hear it any more. It was not preached to them that *were* dead, however. They were all alive when it was preached to them, but now they are dead. It was preached to them for the same reason that it is now preached to us,

#### **1 Peter 4**

<sup>6</sup> ...that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit;

—that is, that they might be delivered from the flesh, and live spiritual lives.

This is no disparagement of baptism in water. That is a most impressive and beautiful and solemn public declaration of one's acceptance of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ; and since Christ has instituted it, every one who knows and loves Him will be most glad to submit to it; but salvation is dependent on the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord, and not upon a new sign of it.

There will be many in the kingdom of God from among the heathen, who have died without ever having heard of baptism, or even the name of Christ, but who have seen the life that was manifest,<sup>485</sup> and have accepted it; they have walked in that light...

#### **John 1**

<sup>9</sup> ...which lights every man that comes into the world,

—and have not held down the truth in unrighteousness;<sup>486</sup> and:

#### **Acts 10**

<sup>35</sup> In every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted with Him.

May we be as faithful with our greater measure of light.

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<sup>485</sup> 1 John 1:1-3.

<sup>486</sup> Romans 1:18.



## 138. Who is the Preferred Creditor?

Present Truth, December 4, 1902

Is it right for a Christian to engage in business which requires that he should buy goods on credit? If already in business, and having accounts against him, what would be the most consistent course of action?

THE only way to know what is right for a Christian is to see what the Bible says: and the testimony of the Scriptures is wholly against going into debt. I do not know of any instance on record in the Bible, of God's children engaging in business and credit; and I do know that when at His command they built the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, they obeyed His instructions, and had all the money, and materials for building, ready before they began.

We need not too closely press the words of the apostle,

### **Romans 13**

<sup>8</sup> Owe no man anything, but to love one another,

—in order to show that Christians ought not to be in debt. I will not contend with one who says that the apostle has no reference to business transactions, in the words just quoted; still, nobody can prove that he has not; and the verse just preceding:

<sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor,

—savors very strongly of a business precept. But as we are much more in danger of taking Scripture for less than it means, than for more, the safest thing for any man to do is to take *Romans* 12:8 as a positive command against incurring debts of any kind. There is other evidence, however, equally conclusive.

### **Proverbs 22**

<sup>7</sup> The borrower is servant to the lender.

Now when we remember that God's children are not in bondage, and that the seed of Abraham are all free men, it is plain that none of those who are Israelites indeed can be in the bondage of debt.

This is made still further evident by reference to *Deuteronomy* 28 where Israel is told that if they hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord, to observe and to do all His commandments,

### **Deuteronomy 28**

<sup>12</sup> The Lord shall open unto you His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall land unto many nations, and you shall not borrow.

<sup>13</sup> And the Lord shall make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath.

Thus we see that if a person is in debt it is an evidence that he has not been as faithful as he should be in serving the Lord. He has not kept all the commandments.

The person who, in accordance with the common business custom, buys goods on credit, is never free. Thousands of men with the most honest intentions have failed under just those conditions, and have died without being able to pay what they owed. Of course it was because something happened that they did not expect; but nobody can tell when the unexpected will happen, and therefore it is plain that all debt of whatever kind is mere speculation; and God's people are not to deal in uncertainties. They are to walk by faith,<sup>487</sup> which comes by hearing God's word.<sup>488</sup> They are always to know where they are and whither they are going, and how they are to get there. They are to possess substance, not a shadow.

The man who pays cash for everything he buys, when he buys, can never become bankrupt, and can never by any possibility be the cause of loss to others. He may lose everything he has, by fire

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<sup>487</sup> *2 Corinthians* 5:7.

<sup>488</sup> *Romans* 10:17.

or flood; but he can never have less than nothing, as would be the case if he owed for some of the destroyed property.

I am well aware that many will say that this advice, if followed, would greatly hamper business; but I have noticed that business men seem to think more of a customer who always pays cash; and I know, because it is Bible truth, that if nobody ever incurred debt, business would indeed be “business,” and not, as is too often the case, a mere lottery.

It is evident, therefore, that the consistent thing for man to do, who is already in debt, is to get out of debt as quickly as possible, even if he has to diminish the amount of his stock. If a man cannot start in a business without going into debt, that fact alone is sufficient proof that he is not ready to engage in it.

What principles should guide a business man in the matter of paying tithe? If the only means of ascertaining his income involves taking stock, which is sometimes too tedious to be frequently done, how is he to decide the amount of tithe to be paid in the intervals? Also, how is he to know whether he is misappropriating funds [the Lord's tithe] in meeting his current expenses?

Every real business man always knows whether his business is gaining or losing. He cannot of course always tell to a penny how he stands, because there will always be unfinished transactions; but the man who does not always know whether he is gaining or losing in his business is not a business man, and ought not to be making believe that he is.

Every business man knows his daily or weekly takings and expenses, and can lay aside his tithe regularly, according to the proportion of those two items. He expects to live out of his business, and the least that he could do would be to set aside a sum equal to one-tenth of his living expenses. Then he will know that he is not living on money that belongs to the Lord.

If a man is in debt, is he justified in making a donation (apart from the tithe) to the Lord's work? Or should he first devote all his spare money toward removing the debt, so that he may be free to give to his own?

One text of Scripture is sufficient to settle that question. It is:

**Malachi 3**

<sup>8</sup> Will a man rob God? yet you have robbed me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings.

This shows that we owe offerings to the Lord, as well as the tithe. Then the question resolves itself into this:

“If a man is in debt to his fellow-men, and also to God, should he give his fellow-men the preference over God, paying them all off before he pays anything to the Lord?”

Can there be any doubt as to the answer? Ought not the Lord to stand at least an equal chance with other creditors? Ought He not to receive a *pro rata*<sup>489</sup> with the rest? I think you can answer this now for yourself.

There are, I know, hundreds of possible conditions, concerning which questions might arise; but the principles here briefly set forth will cover everything. The right way is always the simplest way.

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<sup>489</sup> *Pro rata* is a Latin term used to describe a proportionate allocation. It essentially translates to “in proportion,” which means a process where whatever is being allocated will be distributed in equal portions. (investopedia.com)

## 139. Going to Law

Present Truth, December 11, 1902

What course should a Christian take towards one who is in debt to him? Is it proper to go to law to recover a debt?

WHAT says the Scripture?

### **Luke 10**

<sup>26</sup> What is written in the law? How do you read?

We know well enough what course the world takes in such a case; and if the Word of God has nothing to say about it, then we can do as the world does; but if God has spoken, then we as Christians can do nothing else than what He says, no matter how widely it may differ from the way of the world.

Before taking up what the Bible says about going to law, let me repeat what I have before said in this “Corner” about that, so that there can be no possible ground for the idea that I am apologizing for debt, or taking the side of the debtor, against the creditor.

### **Psalms 37**

<sup>21</sup> The wicked borrow, and pay not again.

That fixes the standing of the man who does not pay his debts, and especially of a man who contracts a debt which he has no prospect of paying. The well-instructed, sincere Christian never does such a thing.

### **Proverbs 22**

<sup>7</sup> The borrower is servant to the lender.

But God’s people are all free; He is the Deliverer, and He does not rule over slaves. God’s subjects are all rulers. He says that His people shall lend to many nations, and not borrow.<sup>490</sup> It is evident, therefore, that no one who really understands and values the lib-

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<sup>490</sup> *Deuteronomy* 15:6.

erty wherewith Christ makes us free<sup>491</sup> will voluntarily subject himself to the bondage of debt.

Now let us come directly to the point, and read in plain words what the Bible says about going to law.

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>38</sup> You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

<sup>39</sup> But I say unto you, That you resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

<sup>40</sup> And if a man will sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also.

What could be plainer? “If any man will sue you,”—if any man is about to sue you for your coat, let him have your cloak rather than go into court. Surely this would effectually cut you off from suing your brother.

But there is other scripture equally direct and strong.

### **1 Corinthians 6 [RV]**

<sup>1</sup> Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?

<sup>2</sup> Or know you not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

<sup>3</sup> Know you not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

<sup>4</sup> If then you have to judge things pertaining to this life, do you set them to judge who are of no account in the church?

<sup>5</sup> I say this to move you to shame. Is it so, that there cannot be found among you one wise man, who shall be able to decide between his brethren,

<sup>6</sup> But brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?

<sup>7</sup> Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that you have law-suits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?

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<sup>491</sup> *Galatians 5:1.*

You had better read this Scriptures several times, before you hastily conclude that it sanctions going to law, but not before unbelievers. If a Christian did go to law, but not before unbelievers, he would have to go before the church, and that would show that the church had usurped the functions of the civil power. But let us study the text closely. Note the first word.

### **1 Corinthians 6 [RV]**

<sup>1</sup> *Dare* any of you go to law?

It is certainly no light matter, or the word “dare” would not be used. The Greek word signifies, *to have boldness*, the *effrontery*. According to this it is great presumption for a Christians to go to law.

The saints are to judge the world and angels; certainly, then, they ought to be able to decide matters pertaining to this life. Who ought to be able to decide? Why, everybody who is to have a share in judging angels. Do you not see that this shuts out even arbitration in the church? for if all the saints (and all in the church are supposed to be, and ought to be, saints) are capable of judging in the affairs of their neighbors, they are certainly able to settle their own affairs, without bringing them before anybody else. For one to demand a trial before his brother, to settle the question, whether by arbitration or any other means, is to stand self-confessed as unfit for the world to come; and in that case one certainly has a greater and more important duty than trying to secure ones “rights.”

Christ has left us an example in this respect. He not only committed His own case...

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>23</sup> ...to Him that judges righteously,

—but He refused to interfere in strife. When on one occasion,

### **Luke 12**

<sup>13</sup> One of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me,

—Jesus replied,

## **Luke 12**

<sup>14</sup> Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

And then, in order, to discourage such sordid pursuits as striving after gain, and seeking to get one's due, He added,

<sup>15</sup> Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

Christ refused to be a judge in worldly affairs, because His kingdom is not of this world. When He comes in His kingdom, He will sit on the throne judging righteously, and then the saints will be called to their work of judging. So as He refused to judge earthly affairs when on earth, we are exhorted to...

## **1 Corinthians 4**

<sup>5</sup> Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.

So if there is a dispute between two brethren in the church, and the dispute is referred to another person, or to the church, the duty of that other person, or of the church, is not to interfere in the case, and decide the question at issue, but to help the disputants to get converted, so that they will have the Spirit of Christ to settle all difficulties, or rather, to prevent them.

The dispute which would demand for arbitration indicates such a defect in the character of the ones demanding it as should lead them seriously to consider their prospects for the next world, rather than press their claims for the things of this world. This is just what the text says:

## **1 Corinthians 6 [RV]**

7 It is altogether a defect in you, that you have lawsuits one with another.

The word here rendered "lawsuits" means not only the actual suit, but the case to be decided. It means *a question, a matter for judgment*. The "defect," and this is also a strong term,—the weak-



ness, the lack,—is that there are judgments in the church—that brethren ever have any cases for arbitration. But it may be asked,

“What if one in the church is really dishonest, and will not pay his just debts?”

Of course that is a great fault; but the defect becomes equal if the other brother begins an action against him to recover the debt.

### **1 Corinthians 6 [RV]**

<sup>7</sup> Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?

And this reminds me of the advice given by Commissioner Kerr, one of the leading London magistrates, who died a few days ago at the age of eighty-one. It is said that...

“He had fewer judgments reversed than any other judge in the metropolis,”

—so it is evident that when he gave an opinion he knew what he was talking about. And here is his advice about going to law:

“Never go to law under any consideration. You had much better lose your money than go to law.”

Thus it appears that there is sound legal wisdom in the Scripture admonition against going to law. There is more money lost than gained by it. More money is put into courts by litigants than is taken away by them.

That perfect justice cannot possibly be obtained in any human court, is plainly indicated in the statement concerning Christ. He shall be, by the seven-fold Spirit on Him,

### **Isaiah 11**

<sup>3</sup> ...of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of His ears:

<sup>4</sup> But with righteousness shall He judge the poor.

Men have no means of judging except by the hearing of the ears and the sight of the eyes; therefore their judgment, even at the best, cannot be according to righteousness. It is necessary to have judges on this earth for a certain class of persons; but God's people will commit their cases...

## 1 Peter 2

<sup>23</sup> ...to Him that judges righteously.

"But it is not a personal matter with me," you say; "if it were, it would be easily disposed of; but the work in which I am engaged is a branch of the Lord's work, and it seems as though His cause ought to have all that is due it."

Now let me tell you that the Lord is as able to take care of His own money as He is to care for yours. All the money in the world is His anyhow, no matter in whose hands it is. Do you think that the Lord will require you to do for Him that which He has forbidden you to do for yourself. If He were now in your place, carrying on His own work personally, do you think He would go to law to recover a debt? Would He violate His own precepts? You know that He would not, and therefore you may know that He will not ask you to do for Him what He would not do for himself.

"But did not God himself command that judges should be appointed for ancient Israel, who worked to decide the small cases, and bring the difficult ones to Moses, for him to settle?"

He certainly did, and many other things He had done because of the hardness of their hearts. Israel was God's church, "called out" of Egypt,<sup>492</sup> that each person might be a king and priest for the rest of the world,<sup>493</sup> by virtue of His Spirit in them. The necessity for judges among them, therefore, indicated the "defect" of which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, a lack of connection with God, in reality, a falling away, an apostasy.

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<sup>492</sup> *Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15.*

<sup>493</sup> *Exodus 19:6.*

That which was said of old, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,”<sup>494</sup> was said to the judges, as a guide to them in their decisions. And here we see a provision to minimize the evil results of the working of perverse human nature. The *natural impulse* when one is struck is to strike back, to give “as good as is sent;” but the appointment of judges took this out of the hands of private individuals.

Thus the courts were largely in those days what they are now—a public means for the gratification of private revenge. Even Christians, who would not think of resenting an injury, by personal violence, seem to think that this is all right if they pay somebody to inflict punishment, who has been appointed for that purpose.

I am not decrying the existence of courts of law. They are an absolute necessity in this evil world. As long as people wish that anybody who has injured them shall be punished, and as long as people are intent on securing their “rights,” so long will courts be a necessity. It is better that “justice” be administered by a disinterested party than by the aggrieved one.

But when we Christians attempt to justify ourselves in making use of courts of law, on the ground that they are a necessity in the present state of the world, we identify ourselves with the world’s present state, which is not at all flattering to our Christianity. It is astonishing how much Christians today are inclined to take advantage of provisions made long ago as *a concession* to the hardness of the hearts of the people just come from heathenism. It shows the hold that heathenism still has on the Christian world.

Of course the objection will be raised,

“If it were known that we would not defend ourselves, nor assert our rights, people would take advantage of us, and we should lose everything we have.”

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<sup>494</sup> *Exodus* 21:24; *Leviticus* 24:20; *Deuteronomy* 19:16-21.

Well, there is the word of the Lord, and if we should present our objections to Him, He would doubtless say,

### **John 21**

<sup>22</sup> What is that to you? follow me.

Love, which is the fulfilling of the law,<sup>495</sup>

### **1 Corinthians 13**

<sup>5</sup> ...seeks not her own.

But,

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>33</sup> Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Our sole business in this world is to obey God, and to glorify Him; He has charged himself with the responsibility of supplying all our needs; and He has riches enough in glory with which to do it. God's precepts are for us, and not against us. He has not forbidden us to go to law, in order to make our way difficult, but in order to save us trouble.

The question resolves itself into this:

- Shall we defend ourselves? or shall we leave our defense with God?
- Shall we appeal to man for help? or shall we seek help from God alone, who made heaven and earth,<sup>496</sup> and to whom the earth belongs<sup>497</sup>?

Which shall it be?

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<sup>495</sup> *Romans* 13:10.

<sup>496</sup> *Psalms* 121:2.

<sup>497</sup> *Psalms* 24:1.

## 140. The Crowning Glory of the First Advent

Present Truth, December 25, 1902

Original Note: All communications intended for publication, and all questions, whether an answer is desired by letter or through the paper, should be addressed to the Editor of *Present Truth*, and *not* to the International Tract Society. Correspondents are requested in all cases to give the name and address, and to take pains to write them legibly. All questions are regarded as strictly confidential, and nobody but the Editor ever has any knowledge of the questioner's identity; but the Editor wishes always to be able to communicate with his correspondents. E. J. Waggoner, *Editor*.

The *Present Truth* often refers to the Second Coming of Christ. Will you not tell me what relation, if any, that coming has to the first advent of Christ, and what is the real necessity of it if the saints, as we are taught, go to be with the Lord in heaven at death?

LET us consider the last part of the question first. We are not taught that the saints go to be with the Lord when they die. That is, we are not taught it in the Bible, and this is the only authority. We are taught that...

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not anything;

—that...

<sup>10</sup> There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you go;

—that the dead shall “live again,” coming forth from their graves at the call of Christ<sup>498</sup>; and that they “wait” in the grave the “appointed time” for their “change” at the call the Lord.<sup>499</sup> What this change is, and how and when it will be effected, is told in these words:

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<sup>498</sup> *John* 5:28-29.

<sup>499</sup> *Job* 14:14-15.

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

## **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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 [by this means, and in this manner] shall we ever be with the Lord.

When Jesus was about to depart from this world, and go to the Father, He said to His sorrowing disciples,

## **John 14**

<sup>1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled:...

<sup>2</sup> ...I go to prepare a place for you.

<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

The word “again,” means once more, and so, according to His promise,

## **Hebrews 9**

<sup>28</sup> ...unto them that look for Him shall He appear *the second time* without sin unto salvation.

He went away to prepare a place for His disciples, which indicates that the place was not then ready for them. He said that as surely as He went to prepare the place, He would come again, to

take them to himself. And, further, He said that His coming again to take them to himself would be in order that where He is, there they might be also; which proves conclusively that without Christ's second coming His disciples could never be with Him; and thus we learn the importance of the second advent. It is the "blessed hope"<sup>500</sup> of the Christian, the consummation of all his hopes.

This really explains the relation of the second advent to the first. The second is the completion of the first. Without the second coming, the first would have been in vain. The shame and suffering of the cross finds its justification in the glory of the second coming of Christ. Only then will the suffering of the cross really have an end; for Jesus still bears the world with all its sin and woe.<sup>501</sup> At His first advent He had not where to lay His head; but the earth belongs to Him by right, and so He will come the second time to claim it.

The first advent was only a preparation for the second, in which culminate all the promises of God, and all the hopes of all the saints of all ages; for He came to make it very plain to men how they must live in order to be ready for His coming in glory. He came to give the fullest revelation of God's love to man, and to demonstrate the possibility of the perfect manifestation of the life of God in human flesh.

The Son of Mary is her Saviour<sup>502</sup>; the Seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent that seduced her<sup>503</sup>; and the formation of Christ in His disciples so completely that He is brought forth in their lives, is their salvation.<sup>504</sup> When He shall have been reproduced in men of every tribe and nation,<sup>505</sup> then will all the

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<sup>500</sup> *Titus* 2:13.

<sup>501</sup> *Hebrews* 1:3.

<sup>502</sup> *Luke* 1:47.

<sup>503</sup> *Genesis* 3:15.

<sup>504</sup> *Colossians* 1:23-28.

<sup>505</sup> *Revelation* 14:6-7.

world have the complete witness of the Gospel of the kingdom,<sup>506</sup>  
and then will the end come.<sup>507</sup>

Thus will the first advent, which was the seed sowing, blossom  
into the perfect fruitage of the ingathering.<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> *Revelation 7:1-8.*

<sup>507</sup> *Matthew 24:14.*

<sup>508</sup> *Matthew 13:37-43.*



# 141. The Future Abode of the Righteous

Present Truth, December 25, 1902

I noticed that you often refer to “the new earth” as the future dwelling-place of the saints; yet it seems to be the commonly-accepted idea among Christians that heaven will be the home of the redeemed. Will you kindly give in the “Editor’s Private Corner,” to which I always look forward with interest, the Scriptural ground for your belief on this subject?

**A**LL the Scripture evidence could not be presented in one or even two entire numbers of *Present Truth*; yet a single short paragraph will suffice to set forth positive and convincing proof that this earth is to be made new for the eternal abode of mankind. Thus:

## **Genesis 1**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heaven and earth,...

## **Exodus 20**

<sup>11</sup> ...the sea, and all that in them is;...

## **Genesis 1**

<sup>31</sup> And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.

Now,

## **Ecclesiastes 3**

<sup>14</sup> I know that whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God does it, that man should fear before Him.

## **Ecclesiastes 1**

<sup>9</sup> The thing that has been, it is that which shall be.

There you have the groundwork of the case. When the earth was created, when it was new, God gave it to man.<sup>509</sup> He made man king, crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over

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<sup>509</sup> *Genesis* 1:26-28.

the works of His hands, putting all things in subjection under his feet.<sup>510</sup>

## Hebrews 2

<sup>8</sup> For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.

God has never withdrawn His gift of the earth to man; He has never changed His plan; therefore if that plan should not be carried out, God would be defeated; and that is impossible.

The case is not helped by saying that God saves man, giving him an eternal inheritance in heaven; defeat can be avoided only by establishing man as king to all eternity, over the earth in as good condition as when God made it. God cannot afford to have it said that He began a thing which He could not carry through.

You will doubtless ask,

“Isn’t God really defeated anyhow, since man does not have the earth, and all things on the earth, and in the sea, in complete subjection to him, and the earth is not now as it was in the beginning?”

The reply is, No; for though it is true, as the Scripture says when telling us about man’s rightful dominion, that...

## Hebrews 2

<sup>8</sup> Now we see not yet all things put under him,

—that does not prove that we shall never see it. An enemy has come in and usurped man’s dominion, and challenged God’s authority, and the controversy over the matter is now going on; but surely as God is stronger than Satan, so surely will God’s original grant stand unchanged.

## Micah 4

<sup>8</sup> The first dominion [will surely] come to the daughter of Zion.

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<sup>510</sup> *Psalm 8:5-8.*

If two parties of equal power were contending over the possession of the earth, or if we did not know which was the stronger, the issue would be doubtful; but there is no doubt, because Satan has no power whatever against God.

But you will ask,

“Even allowing that man will finally be in full possession of the earth made new, does not the fact that he fell, and lost the dominion, contradict or disprove the statement that whatsoever God does shall be for ever?”

Not in the least. It is true that we see not now all things put under man;

### **Hebrews 2**

<sup>9</sup> But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Jesus Christ, “the Man Christ Jesus,”<sup>511</sup> the link between heaven and earth, between God and man, has...

### **Colossians 2**

<sup>15</sup> ...spoiled principalities and powers,

—and, “crowned with glory and honor,” as man was in the beginning, has the right to Adam’s original dominion; and He is even now as man, the second Adam, exalted to a higher position than the first Adam occupied. Risen from the dead a glorious Conqueror, He is only waiting in the heavens...

### **Acts 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...until the times of the restoration of all things, whereof God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, which has been since the world began.

When men receive Christ by faith they become new creatures, receive the right, and the power, to become the sons of God; and when a complete race shall have thus been made new, the earth

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<sup>511</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5.

will be given them to rule over. You can see that since the earth is corrupt because man is corrupt,<sup>512</sup> and...

### **Isaiah 24**

<sup>5</sup> ...is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant,

—it would be useless to make it new until man has been made new; for in that case it would immediately be defiled again. But as soon as man is ready for it, it will be made ready for him.

God has never forsaken man. Looking at the spot where man fell, and lost the dominion, we see Jesus in his place, bearing the curse, thus demonstrating man's lordship in spite of it<sup>513</sup>; and thus it is that the dominion has really continued unbroken, and what God did at first is and will be for ever. So,

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>13</sup> We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

When Christ comes,

### **Daniel 6**

<sup>27</sup> The kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

They will sit with Christ on thrones of judgment, judging the ungodly for a thousand years,<sup>514</sup> and...

### **Psalms 149**

<sup>9</sup> ...execute upon them the judgment written.

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>1</sup> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

Then will the voice from heaven say,

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<sup>512</sup> *Genesis 6:12.*

<sup>513</sup> *Genesis 3:21; Hebrews 2:9.*

<sup>514</sup> *Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3.*

## **Revelation 21**

<sup>3</sup> Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them,...

<sup>4</sup> ...and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;

–for all things will be made new.<sup>515</sup> Then will Abraham, to whom it was promised that he, together with his seed,

## **Romans 4**

<sup>13</sup> ...should be the heir of the world,

–have found the “better country”<sup>516</sup> for which he sought.

## **Psalms 37**

<sup>10</sup> For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

<sup>11</sup> But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

And that will be the fullness of the “peace on earth,”<sup>517</sup> which the angels sang at the birth of Jesus. Thus will His mission to earth be crowned, and the ways of God to men will be justified.

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<sup>515</sup> *Revelation 21:5.*

<sup>516</sup> *Hebrews 11:16.*

<sup>517</sup> *Luke 2:14.*

## 142. The Unpardonable Sin (1903)

Present Truth, January 1, 1903

Note: This topic was covered in another article of the same name, about a year ago. See, “[The Unpardonable Sin \(1902\)](#).”

As a constant reader of your splendid paper, *Present Truth*, I find in the issue of Nov. 20, reference made to sin against the Holy Spirit.<sup>518</sup> You have thrown light through your columns on many different passages in the Word of God; and as this question of sin against the Holy Spirit has caused me great anxiety, as I am sure it has thousands of others, I shall feel most grateful if, as soon as your space will permit, you will give this subject a careful explanation, as far as the Spirit has shown you the truth.

This subject seems wrapped in mystery. I have heard people swear by the Holy Ghost; would this be the sin to which are attached such awful consequences?

An early reply through your “Private Corner” will bring light and comfort to thousands of hearts.

**I**T IS not at all to be wondered at that the question, “What is the sin against the Holy Spirit?” has caused many people much anxiety; for Jesus said:

### Matthew 12

<sup>31</sup> All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

<sup>32</sup> And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

I well remember how I trembled when I read this passage as a boy and young man, fearing lest I had unconsciously committed

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<sup>518</sup> This was from an article by Ellen G. White, titled, “Our Defense Against Evil,” published in the *Present Truth*, November 20, 1902. It can also be found in the book, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 323-325. I have included it in the [Appendix](#).

the sin that never could be pardoned; and during my ministry of the Gospel I have met very many people who were firmly convinced that they had sinned beyond the hope of pardon, and who could scarcely be persuaded to the contrary.

One of my most precious treasures is the knowledge, conveyed to me some time after the event, that a man who was in despair over the thought that he had committed the unpardonable sin, and was about to commit suicide, was turned from his fearful purpose, and restored to a joyful faith in Christ, through what the world would call a “chance” reading of an article that I had written on the subject. So I know that it is a most practical question for consideration.

People often get the idea that the unpardonable sin is simply an exceedingly great sin, that is, that it differs from ordinary sins only in degree, or that it is a vast accumulation of sins. It is no uncommon thing to a hear person say,

“I am so great a sinner that the Lord can never pardon me.”

Now that this is not so, is made very plain in the same text that tells us about the unpardonable sin.

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>31</sup> All manner, of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.

And it matters not that the sin is great; for:

### **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> The law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

### **Isaiah 1**

<sup>18</sup> Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

There is no such thing as great and small, difficult and easy, with the infinite God. He creates by His Word, and it is just as easy for Him to speak a universe into existence as to create a single blade of grass, or a single grain of sand. It is by the same Word

of life that He forgives; and it is just as easy for Him, since He is love itself, to speak pardon to the hardened sinner of fourscore as to forgive the child who has taken his first step in the broad way.

Since the sin against the Holy Spirit is the only one that has no pardon, wherever we find mention of any sin from which there is no salvation, we shall know that it is the same one. Now there are a few other texts besides the one already quoted, which speak of such a thing, and they help to a better understanding of the subject.

These texts are all in *Hebrews*, and we will read them together. The first is this:

### **Hebrews 6**

<sup>4</sup> It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

<sup>5</sup> And have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

<sup>6</sup> If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

This should be compared with some verses in chapter 10. After speaking of the...

### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>20</sup> ...new and living way, which [Christ] has consecrated for us through the veil,

—as a reason why we should...

<sup>22</sup> ...draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,

—the Apostle continues:

<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;...

<sup>26</sup> For if we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins,

<sup>27</sup> But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.



<sup>28</sup> He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

<sup>29</sup> Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite to the Spirit of grace?

If you lay all these texts side by side, and consider them carefully, you will see that the one thing which they all mention in common,—the sum, indeed, of them all,—is the willful, deliberate rejection of the means of salvation.

Turn back to *Matthew*, and read the verses in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter, which immediately precede the statement concerning the sin against the Holy Spirit. We see that they contain an account of the attitude of the Pharisees toward the work of Jesus. They said that His miracles were wrought by the aid of the prince of the devils; but we know that they were by the power of the Spirit, as He himself said.<sup>519</sup> This leads to the thought that the unpardonable sin is the utter rejection of Christ's work, and the placing of the Holy Spirit on the same plane as the devil. That is to say, All manner of sin may be pardoned, except the sin of rejecting and treating with contempt the only means of pardon and salvation.

This is corroborated by the statement in *Hebrews* 9:14, that Christ...

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>14</sup> ...through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, [to] purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

The eternal Spirit is that which fills the universe, upholding all things, and filling all with life. Now if this universal Spirit is treated contemptuously, there can be no hope of pardon, seeing that the source of all power is rejected. Thus we are exhorted,

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<sup>519</sup> *Luke* 4:18.

## Ephesians 4

<sup>30</sup> Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

In short, all sin may be pardoned, except the rejection of pardon. And this rejection must be with purpose. Nobody does it unconsciously. It is impossible for a man to commit the sin against the Holy Spirit, and still to be in doubt about it.

Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean that the one who has committed the unpardonable sin will necessarily know that he has done so; on the contrary, he will most likely be utterly indifferent, hardened, and having no conscience of sin. He will have lost the power to distinguish between good and evil; for he has virtually said, with Satan,

“Evil, be my good,”<sup>520</sup>

—and will very often not fear hell any more than he longs for heaven. But it may be set down as a certainty that whoever is in doubt whether he has committed the unpardonable sin or not, and is troubled over his sins, has not sinned beyond the hope of pardon. There is hope as long as one is willing to be saved.

What a wonderful salvation! How long-suffering and patient and kind and forgiving God is! Though one sin against Him seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again, saying,

“I repent,”

—He freely forgives.<sup>521</sup> Though our sins are more in number than the hairs of our head,<sup>522</sup> He will forgive them all.

## Micah 7

<sup>18</sup> Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retains

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<sup>520</sup> Originally, “Evil, be thou my good,” quoted in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, as the words of Satan.

<sup>521</sup> *Matthew* 18:21-22.

<sup>522</sup> *Psalms* 40:12.

not His anger for ever, because He delights in mercy.

<sup>19</sup> He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

## 143. Infant Baptism

Present Truth, January 8, 1903

Would you kindly inform me through your valuable paper *Present Truth*, if in the Bible there is any reference made to infant baptism? I should like to hear your opinion.

**T**HIS is not a case for the expression of an *opinion*, but only for the statement of a truth. It is not a case admitting of argument; for the Bible either mentions the matter or it does not; and all there is to be done is to say whether it does or not. So I say, without the slightest fear of successful contradiction, that nowhere in the Bible is there any mention whatever of such a thing as infant baptism. The thing is wholly foreign to Scripture.

You ask me to prove this statement. Well, there is only one way to prove it; and that rests with you; you must read the Bible through, with reference to this subject; then you will know that it is not there. If you were asking for something that is in the Bible, the thing to do would of course be to cite the texts; but where there are no texts to cite, all that can be done is to say so.

But I will not leave the matter here. I cannot read the Bible through to you in this "Corner," so as to show you that it does not mention infant baptism; but I can set before you the nature and object of baptism, so that you can see that it is plainly a thing with which infants cannot have anything whatever to do; or, rather, which cannot have anything to do with them.

So let us study the subject briefly. We cannot do better than start with the words of Peter filled with the Holy Spirit:

### Acts 2

<sup>38</sup> Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

Here we see that baptism is connected with repentance; but it is obvious that young infants cannot repent, and have nothing to re-

pent of, having never committed sin. We find, in this instance, that...

### **Acts 2**

<sup>41</sup> They that gladly received his word were baptized.

Again, while Philip was preaching Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, as they journeyed, the chariot passed by a pool or stream of water, and the eunuch proclaimed,

### **Acts 8**

<sup>36</sup> See, here is water: what hinders me to be baptized?

Philip replied,

<sup>37</sup> If you believe with all your heart you may.

Here we see that belief is a prerequisite to baptism. But an infant can neither believe nor disbelieve; therefore it cannot be baptized.

Again, referring to the text first quoted, we find that baptism, preceded by belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, is...

### **Acts 2**

<sup>38</sup> ...for the remission of sins;

—but a tender infant has no sins to be remitted, and so again there is no occasion for it to be baptized.

It may be objected that the child is born in sin,—that it has a sinful nature,—and that therefore it should be baptized for the remission of sins. But since the babe cannot exercise faith, and has no will in the matter, not even knowing what is being done if the ceremony is performed, it is evident that if baptism were necessary for an infant, it would prove that there is some magic virtue either to the water of baptism, or to the formula, or both; but if this were so, it would exclude faith on the part of adults; and it would follow that a man baptized even against his will would be saved, just as truly as that physic or poison will operate on a man

who takes it even unwillingly, and without believing that it will have any effect. But the Gospel is not magic.

This brings us to what baptism really is, which we read in:

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

It is the conscious putting on of Christ by intelligent faith. Read:

### **Colossians 2**

<sup>10</sup> You are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power:

<sup>11</sup> In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

<sup>12</sup> Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead.

Here we see that baptism means the recognition and acknowledgment of the fact that one's sins have brought the sentence of death, and the giving up of the life that has been stained by sin so that one actually dies with Christ, and then, through faith in the working of God in raising Jesus from the dead, rises to live a new life in Christ. But all this is impossible for a babe.

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>1</sup> If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

<sup>2</sup> Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

<sup>3</sup> For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

This exhortation would evidently be meaningless if addressed to a babe.

Now read *Romans* 6:1-7, following the chapter which shows that...

## Romans 5

<sup>12</sup> ...death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,

—and that the obedience of Christ gives righteousness and life<sup>523</sup>:

## Romans 6

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

<sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

<sup>3</sup> Know you not that so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

<sup>7</sup> For he that is dead is freed from sin.

There you have the whole subject of baptism. All the way through, it shows a conscious, deliberate acceptance of Christ—the turning from and putting off of an old life, and the resurrection to a new life. There is crucifixion preceding the burial,

<sup>6</sup> ...that henceforth we should not serve sin;

—but an infant has never served sin, having, on the contrary, just begun a new life. All that is required of us is to become as little children.

The death of the Son of God—the gift of His life—has reconciled all men to God.<sup>524</sup> Every sinner who accepts the reconciling word, becomes a new creature, just such as the little babe is. The birth of the tiny babe, as innocent as the opening flower, is a manifesta-

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<sup>523</sup> *Romans 5:17-21.*

<sup>524</sup> *Romans 5:8-10.*

tion of the life that is given for all mankind; for without that life there could be no existence:

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being;

—the child is redeemed by the life that gave it existence, and until it commits sin, there is no need for it to be baptized. The free gift has come upon all men unto justification of life; so the child is made accepted in the Beloved. May our faith bring us into the same state of innocence.



## 144. Eating for Strength

Present Truth, January 8, 1903

Does *Ecclesiastes* 10:17 prove that an early morning meal is injurious?

**W**E CAN tell better if we read it, and find out what it says. Here it is, together with verse 16, from which it cannot be separated:

### **Ecclesiastes 10**

<sup>16</sup> Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes eat in the morning!

<sup>17</sup> Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles, and your princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

Now let us read it slowly and carefully, noting what it says. We see at a glance that there is a contrast—the state of the land under two sets of conditions is contrasted.

- If the king is a child, or a servant, as in the margin of the Revision,—that is, if he is inexperienced, and himself in need of tutors and governors—the land will suffer.
- If, on the contrary, the king is the son of nobles, free born, disciplined in mind and body, and trained to govern, the land will be prosperous.

So much for the king, and all is plain enough thus far. There is yet another adverse condition and its contrasted blessing:

- If the princes eat in the morning, it will be disastrous to the country;
- But, on the other hand, if they eat in due season, it will be greatly to the advantage of the land.

Nothing else can be made of the language than that the morning is not “due season” for eating. I have nothing to say as to what anybody shall do; my business is simply to set forth the

Scriptures just as they read. Custom, convenience, habit, the opinions of men, our own appetites or preferences,—none of these have any place whatever in considering the meaning of any portion of Scripture. “What does it say?” is all that need concern us.

Read the text again, and it will appear that to eat in the morning is not to eat for strength. The land suffers when princes eat in the morning; it rejoices when they eat in due season, that is, not in the morning; for strength, and not for drunkenness. Eating in the morning, therefore, tends to drunkenness, rather than to strength. It does not say that drunkenness necessarily ensues, but that the result of morning eating is the opposite of strength, and that it tends to produce the condition of dullness and heaviness that accompanies intoxication.

Of course the average reader will at once begin to argue or make excuses. Please don’t. Disbelieve the text, if you will; ignore it entirely in your practice, if you choose; but don’t try to twist it out of its plain, self-evident meaning.

“At any rate,” says someone who is anxious to feel clearly justified in ignoring the instruction of the text, “it applies only to princes.”

Yes; it applies only to princes, that is, to those who have to do with affairs of State, so far as the country at large is concerned. Bear in mind that it says “Woe to the land,” when its princes eat in the morning. But it can be bad for the land, only because it unfits the princes for the highest service. Muddle-headed princes or men with overtaxed digestive organs and nerves, cannot rule the land well.

Remember, however, that princes are but men, and that whatsoever affects them injuriously has the same effect on common people. Transgression of physical law on our part may not have as far-reaching effects as when committed by princes—it may make no difference to the country,—but it will certainly make a difference to us personally. If we feel that our proper place is among

the princes of the Lord's people, then we shall give diligence to keep our bodies in at least as good condition as should the princes who wear only an earthly crown.

"But everybody eats in the morning; how absurd to try to start a new custom; I don't believe in fads," I hear someone say.

I beg your pardon, I am not trying to introduce any new custom; I am simply setting forth the obvious meaning of a simple text, in answer to a question. And what if "everybody" does eat in the morning; what does that prove? Isn't it possible that there is a chance for great improvement in the people of the land generally?

Look at the case in its physiological aspect. Doesn't it seem strange that after a night's rest, by which the whole system is refreshed, and in the best condition for work, people should at once begin to spend that energy in digesting food, instead of in work? It is true that there is ordinarily a feeling of hunger soon after rising, but that is solely because the stomach has become accustomed to receiving food at that time; but that feeling is not true hunger,—the cry of the system for nourishment,—for all the organs and tissues of the body have been restored by sleep.

This is not the time or place to enter fully into a consideration of the subject of hunger; but it may be stated as a truth that very much of what people suppose to be hunger is not due to lack of food, but to other causes, when the system does not actually require food, then every particle that is eaten is just so much for drunkenness—the effect is the same as that produced by alcohol, though differing in degree. Anybody can see that it is at least a tax on the system.

"Well then, would you advise me to try going without my early morning meal, and break my fast later in the day?" you ask.

No; most decidedly not.

"Why not? If the Bible says that it is a good thing."

Because I can never advise anybody to try experiments.

### **Romans 1**

<sup>17</sup> The just shall live by faith,

—and faith knows before it acts. Trying experiments belongs to doubt, and not to faith. You are never to try some mode of living, to see how it will agree with you; you are to find out from some reliable source (and there is none better than the Bible), whether the proposed thing is right or not.

If you do not know that some other course is better than the one you are following, do not change; but if you know that a thing is right, then take hold of it with a resolution that will realize the good that is in it, in spite of some possible inconveniences in making the change. You must know that whatever you do is good for you, not because of how you may sometimes feel, but because God's word says so. Otherwise one is manifestly not living by faith.

Someone asks:

“Do you not think that there are other errors in diet which call far more loudly for reform than does this one of eating in the morning?”

Undoubtedly there are many reforms far more necessary than this. If one make all other reforms in diet, that are obviously necessary, one might do very well, as thousands do, while continuing to eat in the morning. Perhaps it may be said that the reform here discussed is a luxury, rather than an absolute necessity. It is a privilege, for those who wish to live like princes, rather than a duty, and as it is not enjoined on any, it may be ignored by these who are content to live only a common life, and have only ordinary strength.

Perhaps a few words of personal experience may be allowable, inasmuch as the subject has been broached. Some time ago, when I had an unusual amount of work on hand, I was considering how it would be possible to get through it. Suddenly the text in ques-

tion flashed into my mind. I had, of course, often read it, but without having my attention fixed upon it. Now it stood out vividly, and I could not help seeing that here was a neglected avenue of strength.

Since it came from God's Word, it was not necessary to confer with flesh and blood; I knew that what the Bible pronounces blessed is blessed, and the decision was instantly made. There was no thought of "trying the plan;" it was entered upon for life, and although a slight inconvenience was experienced for two or three days, no change was ever more easily made, and nothing could persuade me to return to the old habit of eating in the morning.

There was not the slightest doubt to begin with; but experience has demonstrated that both mental and physical labor can be far better performed without an early morning meal than with it.

Nevertheless, I repeat with emphasis, Let nobody adopt this mode of living who does not know absolutely, better even than he knows his own name, that it is the very best thing for him.

#### **Romans 14**

<sup>5</sup> Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind;

<sup>23</sup> ...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

# 145. The Substance and the Sign

Present Truth, January 15, 1903

Having recently lost my situation on account of keeping the Sabbath I have been sorely tempted.

I have been told that if we are wholly the Lord's, and sanctified to His service, we are no longer doing our own work, whatever we do, and that when we do everything to the glory of God,—when we do only the work of the Lord,—then anything that is proper to do any day is legitimate Sabbath work; in short, that there can be no difference in days to the Christian, but that he is to find rest *in Christ*, and not in a *day*.

Can you help me to a clear understanding of the matter? for I wish to do only the Lord's will.

**I** THINK I can help you; or, rather, I can direct you to the Word of the Lord, which can help you. In the first place, let me emphasize the fact that the Christian finds rest only in the Lord. There is no rest for any soul anywhere else. Jesus calls:

## **Matthew 11**

<sup>28</sup> Come unto me, all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.

This rest in Christ is not something new that was introduced at the time of the first advent of Jesus; for many hundred years before, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, God said to Moses,

## **Exodus 33**

<sup>14</sup> My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.

It is worth while to remember that this was said but a few days after the ten commandments were spoken from Sinai, and while Moses was still in the mount with the Lord.

## **Hebrews 4**

<sup>3</sup> We which have believed do enter into rest.

The rest that the Lord gives, which is the only real rest there is, can be obtained only by faith, faith in the finished work of Christ.

## **John 6**

<sup>29</sup> This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.

But God's work is finished and perfect; therefore whoever accepts His work must have rest. The cross of Christ contains and reveals the completed work of Christ; for on the cross He exclaimed,

## **John 19**

<sup>30</sup> It is finished.

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or, "there is a new creation"]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God.

All the real rest that any soul on earth can ever enjoy is in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Resting in the Lord is Sabbath-keeping; and it is only the righteous who rest in the Lord.

## **Isaiah 57**

<sup>20</sup> The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

Therefore a wicked man does not, and cannot, keep the Sabbath. It is only the righteous, who are righteous because they are resting in the Lord, that keep the Sabbath.

"Well, ought not a person to rest in the Lord all the time?"

Certainly he ought.

"Is there any day when a man should not be righteous? Can a man be a Christian if he does not rest in the Lord every day?"

Most certainly not; we are to believe all the time, and so to rest in Christ—in His finished work—all the time, every day in the week, and every hour in the day.

“Then is not every day the Sabbath day?”

Not by any means.

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

That is, “the day of the Sabbath.” We are always to rest in the Lord; but the seventh day, the Sabbath day, is the *sign* of that rest. It is the sign that we know God; and the knowledge of God is rest.

Now while it is a deplorable fact that there are many people who have the sign without the substance, that is no reason why those who have the substance should throw away the sign. Indeed, the idea that sanctified people are above and beyond the keeping of a definite rest day, is most illogical. As a matter of fact, nobody but a sanctified person does, or can, or ever did, keep the Sabbath of the Lord; it is the person who does not trust the Lord who ought not to exhibit the sign of rest in the Lord.

The seventh-day rest by a man who does not know the Lord, is meaningless; if he does not intend to give himself wholly to the Lord, to rest wholly in Him, he ought not to take in the sign; but the better way to do would be to make his practice conform to his profession: to secure the substance and to keep the sign. We are to keep the Sabbath, not in order to be righteous, but as the sign that we trust in God for righteousness.

What about the statement that we ought to be doing the Lord’s work all the time, and that therefore there can be no difference in days; that one day is no more a rest day than any other? The answer to this is found in the example of God himself.



## Exodus 20

<sup>11</sup> In six days God 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.

It is self-evident that God was doing nothing but the Lord's work in the six days of creation; nevertheless He rested on the seventh day. Then it is plain that resting on the Sabbath day is for those who, even in doing their own work on the six working days, are doing only the Lord's work, since they are the Lord's.

Just a few words to call attention to the relation between the Sabbath and the cross. Note the following plain statements of truth.

1. The Sabbath is the sign of work finished and perfect. It is the sign of a new creation; for it was when the heavens and the earth were finished, and "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good,"<sup>525</sup> that God rested on the seventh day. He rested because His work, which was perfect, was finished.
2. It is in the cross that we find the new creation—God's finished and perfect work. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new; and all things are of God."<sup>526</sup> The cross brings us back to the beginning,—into Christ, who is the beginning.
3. Therefore the Sabbath,—the seventh day, in which God rested from all His works,—is the sign of the cross.

Not how little, but how much, is to be the Christian's enquiry. "Much more" is the motto.<sup>527</sup> He is always to be seeking to develop and expand, not to contract. But new lessons in the school of Christ do not necessitate the unlearning of what we have already passed over in the same school. Growth in grace does not

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<sup>525</sup> *Genesis* 1:31.

<sup>526</sup> *2 Corinthians* 5:17-18.

<sup>527</sup> *Romans* 5:9, 10, 15, 17, 20.

imply the rejection of that which has already been gained. The greater includes the less, and cannot be had without it.

So while “the law is spiritual,”<sup>528</sup> and no form is of any value without the Spirit, it is impossible to keep the spirit of the law and to repudiate the letter of it. Thus,

### **Romans 13**

<sup>10</sup> Love is the fulfilling of the law,

<sup>8</sup> ...for he that loves another has fulfilled the law;

—but it is impossible for a man to love his neighbor, and at the same time to rob and murder him. Jesus said,

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>20</sup> Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

To exceed means to go as far, and farther; to have as much, and more. The scribes and Pharisees were very scrupulous about observing the outward form of the law, but had not the Spirit of Christ, which is the living law. Therefore if our righteousness exceeds theirs, it must include both the form and the spirit of knowledge and truth.

And now I may, before closing, call your attention to how really the Sabbath is connected with the cross. You find it actually so in your case. You are out of work; you could easily get employment if you would give up the Sabbath; and your friends and acquaintances doubtless think you are foolish and fanatical. You have found that religion does actually involve the cross; it separates you wholly from the world. Well, why should it not? Why should the native of India or China alone suffer hardship for the sake of Christ, and the Englishman expect to undergo no inconvenience on becoming a Christian? Is not this the Christian's motto:

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<sup>528</sup> *Romans 7:14.*

## **Galatians 6**

<sup>14</sup> God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world?

Do you not now see that you are being tested as to whether you do really trust the Lord or not? we agree that there is no Christianity without resting in the Lord; and that means absolute trust in Him for support; but if you never have any trial, how will it appear that you do really trust Him? How can it ever be known that there is any meaning to you in the petition,

## **Matthew 6**

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,

—if you always have supplies enough on hand for a week or a month? You say that you trust the Lord to save you, soul and body, and to keep you safe to all eternity; surely, then, you can trust Him to keep your body alive in this present time, while you are strictly conforming to His Word.

The Sabbath test has demonstrated in the case of thousands of professed Christians that they dared not trust the Lord where they could see no prospect of life. It has shown that they were not really children of Abraham,

## **Romans 4**

<sup>18</sup> Who against hope believed in hope.

I trust that in your case it may prove that you are...

<sup>20</sup> ...strong in faith, giving glory to God.

## **Romans 14**

<sup>7</sup> None of us lives to himself.

We sing,

What is my being but for Thee?<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>529</sup> Philip Doddridge, Hymn: *My Gracious Lord, I Own Thy Right* [“The Service of Christ a Delight,” or “Living to Serve the Cause of Christ”].

–and yet are apt to act as though we lived only for ourselves. We have our being because of God’s good pleasure, and:

### **Psalms 35**

<sup>27</sup> [He] has pleasure in the prosperity of His servants.

We may be sure that, however sorely we may be tried, if we are serving the Lord He will not allow us to die because of our faithfulness to Him, [except] our death would be to His glory in the salvation of souls; and to die in God’s service is better than to live in rejection of it.

Do not get the idea that the seventh day rest is simply a sign, apart from the substance, and that the complete substance may be had without this sign. In God’s house nothing is for mere show, but every word or sign carries with it the thing signified.

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day *is the Sabbath* of the Lord.

It is the Lord’s rest. We may not understand how it can be, but nevertheless it is a truth, that the seventh day itself carries with it a blessing that no other day can give; and the blessing can be realized only by faith.

### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>4</sup> [God] spoke in one place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.

<sup>5</sup> And in another place, [of those who did not believe,<sup>530</sup>] They shall not enter into my rest.

This shows that God’s rest is the seventh day; not that we are to rest in Him in that 24-hour period only, but that the understanding and acceptance of what it means includes the receiving of all that He is and has for us. God says,

### **Ezekiel 20**

<sup>12</sup> I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.

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<sup>530</sup> *Hebrews* 3:18-19.

Thus let this assurance be your confidence:

**Isaiah 58**

<sup>13</sup> If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure; nor speaking your own words:

<sup>14</sup> Then shall you delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

## 146. Christians and Theatre-going

Present Truth, January 22, 1903

I should be very thankful if you would assist me in the following questions:

Is there any harm in going to the theater? Is it a suitable place for a Christian?

The subject at our Sunday school class meeting lately was theater-going, and most of our scholars seem to think that there is no harm in the theater, which I myself could not agree with.

There was one who said that the theater was established six hundred years before Christ. If you have any account of it, I should be very thankful for your statement.

I AM very glad for the privilege of answering this question, for I know that it is one that exercises the minds of a great many people, both young and old.

I will note the last part of it first. There is no doubt that the theater is much more ancient than six hundred years before Christ, as ancient history, especially Grecian history, abounds with references to plays and to the stage, and actors. In fact our word “hypocrite” is simply the Greek word meaning one who acts a part on the stage. Hypocrisy is the actor’s art. However, the matter of time has nothing whatever to do with the question. Sin does not become righteousness with age. We have positive evidence of idolatry more than sixteen hundred years before Christ, but that does not make it right. Murder and lying date from four thousand years before Christ, but they are just as wrong as though they were introduced only yesterday.

The only thing that really concerns us is, What is the effect of the theater both upon the actors and the attendants? Even the strongest apologists for the theater, those who are the most intimately connected with it, admit that it is demoralizing in its tendency, and that, too, without reference to the class of plays. We

can pass by the depraved exhibitions, which, by the way, constitute by far the largest part of theatrical representation, and take into consideration only the better class of plays. Even these are demoralizing, first of all to the actors themselves, who live in an unreal world. I am not making any charge against the morality of actors, I am only speaking of the inevitable tendency of the stage. It is the truth, admitted by those who know most about the matter, that it requires much more power of resistance, to live a moral life as an actor, than in almost any other calling; and that in general there is more laxness, to say the least, in the theatrical profession, than in any other.

This comes from the very nature of the case. The fact that our word "hypocrite" is the ancient Greek actor is significant. A solid character cannot be built out of nothing, out of untruth. The effect of the theater on those who attend cannot be other than demoralizing, because their minds are always wrought up to an unnatural pitch of excitement. The effect is precisely the same kind as that of drinking intoxicating liquors. It is self evident that if nothing were displayed on the stage except the events of ordinary, everyday life, it would have very few if any devotees. People go to the theater to see something extraordinary.

Even if everything exhibited were possible, and had actually occurred in real life, yet the fact remains that the sum of it all is an exaggeration, since the striking incidents in a score of lives are made to appear as occurring in a single life. People go to a theater to be excited and stimulated; and the effect of a mental stimulant is as bad as that of a physical one. It always results in a reaction. In time something stronger is required, and there is less and less relish for plain food either for mind or body. False views of life are presented, or if in any case there is an exact representation of real life, it is of its worst side. Therefore we may truly say that at the very best the theater represents that vanity from which the

Psalmist prayed the Lord to turn away his eyes<sup>531</sup>; and we should do likewise.

It is right that the mind should be drawn out to view wonderful things, that the conception should be enlarged, but this can be done by truth far better than by falsehood. The truth as revealed in the Bible and in nature is far more wonderful than anything that the wildest flights of human imagination can conceive. There is not a faculty of the mind that cannot be developed and strengthened by the contemplation of truth. But falsehood tends only to narrowness and weakness.

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<sup>531</sup> *Psalm* 119:37.



# 147. A Multitude of Captives

Present Truth, January 22, 1903

Being a constant reader of your valuable paper, and having derived great help and blessing from its "Private Corner," I should be glad if you would give me some information on the following:

*Matthew 27:51-53* says: "And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

Now, can you please tell me what became of them? Did they die, or did they take part in the ascension?

THE verses that you have quoted are all that the Bible contains directly on this subject. There is no other specific reference to those who were raised at the crucifixion of Christ. However, there is a very plain statement made in *Ephesians 4:8*, which enables us to come to a very clear understanding of the matter. The text reads that when Christ...

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>8</sup> ...ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

The margin has it, "a multitude of captives." Thus we know that when Christ ascended to heaven, He took with Him a multitude of captives redeemed from the grave as proofs of His power over death and the grave.

- That multitude, brought up from the graves and made immortal, and taken to heaven, stands as a demonstration of the fact that Christ has the keys of death and the grave.
- They are evidences that He died and rose again, not for himself, but for the world.

- In them is demonstrated the truth that the resurrection of Jesus means the resurrection and immortality of all the righteous.

Now while the record in the Gospel says nothing more concerning those who came from the grave at the crucifixion of Jesus than the mere fact that they appeared unto many, the fact that when He ascended on high, He took a multitude of captives with Him, makes it very evident that those mentioned by *Matthew* must have been among the number, for it is not reasonable to suppose that those saints were left to go back into the graves, and some others taken.

The item is of more than passing interest. It was not recorded merely as a matter of curiosity. Everything in the Bible is for practical use in everyday life; and this shows us what is the lively hope to which we are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

It shows us that even now, before the coming of the Lord, and before this mortal puts on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption, it is possible for human flesh to be delivered from the...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>21</sup> ...bondage of corruption.

### **2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>11</sup> The life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh;

—for the Spirit that is given to dwell in us, is the Spirit which quickens our mortal bodies.<sup>532</sup> Therefore,

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

<sup>21</sup> Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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<sup>532</sup> *Romans 8:10-11.*

## 148. Some Views of the Labor Problem

Present Truth, January 29, 1903

ONE who takes exception to an article in this “Corner” on Trades Unionism,<sup>533</sup> writes enumerating the advantages of unions, and says:

When each of us, seeking his own well-being in the well-being of all, shall identify his life with the life of all, and his interest with the interest of all; when each shall be ever ready to sacrifice himself for others, who are equally ready to sacrifice themselves for him,—then will most of the evils of society disappear, and the will of God will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Then only one union would be necessary, namely, the Brotherhood of Man.

This is the great reform that Trade Unionism is trying to bring about. Can we not truly say that this is a Christian work? And are we to be denounced as slaves, and told that we cannot be Christians while we are members of such unions?

I have retained the last clause in your question solely as a demonstration of how zeal for a party interferes with one’s view of the broad principles of truth and justice, and presents to the mind a distorted image of whatever is said that does not favor that party.

If you will again read more carefully the article referred to, you will find that laboring men were not denounced, neither was it said that nobody could be a Christian and belong to trade unions. It was stated, and is here re-affirmed, that Christians ought not to belong to them; but that is far different from saying that if they do belong they are not Christians. Sincere and earnest Christians often do pursue a course or follow a custom that is essentially inconsistent with their Christian profession, without thereby ceasing to be Christians. The fact that they remain Christians does not

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<sup>533</sup> This is article 17, “[The Labor Question.](#)”

lessen the inconsistency, nor justify the course pursued; it simply shows that Christianity is still greater than Christians,—that professors of the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ have not yet comprehended the fullness of it.

Now please read your own statement again, which I have quoted in the paragraph above. Can you not see that it is in itself sufficient justification of my statement, that Christians should not join trade unions. They can have no use for them, and do not need them. You have simply outlined the perfection of the work of the Gospel of Christ, as set forth in the Scriptures. Its mission is to put the love of God in the hearts of men, so that they will be unselfish; to cause each in honor to prefer another; to lead each man to labor for another's welfare rather than for his own; to bring each, like the Master, to identify his life with the life of all; in short, to cause the will of God to be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

When that time comes, then not only most, but all, of the evils of society will have disappeared. Yes; and "society" itself will also have disappeared; for "the former things" will have passed away, and all things have become new.<sup>534</sup> The arrival at that state will usher in the coming of the Lord in glory, and His everlasting reign of righteousness in the new earth.

Your language implies that trade unionism exists for the purpose of bringing about the glorious state that you have depicted; but what can it aspire to, that the Gospel does not provide for? The highest hopes of the most unselfish philanthropist cannot embrace so much for mankind as is offered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which it is the mission of His church to proclaim. There is therefore no need for any such organization as a trade union, to bring men to love their neighbors as themselves.

I can quite understand the call for something of the kind, by well-disposed men who do not know the Gospel; but when Christians enter into such organizations, for the reasons set forth in

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<sup>534</sup> *Revelation 21:4-5.*

your statement, they thereby bring a charge of inefficiency against the Gospel which they profess. Moreover, however zealously men labor to spread the spirit of brotherly love, they can never accomplish it except through the preaching of Christ, in whom the love of God is revealed; for the first and great commandment is,

**Luke 10**

<sup>27</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind;

—and the commandment,

**Mark 12**

<sup>31</sup> You shall love your neighbor as yourself,

—is secondary to this, and grows out of it.

**1 John 4**

<sup>19</sup> We love...because He first loved us.

It is only as...

**Romans 5**

<sup>5</sup> ...the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit,

—that any man can love his neighbor as himself.

You speak of the Brotherhood of Man. Very good; but that can exist only when God is recognized and honored as the Father. Men are born brothers, not made so by contract or agreement. It needs no argument to show that there is not a state of brotherhood now existing among men; therefore it is self-evident that this desirable state can be reached only through the new birth. The only solution of the labor problem, and of the unrighteous strife between Capital and Labor is found in the re-creating, re-generating cross of Him who cries,

**Matthew 11**

<sup>28</sup> Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.

I am aware that thus far I have only shown that trade unionism cannot do the work of the church, and that I have not yet made it fully apparent why a Christian ought not to be entangled in such an organization. Another communication in the same line as yours, from another person, opens up that phase of the subject; and to this newcomer, and his objections, I will now address myself.

Trades unionism is a method adopted by the workers, to enable them to fight against injustice and tyranny. Is not this the duty of Christians?

Certainly not; for the Scripture says:

### **Romans 12**

<sup>19</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.

If that is not sufficient testimony, read this:

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>39</sup> I say unto you, That you resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

<sup>40</sup> And if any man will sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also.

<sup>44</sup> Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

<sup>45</sup> That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Still farther: In the epistle of *James* we have the sternest denunciation of those who have by fraud kept back the hire of the laborers that have reaped their fields. To them the word of Inspiration comes:

## **James 5**

<sup>6</sup> You have condemned and killed the just, and he does not resist you.

This shows that the just do not resist oppression and tyranny. The obvious conclusion is that those who do resist are not just. Together with the foregoing, read the following:

## **Psalm 9**

<sup>18</sup> For the needy shall not be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.

## **Psalm 12**

<sup>5</sup> For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.

Now in the face of this, for any poor man to undertake to mete out justice to the oppressor, with his own hands, can be nothing else but a manifestation of unbelief in God. Here is a word addressed directly to the poor and oppressed themselves:

## **James 5**

<sup>7</sup> Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

<sup>8</sup> Be you also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

Cannot the lover of the Lord have enough confidence in Him to believe that He sees the oppression, that He is deeply moved by it, that He is able to punish the tyrant, and deliver his victim, and that He certainly will? Can you not wait the little while until He comes? Do you not know that he who begins to smite his fellow-servant thereby says in his heart,

## **Matthew 24**

<sup>48</sup> My Lord delays His coming?

And can you reconcile that with the character of a Christian?

Loving your neighbor as yourself abolishes competing with each other for an existence, substituting a union in which each should work for all, and all for each. Today Christianity does not prevail: the people are divided into classes, and a warfare constantly going on between the rich and the poor.

That shows that even if “Love your neighbor as yourself” is the motto of trade unionism, it is not the rule by which it works. Why limit the term “neighbor” to the man who works at the same trade that you do? or to the man who is in the same rank as yourself, according to this world’s standard? Does the possession of a little property take a man out of that category? and is it any part of Christianity to hate the man who has more money than we have? You cannot help seeing that no Christian can consistently belong to any organization that in any way encourages force or violence.

### **James 1**

<sup>20</sup> The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.

No matter how much division and warfare there may be in the world, the Christian can be no party to it; for...

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>20</sup> ...hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife and seditions...

—are ranked with...

<sup>19</sup> ...adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

<sup>21</sup> ...murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like...

<sup>19</sup> ...[as] the works of the flesh,

—which are in opposition to the Spirit of God. Fighting is no part of Christianity.

### **2 Corinthians 10**

<sup>4</sup> The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

Whatever fight there is between capital and labor, is of Satan, and not of the Lord.



## **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>24</sup> The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men.

You may say that such precepts are not adapted to this age; but with that I have nothing to do. I know of no Christianity but that set forth by the Word, and exemplified in the character of the Living Word,

## **1 Peter 2**

<sup>23</sup> Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judges righteously.

To be sure, Christ uttered His precepts a long time ago, and they are commonly voted out of date now; but remember that He was not in harmony with the “spirit of the age” even when He was on earth. So we must choose whether we will follow Him or the world. We cannot have both. Which shall it be?

## 149. Christ the Sin Bearer

Present Truth, February 5, 1903

At our men's Bible class recently, the subject being "the place of refuge," the leader made the remark that the high priest was the sin bearer and that "when he died, he died without forgiveness."

He said also that "Jesus Christ, our sin-bearer, died without forgiveness." I asked him if he would kindly say a few words more on the subject so as to help our minds; but he said he would leave it for us to think of.

So having received so much valuable information from your valuable paper, I ask, will you kindly help me?

THE statement in question is a very fair sample of the loose manner in which people deal with matters of religion. Such statements would do no harm, if all hearers would make it an invariable rule to accept nothing without proof. But the trouble is, that whenever a person occupying the place of a leader makes an assertion, somebody is sure to accept it as Gospel truth, without asking any questions. This is the reason why, whenever the real truth is presented from the Scripture, we are sure to be met by an objection from some person, beginning thus:

"But I have been told..."

—and so forth; and although the truth may be plainly read from the Scripture, the unsupported assertion that somebody made holds its place against it.

There is not the slightest reason for saying that the high priest died without forgiveness. On the contrary, the high priest was directed to offer a sin-offering, and make atonement for his own sin, before he offered for the people.<sup>535</sup> A thorough knowledge of the Bible is essential for a Bible class teacher.

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<sup>535</sup> *Leviticus* 16:3-9.

The statement that the high priest was a sin-bearer is also a misapprehension. This is evident from the fact that he had to make an offering for sin. Read the whole of *Leviticus* 16. In this, as well as in other Scriptures, we see that sin was confessed upon the victim, the idea of the sin-offering being that it bore the sin. The death of the sin-offering represents the death of the sinner himself.

Now if the high priest had indeed himself borne the sin of the people, then he would have been obliged to offer himself. The misapprehension doubtless arose from the fact that Jesus our High Priest bears our sins; but here it must be remembered that Christ is not only the High Priest, but He is also the sin-offering,

### **John 1**

<sup>29</sup> ...the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.

If any earthly high priest ever died unforgiven, it was because he had failed to confess and repent of his own sin, and not because he bore other people's sins. As a matter of fact no mere man ever did or ever can bear another's sins.

### **Ezekiel 18**

<sup>20</sup> The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Jesus Christ was the sin-offering for the whole world, because:

### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>4</sup> [He] through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God;

—and, by that same Spirit He dwells in the hearts of men,<sup>536</sup> and thus actually takes the place of all who believe in Him.<sup>537</sup> The death of any number of men, whether forgiven or unforgiven,

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<sup>536</sup> *John* 14:16-18.

<sup>537</sup> *Galatians* 2:20.

would not atone for a single sin that they themselves, or any other person, had committed.

As to saying that Christ died unforgiven, that is both absurd and wicked. It is absurd from the fact that Jesus had no sin for which to be forgiven; and it is wicked, because of the implication that He was a sinner needing forgiveness. And to say that, is to deny that He is the Saviour of sinners.

I cannot think how anyone professing to be a Christian could have made such an assertion. Christ could be our sin-bearer only because He himself was sinless.

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>22</sup> [He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>21</sup> [He] knew no sin.

A single sin that any person has committed is more than he can bear, and will suffice to crush him; but He who knew no sin can bear the sin of the world, and find His burden light.

## 150. Compassed with Infirmary

Present Truth, February 5, 1903

As a student of the Lord's word, and very desirous to ascertain the truth upon all essential points of Christian faith, I should be glad of your reasons for applying *Hebrews 5:2* to our Saviour.

I have always understood the text to teach that the Jewish priest, while called of God to offer an offering for sins on behalf of the worshipers, had likewise to offer for himself a similar offering; and the words in verse 3, "by reason hereof he ought" are based upon the fact stated in verse 2, that like the ones he ministers for, he himself is compassed with infirmity (imperfection).

Our High Priest did not in any way partake of the *fallen* human nature, like the Jewish priests. He came in the *likeness* of sinful flesh, but not in sinful flesh, or flesh full of sins. My real thought is, "that the Word (*Logos*) was made flesh" before sin entered, or otherwise how could He have been a ransom price for Adam, and the race condemned in him?

**Y**OUR question opens up the heart of the Gospel; but although many pages would not suffice to give an exhaustive statement, a very little consideration of the word will make it plain.

If we take up the last part of your question first, we shall get at it in the most logical manner. Your "real thought" that the Word was made flesh before sin entered, is correct; for even as it was by the Word of the Lord that the heavens were made, so it was by that same Word, that man was brought into being. The Word that was made flesh, is the word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, without which not one thing was made.

The perfect man is the man who shares the fullness which is bestowed freely upon all. Without God man is incomplete; it takes God in man to make a whole man. Everybody will see this who recognizes the identity of the words, wholeness, and holiness. A holy man is simply a whole man, a man who is made complete in

Christ. Adam was a complete, perfect man; because, in him the Word of life that was from the beginning, was fully manifested.

But Adam fell, he deliberately cast off his allegiance to God; yet God did not forsake him, the Word still dwelt among men, although not in its fullness of grace and truth, because held down in unrighteousness. Thus it is that...

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>13</sup> ...the Word of truth [is] the Gospel of our salvation.

You ask how the Word could have been a ransom price for Adam and the race condemned in him, if it were not made flesh before sin entered? I ask how it could have been a ransom for the race if it had not remained among men after sin entered? The love of God toward men is shown in that He has not forsaken us in our fallen condition. If it were not so, we should not be alive to tell the tale.

He is our life. He who would raise fallen man, must come where he is. He is made what we are, in order that we may be made what He is. He comes into us, suffering the death which He did not deserve, in order that we may enjoy the life that we did not deserve. And this He does, not arbitrarily, but because from the very fact of our existence He is one with us.

Your statement that our High Priest did not in any way partake of the fallen human nature, like the Jewish priest, is an unsupported assertion, and contrary to the Scripture. Read the words of the Lord to Moses:

### **Deuteronomy 18**

<sup>18</sup> I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto you, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

So we read the words of the Lord:

### **Psalms 89**

<sup>19</sup> I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people.

Now mark well, this does not say that Jesus was sinful. His everlasting glory is, that from the height of heaven He stooped and came down and took upon himself man's sinfulness, and yet remained sinless. Read the testimony:

**Isaiah 53**

<sup>4</sup> He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:

—or, as quoted in...

**Matthew 8**

<sup>17</sup> Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses.

**Isaiah 53**

<sup>6</sup> The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all,

—or, as given in the margin, “has made the iniquity of us all to meet on Him.” This is not a mere figure of speech; it is a statement of an actual fact, a reality. He is the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world.<sup>538</sup> The sin of the world is the sin that is common in the world. He had it all on Him in fullest measure, yet never once did He yield to it in the slightest degree.

This is our hope, our victory; it is our only hope, and the only basis on which we can have any hope. For if there were a gulf between Him and us, if He were at a distance from us, if He occupied the “I-am-holier-than-you” position, standing off in flesh that knows nothing of our weakness, and the conflicts that we have to wage, there would be no hope for us. We should have laid upon us the impossible task of lifting ourselves up to His level, before we could be united to Him, but it is not so.

He that ascended up far above all heavens, is the One who first descended into the lower parts of the earth.<sup>539</sup> He went down to the depths to which man had fallen, in order that man may be raised to the height of His glorious righteousness. And because this marvel of righteousness was manifested in Jesus of Nazareth,

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<sup>538</sup> *John* 1:29 (margin).

<sup>539</sup> *Ephesians* 4:9.

a man born of woman,<sup>540</sup> born of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh,<sup>541</sup> every man born of woman may, if he believes, have that same perfect righteousness, perfect deliverance from sin.

I know the play that is commonly made upon the word “likeness,” in the text which says that, Christ was made...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>3</sup> ...in the *likeness* of sinful flesh.

I do not mean to indicate by the word play, that there is any intentional trifling with the Scripture. But a reference to the same word in *Romans* 5:14 will help us to see that it does not mean something like, yet not like. Thus in the text just referred to we read:

### **Romans 5**

<sup>14</sup> Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the similitude [likeness] of Adam’s transgression.

This, it is evident, is not intended to convey the idea, that the sin of Adam is different from the sin of the rest of mankind, for we all are sharers in his sin. Still more evident is this in the 6<sup>th</sup> of *Romans*, where we read:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>5</sup> If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death; we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

Comparing this with the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse, which says that we are...

<sup>3</sup> ...baptized into His death,

—with the 6<sup>th</sup> verse, which says that:

<sup>6</sup> ...our old man is crucified with Him,

—and with the 8<sup>th</sup> verse which says that:

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<sup>540</sup> *Galatians* 4:4 [RV].

<sup>541</sup> *Galatians* 3:16; *Romans* 1:3;



## Romans 6

<sup>8</sup> ...we are dead with Christ,

—we see that this expression “in the likeness of His death,” means identity. We share His death, that we may share His life. Still more plainly does this appear from the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of *Hebrews*:

## Hebrews 2

<sup>11</sup> Both He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

<sup>14</sup> Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He also himself likewise took part of the same.

Nothing could be more emphatic than this: He partakes of the same flesh and blood that the children have, whom He came to save. He took upon Him the seed of Abraham. He is the Seed of the woman, and in order to make this central truth of the Gospel emphatic, and to keep it ever before the minds of mankind, He always spoke of himself as the Son of man.

If there were a difference between the nature of Christ, and that of man, that which we read in *Hebrews* 5:7, would be but a farce:

## Hebrews 5

<sup>7</sup> In the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death.

He did not do this for nothing: He did not do this merely as an example to show us what we ought to do. But He did it through the eternal Spirit, that by that same Spirit He might be the Author of eternal salvation to all that trust Him.<sup>542</sup> And how about Him at the present time? He is our High Priest in the heavenly places at the right hand of God, yet He is on earth in our flesh, even in our sinful flesh.

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<sup>542</sup> *Hebrews* 5:9.

## Romans 10

<sup>6</sup> For the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above).

<sup>7</sup> Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

<sup>8</sup> But what says it? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart; that is, the Word of faith which we preach;

<sup>9</sup> That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

If He were not still on earth (by the Spirit of course) among us, dwelling in us, there would be no hope of salvation to any human being; but our hope, our only hops, our all sufficient hope, is this, that every weakness which would cause us to stumble and fall is upon Him, and if we but see and confess this continually, allowing Him to do that for which He is in the flesh, He is abundantly able to keep us from falling.<sup>543</sup>

Although in the heavens, He is still compassed with infirmity, even with our infirmity. Our great High Priest that is passed into the heavens is still touched with the feeling of our infirmity.<sup>544</sup> This is why we can come with boldness to the throne of grace, assured that we shall find mercy and grace to help in time of need.<sup>545</sup>

There seems to be the idea that it is derogatory to Christ's character, to say that He has come in sinful flesh. I have heard a professed Christian express the same thing to me, saying that the idea that Christ was born of woman was repugnant to him; he felt that it was debasing to Christ. What a false conception! It is in the highest degree honorable to Him that He can be compassed with infirmity, yet not fall, that He can have all the sin of the world

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<sup>543</sup> *Jude 1:24; Ephesians 3:20.*

<sup>544</sup> *Hebrews 4:15.*

<sup>545</sup> *Hebrews 4:16.*

upon Him, yet not be defiled. It is this that makes Him the gloriously complete Saviour; this will be His glory to all eternity.

Aside from all this, my reason for applying *Hebrews* 5:2 to Christ, is that He is the subject of the discourse. That which is stated in that verse is said to apply to every high priest taken from among men, who is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, and this is emphatically true of Christ. All this, however, will receive fuller consideration, as we proceed in our study of *Hebrews* in the Bible class.<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>546</sup> PP Editor's Note: The articles on *Hebrews* are included in the collection *Studies in Hebrews*, by E. J. Waggoner, which at the time of this writing (June 2023) is not yet finished, but should be soon.

## 151. Take Heed

Present Truth, February 12, 1903

Is it possible for a child of God to be lost, after having the gift of eternal life?

**T**HE last part of the question can be omitted without affecting it, for a person cannot be a child of God without having the gift of eternal life. The whole question, therefore, is this,

“Is it possible for a child of God to be lost?”

—and the Scripture plainly teaches that it is. Judas was an apostle, and with the rest of the twelve was sent out with...

### **Luke 9**

<sup>1</sup> ...power and authority over all devils,

<sup>2</sup> ...to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

Yet he became...

### **John 17**

<sup>12</sup> ...the son of perdition.

Paul, who was God's chosen vessel to carry His name before kings, and who received the most wonderful revelations, was obliged to practice rigid self-discipline, lest after he had preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away.<sup>547</sup> The exhortations in *Hebrews* 4:1-11; 6:1-9, are evidence of the possibility for those to fall who have been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come.

However, it must be understood that there is no necessity for any child of God to fall. Jesus said of those to whom He gave eternal life,

### **John 10 [RV]**

<sup>28</sup> No one shall snatch them out of my hand.

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<sup>547</sup> *1 Corinthians* 9:27.

<sup>29</sup> My Father, which has given them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

We may cease to trust, and thereby take ourselves out of the hand of the Lord; but as long as we by faith abide in Him, no power can prevail against us. The promise is,

### **1 Corinthians 10**

<sup>13</sup> God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> [God] is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

—able even...

### **Jude**

<sup>24</sup> ...to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

The statement by Christ, that...

### **Matthew 10**

<sup>13</sup> He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved,

—shows that there is a possibility that some may not endure, yet no reason why they need not. Therefore,

### **1 Corinthians 10**

<sup>12</sup> Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.

## 152. Death and Judgment

Present Truth, February 12, 1903

A friend having shown me a number of your paper, I am very much taken up with it, and like the way in which you explain the Scriptures. My friend and I have long talks on the state of the dead, and we have got to your way of thinking.

I may say that there has been some trouble between my friend and her parents over this subject, for they believe we are judged as soon as we die. Of course, the church teaches that belief, and in the *Confession of Faith* they explain it, by referring to *Ecclesiastes* 11:7, and *Luke* 23:43.

My friend's father is an elder in the Congregational Church, and he says we are judged as soon as we die, and points out to us *Matthew* 17:3, "And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him," also in *Luke* 16, about the rich man and Lazarus.

Now I am taking the liberty of asking you, if you will be so kind as to explain those verses, as I am not able to do so.

YOU have laid out a good deal of work for one small "corner," for it obviously takes much more space to give a clear exposition of a text than merely to refer to it, and say that it proves a certain thing; and here I have several texts to deal with. Moreover, the consideration of them must be to a certain extent negative, which is never so satisfactory as to deal with a subject from the foundation. However, we shall see what can be done in brief.

Both Scripture and our own observation teach us that the dead are unconscious. Nobody ever saw a dead man make a single voluntary movement, and nobody ever heard one utter a sound, no matter how earnestly he was addressed. The Bible also says that:

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> The dead know not anything,

—and that:

## **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>10</sup> There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave.

It is plain, therefore, that, in the face of this evidence, whoever claims that the dead are actually alive and conscious, is bound in reason to offer positive proof of the fact. But that would be a thankless task; for if one could produce such evidence, it would prove the Bible untrue, which is impossible.

Let us first deal with the account of the transfiguration, as given in *Matthew* 17. Jesus was in the mount with His disciples,

## **Matthew 17**

<sup>3</sup> And there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

This, you say, is offered you as proof that men are judged as soon as they die; but it is no proof at all. For in the first place, Elijah never died, but was taken to heaven without dying.<sup>548</sup> It is strange, but I have noticed that most people seem never to have observed this fact.

Now as to Moses in the mount with Jesus. We know that Moses died, and that the Lord buried him.<sup>549</sup> What shall we then conclude? why, knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we will show our confidence in it by believing it; and since it says that Moses died; that the dead know not anything; and yet that Moses was seen fifteen hundred years afterwards talking with the Lord, we shall draw the obvious conclusion that he had been raised from the dead.

That this is the case, is corroborated by two portions of Scripture. One is *Jude* 9, which says that Michael the Archangel, the one whose voice will call the dead to life at the last day,<sup>550</sup>

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<sup>548</sup> See *2 Kings* 2.

<sup>549</sup> *Deuteronomy* 34.

<sup>550</sup> See *1 Thessalonians* 4:16; *John* 5:26-29.

## **Jude**

<sup>9</sup> ...when contending with the devil, He disputed about the body of Moses.

Now the devil is the one...

## **Hebrews 2**

<sup>14</sup> ...that had the power of death,

—and Christ is the one who has broken his power, and who has the keys of death and the grave.<sup>551</sup> The only thing which they could dispute about over the body of Moses, would be the right of Christ to take him from the grave, the devil's prison; for if Jesus did not intend to raise him, He would have no occasion of dispute with the devil; but since they did dispute, we may be sure that Christ gained His point. Thus we have one further evidence that Moses was raised from the dead.

Again, the Apostle Peter refers to the transfiguration scene as an illustration of...

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>16</sup> ...the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus also, just six days before the transfiguration, said,

## **Matthew 16**

<sup>28</sup> 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.

Now when Christ comes...

## **Matthew 24**

<sup>30</sup> ...with power and great glory,

## **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> ...the dead in Christ shall rise first,

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<sup>551</sup> *Revelation 1:18.*



—and then the living saints will be changed to immortality, and caught up with the others, thus ever to be with the Lord.<sup>552</sup> Therefore, in order for the transfiguration to be a perfect representation of the coming of the Lord, there must have been present a representative of those who are raised from the dead, and also of those who are taken to be with Christ without dying. This last we have in the person of Elijah, and is it plain that Moses must have represented the other class. So much for that.

*Ecclesiastes 12:7* is the conclusion of a series of figures indicating death, and it says,

### **Ecclesiastes 12**

<sup>7</sup> Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

That is a simple description of the unmaking of man, just as *Genesis 2:7* is of the making of man; but it affords not the remotest intimation that man is judged at death, or is conscious in death. Indeed, it teaches exactly the opposite, for it shows that in death, man's condition is the same as it was before he was created.

*Luke 23:43* may be disposed of as easily as the case of Moses and Elijah. Jesus was on the cross, on which He died. He did not go to heaven that day, but, on the contrary, went into the grave. On the third day afterward, angels came from heaven, and rolled away the stone, and...

### **Acts 10**

<sup>41</sup> ...He rose from the dead.

Mark well, He “rose,” and appeared unto His disciples. He did not come down from heaven and appear to them. Moreover He said to Mary, who would have embraced Him,

### **John 20**

<sup>17</sup> Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father;

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<sup>552</sup> 1 *Thessalonians* 4:16-17.

—yet later the same day He allowed the disciples to touch Him, showing that immediately after appearing to Mary, on the morning of His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven, to the Father, and returned.

Thus we see that Jesus did not go to Paradise three days before; for Paradise is in the highest heaven. Therefore the thief could not possibly have been with Him in Paradise that day. The thief did not ask or expect to be in Paradise with Jesus on the day of the crucifixion, nor did Jesus say that he would be.

What the thief asked was that Jesus should remember him when He came in His kingdom, and we know that He will; for He assured him even that day,

- although He was nailed to a cross, and mocked and derided;
- although all men had forsaken Him;
- although most thought He was a deceiver, and even His own disciples thought that He was deceived;
- although all appearances seemed to be against Him,

—yet even that day, in that darkest hour, Jesus declared with all confidence that the thief should be with Him in Paradise. One knows not which to wonder at most—the faith of Jesus, or that of the thief.

As to the comma before the word “today,” instead of after it, it need only be said that the punctuation of the Bible is not a matter of inspiration. There were no marks of punctuation when the Bible was written. When punctuation marks were invented, and men punctuated the Bible, they naturally made it read according to their understanding of the text. All that is necessary is to think of the text without any punctuation, and then read it in the light of its surroundings and the rest of Scripture. *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18 and *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54 show when and how those who believe in Christ, and die in faith in Him, will be with Him.

It might also be mentioned in this connection, that Jesus has not yet come in His kingdom. He has gone to heaven to receive it,

and when it is given to Him He will return, sitting on the throne of His glory.<sup>553</sup>

We have only the parable of the rich man and Lazarus<sup>554</sup> remaining, out of your list of texts; and inasmuch as that is a parable, we need not tarry long over it. It is not that we should treat parables slightly; but unless a parable is explained by the One who gave it, as with most of those in *Matthew* 22, it is plain that no doctrine can be based on it; and this one has no explanation.

However, the context plainly indicates that it was spoken for the special benefit of the Pharisees who were covetous, and who thought that riches were a sign of God's favor, and poverty of His displeasure; and by it Jesus teaches that a man's wealth or social position in this world does not indicate his position in the world to come.

If it be claimed that the parable must nevertheless teach what is true about the state of death, note that Abraham is represented as telling the rich man what took place in his lifetime. Note, also, that Lazarus is said to have been carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. That shows that it is but a figure, unless one would have us believe that all good men are actually reposing in Abraham's bosom!

*Judges* 9:7-15 is another instance of things personified in a parable. In the one in *Luke* we have dead men represented as speaking, just as in *Judges* the trees are holding a conversation.

And now I must leave you with the Bible, to meditate upon the great truth that life comes only through our Lord Jesus Christ, even as righteousness does, and that justification by faith is inseparably bound up with life only for the righteous.

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<sup>553</sup> *Matthew* 21:31.

<sup>554</sup> *Luke* 16.

## 153. Not Compulsion; but Persuasion

Present Truth, February 19, 1903

I am a member of the Good Templars, a religious temperance society. We are great at fighting publicans, brewers, and so forth; in fact, we go for anything connected with the liquor traffic. Now somehow from reading *Present Truth*, I begin to think we are spending our energy in a wrong way, and that our business is not to fight brewers, but to persuade men and women by our lives. Will you kindly enlighten me?

**I** AM sure you have come to a right conclusion. And this I say not of myself but from the word of God.

### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>12</sup> For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.

Therefore:

### **2 Corinthians 10**

<sup>3</sup> Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh

<sup>4</sup> (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds);

<sup>5</sup> Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

## **Reclamation, Not Denunciation**

Our mission to sinners is not denunciation, but reclamation.

### **John 3**

<sup>17</sup> God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

<sup>19</sup> This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world.

Therefore the only way that we can condemn the world is to let the light shine. Noah condemned the world by being a preacher of righteousness.<sup>555</sup> Jesus said,

### **John 12**

<sup>46</sup> I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on me should not abide in darkness.

<sup>47</sup> And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

Read *2 Corinthians* 5:18-20.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore,

<sup>20</sup> We are ambassadors on the behalf of Christ, as though God were beseeching by us...in Christ's stead.

Whenever we lose sight of this fundamental truth, and seek to advance the cause of truth by denunciation, we are sure to fail.

### **James 1**

<sup>20</sup> The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.

### **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>24</sup> The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

<sup>25</sup> In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

I know that the idea is becoming almost universally prevalent in the Church, that Christians must deal with existing evils, in what is termed "a practical manner," namely through the machinery of the State. Modern reformers have not the patience to wait the result of preaching the Word, they want to see people con-

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<sup>555</sup> *Hebrews* 11:7; *2 Peter* 2:5.

verted in a body. This shows that they have not learned either the Scripture or the lesson of history.

The heathen Saxons were baptized in a mass, as a token of submission to Charlemagne, but that baptism did not constitute them Christians. Nothing but the Spirit of God working on the heart of man can effect true reformation; and therefore every use of any other means, is but a hindrance to the progress of the Gospel.

## 154. The Earth's Future

Present Truth, February 19, 1903

Allow me to thank you for the help *Present Truth* is to me. Will you kindly make more plain, with God's help, the following passage from *Man's True Dominion*?

"When Satan has full control of all except the little flock who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, the Lord will come, the wicked will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. The righteous will be taken to be with Him, and the earth will be left desolate, without cities and without men, for a thousand years."

In *Revelation* 20:3-4 we read that Satan is to be bound a thousand years, and when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, etc.

You also stated, a few weeks ago, that this earth would be purified by fire. We read in *Revelation* 20:11, "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them;" and in chapter 21, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven," etc., and the description of the New Jerusalem, verse 4, and onward, shows a city for God's people, entirely new.

Thanking you in anticipation, if you have the time to explain what may not appear difficult to you, but is to me as I now read God's word, believe me, yours sincerely.

YOUR difficulty arises very naturally from the fact that in the articles you refer to, the events of the last days were only incidentally mentioned, and the Scripture authority for the statements made was not given, although it has often been presented at length in *Present Truth*. A presentation of some of the principal portions of Scripture treating upon the coming of the Lord and

the circumstances attending it will, I think, make the subject clear to your mind, and will certainly be profitable to all.

### **Promise of Restoration**

In the first place we must remember that the earth is much changed from what it was when it was created, and that a restoration to its original condition has been promised by the Lord through His prophets throughout all the ages; and further that this restoration is connected with the second coming of Christ.<sup>556</sup>

If you read the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of *2 Peter*, you will find the entire history of the world summarized in very small compass, and this will serve excellently as an outline. There we find that the earth is spoken of at three different stages of its existence, as though it were three different worlds. Notice this carefully, and you will have the solution of a large part of your difficulty.

First, we have the earth at creation, a watery mass.

#### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>5</sup> ...by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.

Then we are brought to the flood, which destroyed the earth that then was,

<sup>6</sup> Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished;

—leaving...

<sup>7</sup> ...the heaven and the earth, which are now,

—and which are reserved to be destroyed by fire by at the last day.

<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the

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<sup>556</sup> See *Acts* 3:20-21.



elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

<sup>11</sup> Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

<sup>12</sup> Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

Now, just “as the heavens and the earth which are now” since the flood, are not “the world that then was,” but greatly modified in appearance, so the new heavens and new earth are but this present heaven and earth restored to their original condition.

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>5</sup> He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

The earth when first created was new, and so, when restored to its first condition, it will of course be new. Having the subject before us in outline, we may now fill in the details.

The Scriptures mention in different places, many things that take place at the second advent of our Lord. What often leads to confusion concerning the order of these events is the failure to keep in mind that the second advent of Christ, like the first, is not an affair of but a moment, but covers a period of time.

### **Resurrection and Translation of the Righteous**

In the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Revelation* we have a description of “the seven last plagues” which will immediately precede the second coming of Christ. The circumstances attending the appearance of Christ in the clouds of heaven, will be the most awful and terrible that the earth has ever experienced.<sup>557</sup>

To come more definitely to particulars, we may read what will happen to the righteous when Christ comes:

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<sup>557</sup> See *Matthew* 24:29-30; *Revelation* 1:7. Read also the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of *Isaiah*, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of *Habakkuk*.

## **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

You might also read *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54 in this connection.

## **The Wicked Destroyed**

But what about the wicked? The 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Revelation*, to which you have referred, is sufficient authority for the statement that the wicked will not receive their final doom at the moment of Christ's appearance in the clouds of heaven, to gather His saints. That chapter indeed, together with the one following, gives a very complete summary of the events from the coming of Christ and the resurrection to the final destruction of the wicked and the restoration of the earth.

In reading that chapter, note that there is a period of a thousand years between the resurrection of the just, and that of the unjust. Now we may go back to trace the story of the wicked and of the sin-cursed earth up to the close of the thousand years, when the second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked, takes place.

## **The Brightness of His Coming**

In *2 Thessalonians* 2:8 we read of...

## **2 Thessalonians 2**

<sup>8</sup> ...that Wicked...whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the brightness of His coming.

The coming of the Lord will be with such dazzling glory as the world has never known.<sup>558</sup> Therefore we can well understand that the wicked that are left after the plagues will be instantly destroyed by it. The righteous will be able to endure it, because of what is stated in:

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<sup>558</sup> Compare *Psalms* 97:3-6; *Luke* 9:26; *Habakkuk* 3:3-4; *Matthew* 24:27.

## **2 Corinthians 3**

<sup>18</sup> We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Having been accustomed to behold the glory of the Lord, the full revelation of it will but complete the change that has been taking place in them while they beheld, making their bodies immortal. Thus they are taken to be for ever with the Lord, and the earth will lie desolate, stripped of all its inhabitants for a thousand years, until the second resurrection.

## **The Binding of Satan**

This desolation of the earth to which Satan will be confined, will constitute his binding. With none of the wicked left to work through, and none of the righteous to tempt or torture, his occupation will be gone. His hands will be bound. He will be left to his own meditations for a thousand years, to contemplate the ruin which he has wrought. Then the results of rebellion against God's government will be apparent.

## **The Bottomless Pit**

But what about the condition of the earth during this time? It is described as "the bottomless pit," and it is interesting to know that the Greek word *abussos*, "abyss," corresponds to the Hebrew word rendered "deep" in *Genesis* 1:2, and is identical with the word in the Septuagint. This gives us an idea of the situation. The earth in the beginning was a liquid mass,

## **Genesis 1**

<sup>2</sup> ...without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Compare this with:

## **Jeremiah 4**

<sup>20</sup> Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains as in a moment.

<sup>21</sup> How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of a trumpet?

<sup>23</sup> I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.

<sup>24</sup> I behold the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

<sup>25</sup> I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

<sup>26</sup> I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down by the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.

<sup>27</sup> For thus has the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

<sup>28</sup> For thus shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

## Effects of Satan's Rule

Thus it will be made plain to the universe that Satan's rule of the earth is the complete undoing of God's work. Where God builds up, Satan pulls down and destroys.

With the foregoing description of the earth "without form, and void" and covered with darkness, as it was before the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters, compare the Scriptures that speak about the melting of the earth. For example, *Psalms* 97:5; 46:6; *2 Peter* 3:10. This corroborates the statement that the earth will be reduced to a liquid state again, and will thus constitute the bottomless pit, or "the deep." *Isaiah*, chapters 34 and 35 may well be read in this connection.

These are but a few of the many Scripture references to the events of the last days; but they sufficiently serve our purpose, which is to give only a connected outline.

## The Loosing of Satan

And now for the closing scene. It is given in *Revelation* 20 and 21.

## **Revelation 20**

<sup>7</sup> When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.

The question in your mind is,

“How will Satan be loosed from his prison, and how will he find any nations to deceive, if the earth has been stripped of all its inhabitants?”

The answer to this question is given in the preceding verses, and has perhaps already suggested itself to you. It will evidently be by the resurrection of the wicked, at the close of the thousand years.

That the New Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven, and will rest upon the earth before it is renewed, is plainly indicated in *Zechariah* 14:1-9, and other scriptures. *Isaiah* 33:14-24; 54:11-17, combined with *Revelation* 20:9-10, show that the New Jerusalem, with the saints in it, will be on the earth when the fire melts it and consumes the wicked, and that it will ride in safety upon the lake of fire, even as the ark was safely borne by the waters of the flood that once destroyed the earth.

This is further indicated in:

### **Malachi 4**

<sup>1</sup> Behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

<sup>3</sup> And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I do this, says the Lord of hosts.

## **Plotting of the Wicked Against the Just**

A moment's thought will enable us to see what the deception is by which Satan gathers the nations of earth to battle after the second resurrection. The holy city having descended to earth, he will

make the nations believe that they can take it, and thus possess the land for ever.

This will be an easy task, because they have been accustomed to follow his lead, and many of them will have been in the act of slaughtering, or attempting to slaughter, the righteous, when death overtook them. They will begin the work of persecution where they left off a thousand years before.

## **A Strong City**

But inside the New Jerusalem the saints of God will rest as securely as did Noah in the ark tossed by the billows. No weapon that is formed against their citadel will prosper.<sup>559</sup>

### **Isaiah 26**

<sup>1</sup> In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

Its walls will be Salvation, and its gates Praise.<sup>560</sup> And here is the practical point of the whole story for us. It will be a terrible, awe-inspiring sight when the mighty host,

### **Revelation 20**

<sup>8</sup> ...the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,

—consisting of all the wicked who have ever lived on earth, in well-drilled and armed battalions, with Satan at their head, march up...

<sup>9</sup> ...on the breadth of the earth,

—and surround the city. By all human calculation, the city, whose inhabitants they will out-number a hundred times, would fall an easy prey to Satan's army. But,

### **Psalms 46**

<sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early.

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<sup>559</sup> *Isaiah* 54:17.

<sup>560</sup> *Isaiah* 60:18.

The power that has kept the saints hitherto,—the power that has made them saints, will keep them still. No one in his senses can have the faintest shadow of doubt as to the outcome. But know that every person who trusts God is just as safe from the power of Satan now as the saints in the holy city will be then. The salvation which is ours now in Christ will be all that we can have then to depend on; and it will be ample, because it is all-powerful now.

Therefore in anticipation of that day, we may each one apply to ourselves now the glorious exhortation:

**Isaiah 12**

<sup>6</sup> Cry out and shout, you inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of you.

# 155. What to Do with Offenders

Present Truth, February 26, 1903

What course should be pursued when persons in the Church have done wrong, or are thought to have done wrong?

LET us study the matter from the Bible, and we shall learn some principles that ought to be universally understood, but unfortunately are not; for the Scriptures are very definite and explicit upon this subject.

In the first place, it may well be asked,

“Who is to deal with the wrong-doer, when it is known what ought to be done?”

That is to say,

“Who will be left, when all the wrong-doers are found?”

“Who is there that has not done wrong?”

## **Romans 3**

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

This is an item of serious importance, which is too often overlooked, and its neglect leads to much opinion, and usually to an aggravation of the wrong. However, we are not taught that nothing is to be done for anybody, since all have done wrong, but are only put on our guard, lest we assume the position of the self-righteous Pharisee and judge. Here is one of the plainest directions:

## **Galatians 6**

<sup>1</sup> Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.

<sup>2</sup> Bear you one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.



The work of Christ for sinners, and His manner of dealing with the erring, is the example for all His followers. The work, it will be seen, is restoration, not condemnation.

### **Matthew 18**

<sup>11</sup> For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

### **John 3**

<sup>17</sup> For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

The following Scripture also should always be kept in mind:

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

<sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has given to us the word of reconciliation.

## **Bearing One Another's Burdens**

Reconciliation, restoration, is the work allotted to Christ's followers. They are to fulfill the law of Christ, by bearing the burdens of others. How this is done is indicated in the text just quoted:

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

Christ took the sin of the world on himself, that we might be delivered from it, we bear one another's burdens, by putting ourselves in each other's place. It is astonishing what a difference this makes in one's view of things. Often the supposed wrong disappears as soon as this has been done.

### **Galatians 6**

<sup>1</sup> You which are spiritual,

—restore the erring. Nobody else can. It is evident, therefore, that if we hold ourselves to rigid obedience to the Scriptures, the

first sight of evil in another will set us to asking whether or not we ourselves are wholly in Christ. If we are not spiritual, we have no warrant whatever to deal with an offender; for the only thing to be done is to “restore such a one;” and the only ones who can restore him are those who are spiritual; and if we are not spiritual, our first duty is to become so.

Having become assured that we are in Christ, so that we shall not do more harm than good, we proceed to restore the wrongdoer, according to the following directions:

### **Matthew 18**

<sup>15</sup> If your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: and if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother.

Some ancient versions omit the words “against you,” making the text general in its application. This is more in accord with the rest of Scripture.

<sup>15</sup> Go and tell him his fault.

How? In a way calculated to restore him, and not to drive him further away; for the business at hand is not to charge him with a fault; not to try him and condemn him; but to save him. And note well, that this is in case he has really committed a fault. You are not to go on suspicion. Moreover, there is to be no charging with guilt in any case. You are to be his restorer, not his judge.

Note again:

<sup>15</sup> Go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone.

Do not tell somebody else.

### **Leviticus 19**

<sup>16</sup> You shall not go up and down as a tale bearer among your people...

—is just as much a part of the ten commandments as:

## **Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,

—or,

<sup>13</sup> You shall not kill.

## **Galatians 5**

<sup>14</sup> For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

## **Matthew 7**

<sup>12</sup> Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Your brother's reputation must be just as dear to you as your own. Besides, you endanger your own soul when you repeat a story that you have heard; for if it be not true you are guilty of lying, just as surely as though you knew it was false. Whoever repeats a story that he does not absolutely know is true, shows that he is willing to risk telling a lie, rather than miss spreading a bit of gossip. And even though you know the story to be true, you are not to repeat it to another's discredit; for that is not calculated to gain him. How do you feel when people talk about your real or imagined faults? Put yourself in the other one's place, and you will know what to do for him.

## **Galatians 6**

<sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens.

## **Matthew 18**

<sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

That is, do not give him up at the first trial. What you have failed to do, others may succeed in doing. Still you are to seek to restore him, in the spirit of meekness. Lastly,

<sup>17</sup> If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen

man and a publican.

What does that mean? Just what it says: You have exhausted every means to restore him, and he will not be restored; now you can do nothing more, and must let him be as any other obdurate heathen. Do not rail against him; do not publish his fault abroad, but rather seek to conceal it; for who knows but that he, as well as any other, may be reclaimed.

This, in short, is an answer to your question as to what to do with those that are out of the way. Like our High Priest, we are to...

### **Hebrews 5**

<sup>2</sup> ...have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.

But in order that certain very common, almost universal, misconceptions may be cleared from our minds, it is necessary that we should give some study to the church—what it is, and what it is for, its duties and its privileges.

### **What Is the Church?**

Not to multiply words, we find from *Ephesians* 1:22-23, that the church is the body of Christ. This body is composed of all who are Christ's. The church is also called the house of God,<sup>561</sup>

### **Hebrews 3**

<sup>6</sup> Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing in the hope firm unto the end.

The church is not composed of "the clergy," so called, that is, of the ministry; for we read:

### **1 Corinthians 12**

<sup>27</sup> You are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

<sup>28</sup> And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

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<sup>561</sup> 1 *Timothy* 3:15.

## **Romans 12**

<sup>4</sup> For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

<sup>5</sup> So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

The Greek word which is rendered “church,” is a compound word meaning “called out.” We have the word in the adjective “ecclesiastical.” God called Israel of old out of Egypt, and they formed...

## **Acts 7**

<sup>38</sup> ...the church in the wilderness.

All who are in Christ have been called out of Egypt; for it is written, and fulfilled in Christ,

## **Matthew 2**

<sup>15</sup> Out of Egypt have I called my Son.

Christ is...

## **Hebrews 13**

<sup>20</sup> ...that great Shepherd of the sheep,

—and He stands and calls His sheep and as they hear His voice they come to Him. As they thus assemble about Him, they form His flock or congregation, and this is the word that really ought always to be used, instead of “church.” The names of...

## **Hebrews 12**

<sup>23</sup> ...the general assembly and church [congregation] of the First-born...are written in heaven;

—but whenever on earth there are two or three, or more, of...

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>1</sup> ...like precious faith...

—in the same neighborhood, they naturally come together for mutual edification; and each one of these fragments of “the general assembly” is called a church, or congregation, since the life of the whole is in each part.

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>7</sup> Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

### **The Church Not a Law-Making Body**

From this little view of what the church of Christ is, it is evident that the church is not a law-making body, nor is it charged with the duty of executing laws. The judicial office does not pertain to it. Its only function is to follow the directions of its Head. It is to obey law, not to make or execute laws. Such expressions, therefore, as the church being “our mother,” are nonsense; for we ourselves, if we are in Christ, are part of the church.

I know that you are waiting the opportunity to put this question to me:

“Are we not told to ‘hear the church’? and does not Christ say that ‘whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven’?”

Read the whole passage for yourself,<sup>562</sup> and if you read thoughtfully you will have the answer to your question. It is true that the words quoted occur; but it is not true that there is any commandment to “hear the church,” as though it were a law-making or an executive body. There is just the same commandment given to hear the church that there is to hear any individual member of the church, and no more. When one errs, anyone who is spiritual is to seek, “in the spirit of meekness” to “restore” him<sup>563</sup>; and:

### **Matthew 18**

<sup>15</sup> ...if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother.

In the same way two or three more are to seek to gain and restore him, in case he does not hear the one. And then if he is still obdurate, the entire membership, provided all are spiritual, are to unite in laboring for his restoration. But if he will not listen to

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<sup>562</sup> *Matthew* 18:10-20.

<sup>563</sup> *Galatians* 6:1.

their united pleading, there is nothing more that can be done for him, but to “let him be.”

### **The Church's Authority**

Just at this point comes the statement concerning binding and loosing. That is, whenever the preceding directions are followed, all that is done stands in heaven as well as on earth: because it has been the word from heaven that has been followed. Those who have spoken have spoken...

#### **1 Peter 4**

<sup>11</sup> ...as the oracles of God.

But it will be remembered that “if anyone,” not merely the whole church, speaks, it is to be as the oracles of God. And this thought that the authority rests as much in one or two as in the entire church, is maintained in the verses immediately following those that we have quoted from *Matthew* 18. Thus:

#### **Matthew 18**

<sup>19</sup> If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

The only authority there is on earth is the Word of the Lord. Jesus spoke...

#### **Mark 1**

<sup>22</sup> ...as one that had authority,

—because He spoke only the word from heaven, and was the embodiment of the Word. That word is the law of the church as a whole, and of each individual member. And that Word in the mouth of one man has just as much authority as it has if spoken by a thousand men; and one man speaking that word has infinitely more authority than any number of men, whether they be called the church or not, who have not that Word.

There is no such thing as determination of the truth by majority. Moreover, there is no more antecedent probability that a hundred or a thousand men are right, than that a single man is right. Numbers have nothing whatever to do with the matter; the only question is,

“What does the Word of God say?”

But while the Word of God spoken by a score or more of men has no more authority than when spoken by only one, the Lord does teach us that its effectiveness is augmented if a number are united in it. “One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight.”<sup>564</sup> But all must “speak the same thing,”<sup>565</sup> and that thing must be God’s Word as found in the Scriptures, and not the word of man.

And now you know what to do, not only in the case of a man that is at fault, but in every case. It is simply to take the Holy Scriptures as the sole authority and guide at all times and under all circumstances.

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<sup>564</sup> *Deuteronomy* 32:30; *Leviticus* 26:8; *Joshua* 23:10.

<sup>565</sup> *1 Corinthians* 1:10.



# 156. The Dispensation of Grace

Present Truth, March 5, 1903

Is this dispensation under the law? and are the ten commandments the law of sin and death?

**T**HE first thing to be done in studying any subject is to come to an understanding of the terms used. A great many words float about in common use, and are used without any thought of their meaning, and the word “dispensation” is one of them. The verb “dispend” is the Latin word *to weigh out*. All are familiar with such expressions as “dispensing favors,” that is, the dealing out of gifts. That is dispensation. “Dispensation” is the act of giving out anything whatever.

In the common version of the Bible it is used as the rendering of the word meaning “stewardship.” It is evident, therefore, that to use the word as synonymous with a period of time, as is most frequently done, is nonsense. The first of these two questions really means nothing, for what it virtually amounts to is,

“Is this dealing out under the law?”

But if we ascertain what God has to dispense, and how He gives it out, we shall arrive at the answer to the question that is intended. God deals in grace. He is...

## **1 Peter 5**

<sup>10</sup> ...the God of all grace.

## **Micah 7**

<sup>18</sup> He delights in mercy,

—and,

## **Psalms 103**

<sup>17</sup> The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

He is continually dispensing it, and we can therefore...

## **Hebrews 4**

<sup>16</sup> ...come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

How freely this grace is dispensed is thus stated:

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>7</sup> Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Moreover, God associates the recipients of His grace with himself in dealing it out; for:

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>18</sup> ...[He] has committed unto us the word of reconciliation,

<sup>19</sup> ...[and] has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation;

—SO...

## **1 Peter 4**

<sup>10</sup> As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

People who talk about the “dispensation of law,” and the “dispensation of grace,” as though the word “dispensation” meant a certain period of time, intimating that at one time God deals, or dealt, out law, and at another grace, do not think what a charge they are bringing against God. They are virtually saying that there was a time when God was not gracious, and when men could not be saved, or, if saved, must do the work themselves, without any help from God. That is to charge God with being changeable and partial.

Yet the people who use these terms actually profess to worship and adore such a God. Truly, they know not what they say. Such language is most dishonoring to God, and is directly contradictory to Scripture, which declares that God’s ways are equal, and that He changes not. There has never been a time when the grace of God has not been freely given.

What is the purpose of the grace of God? It is to save men.

## **Titus 2**

<sup>11</sup> The grace of God that brings salvation to all men has appeared,

<sup>12</sup> Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>8</sup> By grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

From what does it save us? We are saved from sin by God's grace. And what is sin?

## **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> Sin is the transgression of the law.

Then is the object of grace to save us from obedience to the law? Not by any means; but from the transgression of it, and so from its condemnation.

## **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

## **Romans 6**

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin [in transgression of the law], that grace may abound?

<sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

<sup>14</sup> Sin shall not have dominion over you.

That is, you shall not be subject to transgression of the law;

<sup>14</sup> ...for you are not under the law, but under grace.

<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin [transgress the law], because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> chapters of *Romans* tell the story in plain terms to everybody who can read. There was law in the days of Abraham, as well as in the days of Moses, because, God says,

## **Genesis 26**

<sup>5</sup> Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

He kept them by faith; for:

## **Genesis 15**

<sup>6</sup> He believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.

Then when the descendants of Abraham forgot the lesson of his life, and became self-confident and self-righteous, the law was spoken from Sinai,

## **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> ...that the offense might abound.

The offense, the sin, already existed, which shows the existence of the law before Sinai; for:

<sup>13</sup> ...sin is not imputed when there is no law;

–but the law was spoken in order...

## **Romans 7**

<sup>13</sup> ...that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

Nevertheless,

## **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> ...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

There was dispensation of law, if you please, but there was “more grace.” The dispensation then was exactly the same that it is now. Moreover the “Christian dispensation” was at Mount Sinai, because grace abounded there, and...

## **John 1**

<sup>17</sup> ...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

The law was...

### Galatians 3

<sup>19</sup> ...in the hand of a Mediator,

—and...

### 1 Timothy 2

<sup>6</sup> There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

Suppose you let all the time between us and Abraham drop out of sight for a moment; it will simplify matters very much. Now read:

### Hebrews 6

<sup>11</sup> We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

<sup>12</sup> That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

<sup>13</sup> For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by himself;

<sup>17</sup> Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

<sup>18</sup> That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

<sup>19</sup> *Which hope we have* as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil;

<sup>20</sup> Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.

Thus we see that we are in the same “dispensation” with Abraham; but God is not fitful, fickle, and vacillating, now giving, and now withholding; so we know that there is no break in the bridge of grace that spans the ages between Abraham and us. Where there is always law, there is always abundant sin, and there is always superabundant grace.

Christ is High Priest for the purpose of making reconciliation for the sins of the people,<sup>566</sup> and His priesthood is...

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<sup>566</sup> *Hebrews 2:17.*

## Hebrews 7

<sup>16</sup> ...after the power of an endless life.

We are...

## Romans 5

<sup>10</sup> ...saved by His life.

Now it is evident that His life was reconciling and saving men even before the days of Abraham, for Enoch, who “walked with God” three hundred years,<sup>567</sup> and was then taken to heaven without dying, and is still living, is a demonstration of it. God does not change. There has been no intermission in His grace, but it has been flowing a steady stream from that time to this. The dispensation of law and grace is coincident, for by the grace of God in Christ the law is written in the hearts of all who believe. Those who sin are “under the law,”<sup>568</sup> while...

## Psalms 119

<sup>1</sup> ...the undefiled in the way...walk in the law of the Lord.

The second question is already answered in the foregoing. Indeed, one has but to read the ten commandments, to know that they are not...

## Romans 8

<sup>2</sup> ...the law of sin and death.

## Exodus 20

<sup>3</sup> You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>13</sup> You shall not kill.

<sup>15</sup> You shall not steal.

<sup>14</sup> You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>12</sup> Honor your father and your mother.

Do you know what it means to say that those commandments are sin? It means that it is sin *not* to kill, steal, swear, commit adultery, dishonor parents, and dishonor God. Is there any doubt in your mind on the subject? Do you think that it is sin *not* to do

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<sup>567</sup> *Genesis* 5:22.

<sup>568</sup> *Romans* 3:19.

those things? Of course you do not. Then you have the answer to your question.

### **Psalms 119**

<sup>172</sup> My tongue shall speak of your word; for all your commandments are righteousness.

What is “the law of sin and death?” It is the carnal mind, our natural disposition, which...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>7</sup> ...is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,

—and,

<sup>6</sup> To be carnally minded is death.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>2</sup> The prince of the power of the air, [is] the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience,

—who are...

<sup>1</sup> ...dead in trespasses and sins;

—but there is...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>1</sup> ...no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,...

<sup>2</sup> For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

The law of God is in the heart of Christ.<sup>569</sup> Indeed, His life is the law, for:

### **John 12**

<sup>50</sup> His commandment is life everlasting;

—and therefore when Christ dwells in our hearts by faith,<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> *Psalms 40:8.*

<sup>570</sup> *Ephesians 3:17.*

## **Romans 8**

<sup>4</sup> ...the righteousness of the law [is] fulfilled in us.



## 157. Risen with Christ

Present Truth, March 12, 1903

As a constant reader of *Present Truth*, I should be obliged if you would enlighten me on 2 Kings 2:11, the latter clause of the verse; and also *John* 3:13.

THE texts in question read respectively thus:

### **2 Kings 2**

<sup>11</sup> Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

### **John 3**

<sup>13</sup> And no man has ascended into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Here is what would seem to be a contradiction, if one did not know the Bible; but knowing the Bible to be the Word of God, we know that it cannot be contradictory.

If a man has never deceived us; if we have been well acquainted with him for years, and we have found that all his sayings, no matter how apparently incredible, were always strictly true, and that he never speaks without a definite purpose, we should never think of doubting him, whatever he said.

Even so it should be with our relation to the Bible. We have proved its truth so constantly, that whenever we find an apparent contradiction we at once set about discovering what deep truth is revealed in it. I say this by way of introduction, not because I think the question indicates doubt, but in order that all may have their attention called to the manner in which we should approach the Bible.

Now to come to the point. Jesus plainly stated to Nicodemus that no man except himself had ascended into heaven; yet we know that both Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven without death, and that Moses was raised from the dead, and taken to

heaven, because he appeared with Elijah in glory on the mount of transfiguration, talking with Jesus about His approaching death.

What then, since Jesus came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and is the Truth, is the only conclusion? Manifestly this, that those men did not ascend to heaven independently, but in Christ. The two seemingly contradictory texts are an illustration of the truths slated in the following Scriptures:

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>13</sup> In Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition;

<sup>15</sup> Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>9</sup> Lie not one to another, seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds;

<sup>10</sup> And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him:

<sup>11</sup> Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>4</sup> God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

<sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead in sin, has quickened us together with Christ (by grace are you saved;)

<sup>6</sup> And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

## **Colossians 3**

<sup>1</sup> If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

<sup>2</sup> Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

<sup>3</sup> For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

The truth set forth in all these is that Christ is the One man in whom salvation is found. In Him are hid...

## **Colossians 2**

<sup>3</sup> ...all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,

—even the deep things of God; for:

<sup>9</sup> In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Consequently no man out of Christ can know the things of the Spirit. Nicodemus, like the other Jewish rulers, and so many others, was endeavoring to solve spiritual mysteries by his own carnal mind; and Jesus showed him that it was impossible. No man can know heavenly things unless he is born from above; and the Son of man, “the Word made flesh”<sup>571</sup> is the One through whom this new birth is effected. But the Son of man on earth is also...

## **John 3**

<sup>13</sup> ...in heaven.

Whoever is in Christ, no more living his own life, but “Christ living in him,” has ascended with Him into the heavenly places, to see and experience the deep mysteries of God, even though he is yet upon this earth.

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<sup>571</sup> *John* 1:14.

So Elijah and Enoch and Moses, when they ascended into heaven, ascended in Christ, continuing under the perfect conditions of heaven the same experiences that they had here on earth when risen with Christ. May this also be our experience.

## 158. Who Changed the Sabbath?

Present Truth, March 12, 1903<sup>572</sup>

**T**HIS is a question that is often asked, and it is answered in various ways, according to the various ideas that men have as to the way that the first day of the week came to be so generally substituted for the seventh.

But the true answer to the question is that nobody ever changed the Sabbath, because such a thing is impossible. The Sabbath is enjoined by the fourth commandment, which is a part of the law that is the righteousness of God; and of the commandments we read that:

### **Psalm 112**

<sup>8</sup> They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

The Saviour said,

### **Luke 16**

<sup>17</sup> It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

So the Sabbath has never been changed.

But the Bible tells of a power,—the papacy,—symbolized by the little horn of the seventh of *Daniel*, which should...

### **Daniel 7**

<sup>25</sup> ...think to change times and laws,

—or, as most versions, including the *Revised*, have it,

### **Daniel 7 [RV]**

<sup>25</sup> He shall...think to change the times and the law.

This power thinks itself able to do it, because it exalts itself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, and sets itself forth to be God. But what it thinks to do it is as unable to do as it

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<sup>572</sup> Originally appeared in *Present Truth*, February 3, 1893.

is to make itself God. It is true that it has made a great many people believe that the Sabbath has been changed, but that does not make it so.

Those who recognize the Lord as the sole Ruler and Creator of the universe, without any vicegerent, know that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is as unchangeable as the throne of the eternal God.

# 159. What Shall the End Be

Present Truth, March 19, 1903

The popular theory respecting the fate of the wicked has always troubled me. I should be glad if you would show me from the Bible whether there is any foundation for supposing that they are to be everlastingly tormented. I cannot think that a God of love would create beings to condemn them to suffering throughout eternity.

## Divine Love

**N**EITHER would He. God is not a cruel tyrant, delighting in human suffering; and the Scriptures give not the slightest warrant for thinking that He is.

### 1 John 4

<sup>16</sup> God is love.

He is not simply *loving*, but He is *love itself*.

<sup>7</sup> Love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.

<sup>8</sup> He that loves not knows not God.

The highest human conceptions of love fall far short of Divine love. Whatever sense of tenderness and compassion and love there is in the world, is but a fragment, a breath, of the boundless, eternal love of God. Hence it is plain that God will never outrage the sense of justice which He himself has planted in the human breast.

## Just Judgment

This is made plain by those words of God:

### Isaiah 45

<sup>23</sup> I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

That this has reference to the time of general judgment, is evident from:

### **Romans 14**

<sup>10</sup> Why do you judge your brother? or why do you set at naught your brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

<sup>11</sup> For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

<sup>12</sup> So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

So we see that no man will be punished until he subscribes to his own judgment, and bears witness that God is just.

### **Judgment Committed to Man**

Still further: So careful is God to insure that no man can have any cause of complaint against Him, and that all shall be satisfied that no advantage is being taken of them, that He has put the destiny of the world into the hands of men themselves.

### **John 5**

<sup>22</sup> For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son.

This is no subterfuge, no device to seem to put judgment out of His own hands, while still holding it; for we read:

### **John 5**

<sup>26</sup> For as the Father has life in himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself:

<sup>27</sup> And has given Him authority to execute judgment also, *because He is the Son of Man.*

In the beginning God gave man dominion over the earth, and He has never taken it from him.

### **Ecclesiastes 3**

<sup>14</sup> Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever.

Therefore Jesus, the second Adam, who as “the Son of man” stands for all mankind, says:



## **Revelation 2**

<sup>26</sup> He that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

<sup>27</sup> And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Compare:

## **Psalm 2**

<sup>7</sup> I will declare the decree: the Lord has said unto me, You are my Son; this day have I begotten You.

<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I shall give You the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Read also:

## **Psalm 149**

<sup>5</sup> Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

<sup>6</sup> Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand;

<sup>7</sup> To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

<sup>8</sup> To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

<sup>9</sup> To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all His saints.

What possible chance is there to think that God has created beings for the purpose of torturing them eternally, when He turns the whole care over to them? Now since, according to God's word, even those who will finally be punished will confess that God is good, and their punishment just, let us examine that same Word, to see if we cannot discern both justice and mercy in the punishment of the wicked.

## Everlasting Destruction

For the wicked will be punished. The testimony of all the Scriptures is to this effect. And there is no ambiguity; for the same passages that tell the fact of the punishment, also tell what it will be. Take, for instance, this:

### 2 Thessalonians 1

<sup>6</sup> Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

<sup>7</sup> And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>9</sup> Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

“They shall be punished with everlasting destruction.”

It is true that...

### Matthew 25

<sup>46</sup> These shall go away into everlasting punishment,

—but the punishment will be death,—cessation of existence,—not existence in torture.

### Obadiah

<sup>16</sup> They shall be as though they had not been.

### Psalms 37

<sup>20</sup> The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

The language is not ambiguous; it is as plain as it can be.

## The Effect of Everlasting Fire

But what about the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, into which the wicked are to be told to depart? That gives no hint of eternity of suffering, but quite the contrary. If the fire

“never shall be quenched,”<sup>573</sup> it will certainly in time consume whatever of a combustible nature is put into it. Thus we read of Christ, that His fan is in His hand,

### **Matthew 3**

<sup>12</sup> ...and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into the garner, but He will *burn up* the chaff with unquenchable fire.

### **Malachi 4**

<sup>1</sup> For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

<sup>3</sup> And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.

## **The Consuming Fire**

Surely there is no room here for eternal conscious existence in torment. But it will be asked how the fire can be everlasting, unless the wicked remain in existence for it to feed on. That is easily answered. It is the fire of God’s own glory.

### **Hebrews 12**

<sup>29</sup> Our God is a consuming fire.

By the fire of His Spirit He consumes sin out of the earth; and it remains with each person to choose how he will have his sin removed—whether *from* him, or *with* him. If the man desires to be for ever separated from his sins, the Spirit of God will consume them, completely freeing him from them, and purifying him; and this work will be performed now.

But if the man loves his sins, and clings to them; if he prefers them to God, and would rather live in them than to abide in God;—then when the sin is consumed (as it must be; for God will have a clean universe), the man who has identified himself with the sin

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<sup>573</sup> *Mark* 9:43, 45.

will necessarily be consumed with it; but the fire of God's glory will abide for ever, after the wicked have all been blotted from existence.

## **The Philosophy of Punishment**

This brings us to the root of the matter—the explanation, the reason, the necessity, the philosophy, so to speak, of the punishment of the wicked. It is very simple when one once knows the simple science of salvation. We begin with the Scripture proposition that:

### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>6</sup> ...God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek after Him,

—rewarding them with himself:

### **Genesis 15**

<sup>1</sup> I am...your exceeding great reward.

There is...

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

There can be no existence apart from Him; for He is our life.<sup>574</sup>

### **Acts 17**

<sup>25</sup> He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

In His hand is...

### **Job 12**

<sup>10</sup> ...the soul [or life] of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being;...for we are also His offspring.

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<sup>574</sup> *Deuteronomy 30:20.*

Let us make this very clear, so that there can be no mistake about it. It is necessary, in order that we may see that righteousness is essential to our existence; for there are very many people who do not acknowledge the right of God to command them, and to expect obedience from them. A little experiment will settle this matter much more positively than a long argument.

Here is a man who does not acknowledge that God has any claim on him, nor that he owes anything to God. Of course, then, he will not think of accepting anything at God's hands; he will not be under obligation to Him for anything. But he is breathing air, which he certainly did not make, and which he does not pay for; no man on earth supplies it to him; it comes from above—the breath of heaven. It is God's air, God's breath, and as the man intends to be absolutely independent of God, he will of course no longer breathe God's air, but will provide his own supply.

But how shall he proceed, since the air is everywhere? It is evident that he must secure an air-tight room, and go inside and remain there, sealing up the entrance, so that not a breath of air can come in. There will be some air inside, which, in strict honesty, he ought to have pumped out; but since finding an air-pump large enough to exhaust the air will be attended with some difficulty, he can venture to trespass to the extent of the one or two thousand cubic feet that the room contains. Or, if he is very scrupulous, he can burn a little charcoal in the room, and the air will soon be exhausted. Now he can carry out his plan of living absolutely independent of God. Unfortunately, he will not live long enough to tell anybody how he enjoys it. His attempt to live by his own power, and his existence, will come to a very speedy end.

Will anybody charge God with injustice or unkindness for allowing that man to die? Will anybody wonder how a God of love could create a being to condemn him to such suffering as choking to death? You will say,

“The man could have lived if he had not been so foolishly and stubbornly independent. There is abundance of air, if he had been

willing to be dependent on God; he died self-condemned and self-executed; and while we pity his folly, we must absolve God from any responsibility for the result.”

You see the point, do you not? It is utterly impossible for any being to exist on this earth independent of God. The man is dependent on God even for a place in which to attempt to carry out his purpose to live wholly on his own resources; and as soon as he makes the attempt, he dies. But he need not die; he may live, if he is but willing to be dependent upon the one Source of life, and to abide in the Life that upholds the universe.

### **Righteousness Essential to Life**

We are not yet quite ready for the final application, although you doubtless have already made it. We must take our man as he stands at the door of the room that is to be his absolute and independent dominion and, foreseeing what the result of his experiment will be, turns back. He will breathe God’s air; he will acknowledge his dependence.

But that means that he will acknowledge God a right to command him, and to expect implicit obedience. Indeed, it is not fair to put it in that way, as though God were receiving something by the man’s obedience. The truth is that the acceptance of God’s life is man’s only hope of life, and if man will not come into harmony with it, he must cease to be. But God’s life is righteousness, and the man who comes fully into harmony with it is righteous, and has eternal life; for:

#### **John 12**

<sup>50</sup> His commandment is life everlasting.

### **The Science of Salvation**

Here, then, is the science of salvation. God created all things for eternal life and happiness. He never created a single soul for destruction, much less for torture. But the inhabitants of this world have rebelled against His loving rule, and have chosen gods of their own. But God is...

## **2 Peter 3**

<sup>9</sup> ...long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

## **Ezekiel 18**

<sup>23</sup> Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

## **Ezekiel 33**

<sup>11</sup> As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

So He has sent forth His Son, in whom is the fullness of His own life, to show the world that He cherishes no ill-will, but that He is anxious for them to be saved. He knows that they do not know what it means to cast off allegiance to Him, and set up their own rule, so He bears long with them, taking their guilt all on himself, so that they may be wholly freed from it.

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>19</sup> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

By the ease with which God keeps us alive, renewing our life moment by moment, He shows how easily He can save us; He shows that He is the Saviour, in that He is the Preserver.

## **The Fate of the Wicked**

With such provision for man's salvation from the sin into which he has plunged himself, it is evident that there is no excuse for him to remain in it. There is therefore no reason for allowing sin to mar God's creation eternally; and so it must finally be brought to an end. That end will come only when it can be made apparent that nothing would be gained by further delay: all who can be inclined to righteousness will have accepted God's free and abundant provision, and only the defiantly depraved will remain.

It is clear that then it will be perfectly just to cut off the sinners, and blot out sin. But even then there is nothing arbitrary in God's action. The Judgment fully demonstrates to all that...

## Revelation 22

<sup>11</sup> He that is unjust, [will] be unjust still...

—and then God finally leaves them to that which they have persistently chosen, contrary to all His entreaties. He takes all creatures absolutely at their word:

- those who have professed to love life, and to love and accept Him as the Fountain of life, He takes to himself, to dwell for ever in Him; and
- those who have hated Him, and have said that they would not have Him to rule over them, He allows to go away by themselves, away from Him.

## A Clean Universe

But where can they go where He is not?

### Jeremiah 23

<sup>24</sup> Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord.

Not in heaven, or earth, or sea, or in all space, can they find a place where they can live outside of God's hand.<sup>575</sup> Therefore there is nothing for them but to go out of existence; and this they do. In the process some suffering is involved, as in the case of the man in our experiment; but even though this seem in some cases to be drawn out to eternity, it will be comparatively but a moment,<sup>576</sup> and then the universe will once more be clean, the...

### Acts 3 [RV]

<sup>21</sup> ...restoration of all things...

—will be completed, and:

### Revelation 5

<sup>13</sup> Every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them,

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<sup>575</sup> *Psalm* 139:1-12.

<sup>576</sup> Compare *2 Peter* 2:6; *Jude* 7; and *Lamentations* 4:6.



–will with one accord unite in proclaiming:

**Revelation 5**

<sup>13</sup> ...Unto Him that sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.

## 160. One Book

Present Truth, March 26, 1903

Can one believe the Gospel, and disbelieve the Old Testament?

**L**ET us see. The Apostle Peter speaks about the salvation of our souls, and says,

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>10</sup> Of which salvation the prophets inquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

<sup>11</sup> Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

<sup>12</sup> Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them which have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Read the text carefully, and you will see that it states that the prophets of old ministered the very same things that are announced by those who preach the Gospel. Then the prophets must have written the Gospel. When Peter was preaching Christ in the house of Cornelius, he said,

### **Acts 10**

<sup>43</sup> To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.

And the Apostle Paul said,

### **Acts 26 [RV]**

<sup>22</sup> Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come:

<sup>23</sup> How that Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

Therefore whoever says that the Old Testament does not contain the Gospel, says that the Apostle Paul did not preach the Gospel.

A great many people who would be shocked at the suggestion that they are infidels, imagine that faith is entirely consistent with a disbelief of many of the records of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament. They think that they believe the Gospel, yet they make no scruple of pulling the Old Testament record of that Gospel to pieces. There are many portions of the Bible that they are very doubtful about; and as for the story of Jonah, and the account of the flood, they can scarcely have patience with anyone who professes to believe them. The Bible account of the creation of the earth, they regard as at the best only a beautiful fable.

Suppose the position be taken that the story of the creation, and of the fall of man, is only a fable. If that were so, then there would be no Gospel at all. For if there were no fall of man, there need be no redemption. So that if the account of the fall be imaginary, then we have the entire Gospel built on a fable, which would make it also a fable.

And besides, if the story of creation and the fall of man be a fable, how can we know that the whole Bible is not the same? We must either accept the whole Bible, or, reject it all. We cannot pull it to pieces.

Take the account of the prophet Jonah. Many people would feel almost insulted if it were intimated that they were so simple as to believe it. They say that it never really happened: that the great fish never swallowed Jonah, and that it would have been impossible for him to live three days in its belly. But Christ said,

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>40</sup> As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Now if Jonah were never in the whale's belly, and could not have been, then we have the Saviour likening His death and resurrection to an impossibility. Therefore to deny the story of Jonah, is to deny the foundation of the Gospel.

It will not do in this case to say as too many of the "higher critics" do, that the Saviour spoke of the things that were currently reported among the Jews, as illustrations, taking the people on their own grounds, without stopping to explain that those things were really fables. If the story were not true, the Lord knew it; yet He said that just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale, so He should be in the heart of the earth. If the story of Jonah were not true, then we have Christ saying that He would not be in the heart of the earth at all.

Is it not better to believe a thing that we cannot understand, than to throw away the entire Gospel? Who dare say that it is of no importance whether or not we believe all the records of the Old Testament?

The saddest part of this matter is that the people have not been led into this loose way of regarding the Bible by professed infidels, but by professed ministers of the Gospel. It is they who are responsible for the current of unbelief that is carrying so many away. Indeed, one can scarcely pick up a religious journal without seeing more or less about the controversy that is now going on over the Bible.

There is a controversy, for there are many ministers who stand for the truth of the Bible; yet there are so many ministers of high standing and influence, who seem to be actuated by intense fear that the people will really believe too much of the Bible, that it is necessary to raise a voice of warning. We need not pass sentence of condemnation upon those ministers, but simply warn the people to beware of them as false teachers.

## **Lessons From the Flood**

One preacher says:

No student of science is able to believe that any such flood as that recorded in the early chapters of *Genesis* ever took place in the history of the human race.

We are not to take the account of the deluge for history infallibly inspired and rigidly accurate in all its details.

That view he tells us,

...is no longer held by persons of ordinary education.

How easy it is to brush aside a proposition with the statement that no one of ordinary education believes it. A base fear of being called ignorant is at the bottom of a large part of the infidelity of these days.

But what about the flood? May we throw it aside as a myth, and still hold fast our faith in the Gospel, and in the Bible in general? Let us see. Christ used the flood and its time as an illustration of the last days.

#### **Luke 17**

<sup>26</sup> As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

In the book of *Hebrews* we are informed who the “all” were who were destroyed by the flood.

#### **Hebrews 11**

<sup>7</sup> By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

It was the world that was condemned by the preaching of Noah, because they did not believe it; and it was the world that was destroyed by the flood. Christ in person, and also through His chosen apostle, bears witness to this.

Again, the flood is put in the same list as the creation of the world, and the general judgment. The Apostle Peter says that they who scoff at the promise of the coming of the Lord, are willingly ignorant of the fact that...

## **2 Peter 3**

<sup>5</sup> ...by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

<sup>6</sup> Whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water, perished:

<sup>7</sup> But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Whoever discounts the story of the flood thereby discounts the story of creation, and also the promise of the coming of the Lord to judge the world. The same word that brought the flood upon the earth, created the earth, and will make it new again. The Scriptures, from Moses onward, testify of Christ, and they cannot be rejected without rejecting Christ.

Still further, if the story of the flood is a myth, then there is no comfort in the Gospel. It is upon that fact, and the things connected with it, that the Lord gives us the assurance that He will not forget us. Speaking to Jerusalem which is above, and is the mother of us all, which is now desolate, mourning the absence of her children, God says,

## **Isaiah 54**

<sup>9</sup> For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with you, nor rebuke you.

Her joy and glory will be the restoration of her children, by the salvation of the righteous; therefore the assurance that God will save His people is no greater than the assurance that there was a flood in the days of Noah.

## **Isaiah 54**

<sup>9</sup> As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not, be wroth with you.

But if there were no flood, then the Lord did not swear that the waters of the flood should no more go over the earth; and so in that case we have no assurance that He will remember to save His people.

Again, we read the words of inspiration through the Apostle Peter:

## **2 Peter 2**

<sup>4</sup> For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

<sup>5</sup> And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

<sup>6</sup> The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

If the Lord did that, He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations; but if He did not do that, what then? the only conclusion is that He does not know how to deliver the godly out of temptations. And so those who deny the story of the flood throw away all the consolations of the Gospel.

More might be said in the same line, but this is sufficient to show that no one can lightly deny any part of the Sacred Record. It all stands or falls together. No, that is not correct: it all stands together; it does not fall, notwithstanding the assaults of men.

## **Psalms 119**

<sup>89</sup> For ever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.

<sup>160</sup> Your word is true from the beginning; and every one of your righteous judgments endures for ever.

## **2 Timothy 3**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

<sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

It is all profitable, and all necessary.



## 161. The Age of Miracles

Present Truth, April 2, 1903

Miracles being opposed to all experience, can we accept them? Can there be a religion without miracles?

THAT is the same as questioning if there is or can be any such thing as religion. But this is not all that is implied in the question; the first part implies that nothing can exist that we have not known or experienced, and also that we can never learn anything new. That form of unbelief which denies everything that it does not know, may be very gratifying to one's pride,—in that it assumes that one knows all that is worth knowing; but, on the other hand, it is at the same time the very humiliating confession that one is too dense to learn; for it is evident that the one who refuses to accept anything that he has not previously known, can never learn anything new.

The fallacy contained in these questions which, by the way, are not at all uncommon, may be exposed in various ways. First of all, some plain workingman may rudely throw the whole sophistical fabric down by declaring that he knows there is such a thing as religion, because he has experienced it, and that to the saving of his soul. Of what use is it to bring subtle arguments against religion, when thousands of men and women are living proofs of its existence. Such arguments are on a par with the statement of the lawyer who visited his client in jail, and, after hearing his account of the case, said,

"They cannot put you in prison for that."

"But," protested the other, "they *have* done it."

It is folly, and a waste of time, to argue that men and animals cannot swim, when the fact is that they do swim.

But the great, underlying fallacy consists in the assumption that miracles are opposed to all experience. The truth is that miracles

are not opposed to any experience; and the one who is not conscious of seeing miracles daily, has his faculties very feebly developed.

There is another fallacy implied in this one, or, rather, this fallacy is virtually the statement of another one, namely, that the existence of God is opposed to all experience; for to say that there are no miracles is the same as saying that there is no God. To deny miracles, is to deny God; for if God did not from the very nature of His being, do things that men cannot understand, He would be no greater than they, and would not be God. The fact that "God is,"<sup>577</sup> carries with it the doing of things that are utterly incomprehensible to mere human beings. God *must* do miracles, for they are His nature; they are His ordinary way of working. In very truth, God does nothing that is not miraculous to the thinking mind.

Many have the idea that it is only crude, undeveloped, inexperienced minds that believe in miracles, and that the more cultivated one's mind becomes, the less does one see to wonder at. This is directly contrary to the facts in the case. It is the close observer and student of nature, the astronomer and the microscopist, before whom the field of wonders is constantly expanding, and who is daily seeing things that pass all understanding. The person who does not know that miracles are continually occurring, has not yet had his mind awakened to appreciate what is going on in the world around him, and even in him.

Scientists tell what they see,—they describe phenomena, but no scientist professes to be able to explain the origin of anything. More than this, they are generally agreed that the ultimate cause of all phenomena, the origin of all things visible and invisible, is unknowable. Only the Bible reveals the truth that God is the Great Cause. This gives solid ground to rest and build upon, but it does not clear away the mystery. God's own existence, God himself, is the one, great miracle of the universe.

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<sup>577</sup> *Hebrews* 11:6.

The simplest, everyday operations of nature around us and in us are miracles. The germination of a seed, the growth of a plant, the ascent of the vapor, and the clouds, the flight and migration of birds, the digestion and assimilation of food, the growth of bodies, and the repair of waste, are all miracles of the most marvelous kind. Whoever has his eyes open must not only continually find new things to admire, but be constantly lost in wonder at the miracles with which he is most familiar.

### **What is a Miracle?**

Most people have a wrong idea of what constitutes a miracle. They seem to think that constant repetition of an act deprives it of its miraculous nature. A thing that has never before come within the range of their experience or knowledge, they regard as a miracle; but if it is done constantly before their eyes, their interest soon ceases, and if it should be referred to as miraculous, they would reply,

“Ah, that is nothing strange; I see that every day.”

Thus the bringing of water from the rock for the Israelites in the wilderness, is universally regarded as a miracle, that is, so far as the record is believed, because people suppose that it was a unique case. But when they traverse the mountains and the plains, and see springs gushing forth from the rocks, they think that it is “the most natural thing in the world.” Yet it is the very same miracle, and nobody can explain it.

The miracle is just as wonderful today as it was the day that Moses smote the rock in Horeb. The water comes from the earth, and the earth gets it from the sky, and gives it back to the sky, to receive it from the sky again; and so the endless round goes on, and still the question remains unanswered,

“Where does it come from?”

Yet people might know, if they would but recognize the presence of the Lord among them, and acknowledge that...

## **1 Corinthians 10**

<sup>4</sup> ...they drank from that Spiritual Rock,...and that Rock was Christ.

Not only as great miracles, but the very same miracles, are now being performed as are recorded in the Bible; for those miracles were wrought, and the record of them has been preserved, in order that men might have their attention called to God's manner of working, and become acquainted with it. The result of such thoughtful consideration will not be contemptuous thought of the miracles recorded in the Bible, but awe in the presence of God's works, and reverence and adoration of the Creator.

## **Job 36**

<sup>24</sup> Remember that you magnify His work, which men behold.

Take the miracle of the turning of water into wine, recorded in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of *John*.

## **John 2**

<sup>11</sup> This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory.

But ever since the creation the same miracle has been repeated every year; for Christ is the True Vine, the Father is the Husband-man, and...

## **Isaiah 6**

<sup>3</sup> ...the whole earth is full of His glory.

## **Colossians 1**

<sup>17</sup> In Him all things consist,

—and every year the vines of earth, in Him, the true Vine, have changed water into wine; and men have seen it, and have not believed on Him. Like the unbelieving Jews, who had just been filled with the loaves so miraculously produced by His hand, they have said, even while looking at His wondrous works,

## **John 6**

<sup>30</sup> What sign do you show, then, that we may see, and believe you? What do you work?

The thoughtful reader will have observed that the question as to whether or not God can “suspend the laws of nature” in order to perform miracles, is already answered. The “laws of nature” are simply what men have observed and noted of God’s ways of working; and at the best they have seen but...

## **Job 26**

<sup>14</sup> ...parts of His ways.

Every “operation of nature” is itself a miracle, performed, not by the suspension of law, but by the execution of it. The age of miracles is not past, and cannot be as long as God lives.

## **The Perfect Rule of Law**

I have intimated that the performance of miracles does not imply the suspension of any “law of nature.” It must be plain that it cannot be, if one but remember that God...

## **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>13</sup> ...cannot deny himself.

But I would go farther, and maintain that the greatest miracles are not contrary to the laws that govern the universe, but are only the more perfect and unhindered working of those laws. Take, for example, the raising of the dead to life. No miracle can surpass this, and no other miracle so completely exhibits the perfect working of the law by which God governs the universe.

## **Jeremiah 10**

<sup>10</sup> God...is the living God.

His Spirit is life,<sup>578</sup> and:

## **John 12**

<sup>50</sup> His commandment is life everlasting.

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<sup>578</sup> *Romans 8:10.*

From His own life all things came, and by His life they are maintained. His life is the law that governs all creation.

### **1 John 3**

<sup>4</sup> Sin is the transgression of the law;

—and death comes by sin. Death is therefore a temporary interference with the law, a hindering of its action; and the raising of the dead is the resumption of the perfect rule of law. It is not contrary to nature for God to raise the dead. It is death that is unnatural, and life that is natural; for it is spiritual law:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>2</sup> The law of the Spirit of life,

—that rules in “the natural world” when everything moves without a jar. Death ensues only when this law of nature—“the Divine nature”<sup>579</sup>—is transgressed.

This is demonstrated before our eyes and in our bodies every day. Because of the violation of law, death is in the world, and our bodies are undergoing a constant process of decay; yet we live. We are severely wounded, or are brought to the verge of the grave by illness, and our bodies are mysteriously and miraculously built up whole as before. Everywhere we see God at work to build up, to heal, and to restore, showing that His law is life. And since the greatest of miracles,—the restoring of life,—is but the full and free operation of His law, it is evident that no law is ever suspended by the performance of any miracle. The working of God’s laws results in a constant succession of miracles, more than can be numbered.

And this mysterious, miraculous, yet most common power of God, is that by which men are saved. To yield implicitly to it constitutes the perfect religion. For:

### **Romans 1 [RV]**

<sup>16</sup> ...the Gospel...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes;

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<sup>579</sup> 2 Peter 1:4.

–and,

<sup>20</sup> His everlasting power and Divinity...are seen [in] the things that are made.

Thus in order to be saved, one has only to have a perfect faith in miracles, not past, but present; and in order to believe in present miracles, one has but to have his eyes opened. There are many miracles that Jesus did,

### **John 20**

<sup>30</sup> ...which are not written in the Book;

<sup>31</sup> But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that works in us*,

<sup>21</sup> Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

## 162. How Can I Tell?

Present Truth, April 9, 1903

I desire to do the will of the Lord. How can I tell which day I should keep? If I can be convinced that I am in the wrong, at any cost I'll adopt the other day.

**W**E ARE sure that there are hundreds of other people who will see this paper, who are in the same condition, and therefore we write for the benefit of them all. There are very many who desire to do the will of the Lord in the matter of Sabbath observance as well as in other things, but who are yet in doubt as to what that will is. We ask such to take up with us a brief study of the subject.

### The Source of Authority

When we know where we may find an answer to a question, it is half answered. For our part, we accept the Bible as the final authority in all matters pertaining to our duty to God and to men. If our inquiring friends accept the same standard, we shall have little trouble in arriving at a solution of the difficulty. The Psalmist says,

#### Psalm 119

<sup>105</sup> Your Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Therefore we must expect it to shed light upon this question. Again we read,

<sup>104</sup> Through your precepts I get understanding.

Therefore, if we study the precepts of the word of God, we shall understand this matter, as well as others. But in studying those precepts, we must be sure to listen to the voice of the Lord alone, and must avoid listening to the constructions of man, our own included. Again we read the words of the same psalm,



## **Psalms 119**

<sup>11</sup> Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Then if we have that Word not simply in our minds, but in our very lives, we shall be kept from all sin. On the contrary, if that Word does not control our lives, we shall be sure to sin. The Apostle Paul wrote,

## **2 Timothy 3**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

<sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Therefore if we follow the Scriptures, we shall do everything that is necessary to be accounted perfect before God. No human addition is needed. But no word of God must be neglected, for man cannot live except...

## **Matthew 4**

<sup>4</sup> ...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

With these assurances as to the authority of the Word of God, let us begin our brief search.

## **In the Beginning**

In the beginning is the place where we ought to begin. We read that...

## **Genesis 1**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The remainder of the chapter gives the work of each day of creation, and at the close we are told that:

<sup>31</sup> God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Then the record continues:

## **Genesis 2**

<sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

<sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

Here we have the record of the institution of the Sabbath. The first Sabbath was the seventh day of the first week of time. “The seventh day,” not merely a seventh part of time, was blessed and sanctified, because it was the day of the Lord’s rest. To sanctify a thing is to set apart that thing as sacred to a certain purpose.<sup>580</sup> Therefore the sanctification of the seventh day of the week by the Lord in the beginning, was the appointment of it as the sacred rest day for all mankind. That it was for all mankind is shown by the fact that it was given to Adam, the head of the human race; and to this agree the words of the Lord Jesus,

## **Mark 2**

<sup>27</sup> The Sabbath was made for man.

The record of creation gives the origin of the week. There are seven days in the week, and the Sabbath, the last of the seven, rules it. The measurement of time by weeks is as old as creation, and has continued ever since, and will continue to all eternity, for the Sabbath is to endure for ever.<sup>581</sup> We know also that...

## **Ecclesiastes 3**

<sup>14</sup> Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever.

## **In the Wilderness**

When the Lord brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt it was...

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<sup>580</sup> See the record concerning Mount Sinai and the cities of refuge, in *Exodus* 19:12, 23; *Joshua* 20:7-9, and margin of verse 7.

<sup>581</sup> See *Isaiah* 66:22.

## **Psalms 105**

<sup>45</sup> That they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws.

Accordingly, when they murmured on account of hunger in the wilderness, a few weeks after leaving Egypt, the Lord said to Moses,

## **Exodus 16**

<sup>4</sup> Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and, gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

Read the entire chapter, and you will find that the people were to go out each morning and gather manna for that day. They were to leave none of it until the next morning, for if they did it would breed worms, and be offensive. On the sixth day of the week, however, they were to gather twice as much as on other days, and the extra portion was to be kept over for the next day's use, since on the seventh day of the week none fell. And although it was ordinarily impossible to keep the manna overnight, without its utterly spoiling, no such trouble was experienced on the seventh day, for on that day they found that what remained over from the preceding day was sweet and good for food.

## **Exodus 16**

<sup>27</sup> And it came to pass that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

<sup>28</sup> And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse you to keep my commandments and my laws?

<sup>29</sup> See, for that the Lord has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days.

From this it appears that the Sabbath is the test of whether or not men will keep the law of God. Whoever will keep the Sabbath in spirit and in truth will keep the whole law of God. Whoever refuses to keep the Sabbath of the Lord, thereby shows that his apparent obedience to any other requirement of the Lord is not out of reverence to God, but because of some selfish motive.

## At Sinai

Not many days after the first appearance of the manna, the children of Israel came to Sinai. There, after suitable preparation had been made, the Lord came down in awful majesty, and spoke His law...

### Deuteronomy 5

<sup>22</sup> ...out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice,

—which shook the earth.<sup>582</sup> On that occasion the Lord spoke the Ten Commandments, and nothing more, and He wrote them with His own finger on two tables of stone.<sup>583</sup> The fourth commandment reads thus:

### Exodus 20

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

<sup>9</sup> Six days shall you labor, and do all your work:

<sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates:

<sup>11</sup> 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.

Here we find that the facts of creation are the foundation of the Sabbath. Therefore we know that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is identical with the Sabbath that was sanctified at the close of the first week of time.

## A Definite Day

Moreover we know that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is a fixed definite day of the week. How do we know this? We know it first from the fact that the giving of the commandment followed very closely after the giving of the manna, by which the Sabbath was shown to be unalterably fixed to a certain day of the

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<sup>582</sup> *Hebrews* 12:26.

<sup>583</sup> See *Deuteronomy* 5:22; 10:4.

week,—the seventh day. By a series of miracles repeated every week for forty years, the Lord showed that His Sabbath was a definite day of the week, and that it was to be honored above all the other days of the week. During that forty years it was impossible for anyone to be in the slightest doubt as to which day of the week was the Sabbath. It was the day of the week that was thus fixed and guarded on all sides, that God from Sinai declared to be His Sabbath.

Further, we know from the record of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, that the commandment requires the observance of a certain day of the week,—the seventh,—and not an indefinite seventh part of time. In the gospel of *Luke* we are told that the day of the crucifixion...

### **Luke 23**

<sup>54</sup> ...was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

<sup>55</sup> And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid.

<sup>56</sup> And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

### **Luke 24**

<sup>1</sup> Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared.

From the record in *Mark* we learn that the women came...

### **Mark 16**

<sup>1</sup> ...when the Sabbath was past.

But they came on “the first day of the week.” Then it is evident that the Sabbath was the day before. But since there are but seven days in the week, it follows that the day before the first day of the week must necessarily be the seventh day of the week. Therefore the day on which they rested was the seventh day of the week. But they rested...

## **Luke 23**

<sup>56</sup> ...the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

Therefore it is as certain as inspired Scripture can make it that the Sabbath day according to the commandment is the seventh day of the week.

### **The Sabbath Unchanged**

The Scriptures that we have already studied sufficiently point out the true Sabbath of the Lord. There are therefore only two questions that can by any possibility cause any doubt in the minds of any, and they are,

1. Has the Sabbath been changed? and
2. Can we be certain which day is the seventh day of the week, and thus the Sabbath of the commandment?

These questions are not at all difficult, and may be answered in a few words.

As to the first, we have the words of our Lord Jesus Christ as He sat upon the mountain teaching the people the great principles of His kingdom.

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>17</sup> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> Whosoever therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach man 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.

This of itself should be sufficient to settle the question as to the possibility of any change in the Sabbath. But Christ continued:

<sup>20</sup> For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The scribes and Pharisees were very scrupulous in the outward observance of the Ten Commandments, but they cared nothing for having them in their hearts. Outwardly, however, they kept the Ten Commandments, just as they are written, very strictly. Jesus did not reprove them for their observance of the letter of the law, but for not keeping it in spirit and in truth. He did not warn His disciples against observing the law, but warned them that they must observe it a great deal better than the scribes and Pharisees did. Our righteousness must “exceed” theirs. That is, it must go beyond theirs. It must include not only the observance of the letter of the law, but also the keeping of the spirit and life of the law, as it is in Christ.

When the Lord has once spoken, a thousand repetitions would not make what He says any more sure. Therefore we can accept it as a settled fact that the law is in force today just the same as when it was spoken from Sinai and written by the finger of God. Not a letter has been changed.

### **The Day Not Lost**

The question, if we can be sure that the day commonly known as Saturday is indeed the real seventh day of the week, counting from the creation of the world, seems to trouble some. But it need not, since nothing is more impossible than that the reckonings of the days of the week should have been lost.

Single individuals have been known to make a mistake in their reckoning, but they have soon been set right by their neighbors. But that an entire neighborhood should on the very same day make a mistake as to the day of the week, and that all should make the same mistake, is a thing beyond the fancy of the wildest imagination.

But if the present seventh day of the week is not the same as the seventh day of creation, then that mistake must at some time have been made not only by one neighborhood, but by the whole world. If there were a disagreement in different parts of the world as to the days of the week, then there would be a certainty that

the reckoning had been lost by some people, and there would be room for question as to which party was correct.

But since there is no disagreement, the only ground on which it can be supposed that the reckoning of the day has been lost, is that on some Wednesday morning, for instance, all the inhabitants of the world awoke with the notion that it was Thursday. Of course the supposition is most absurd, but it is no more absurd than is the supposition that the true reckoning of the days of the week has been lost.

As we have seen, the seventh day at Sinai is identical with that of creation. God's own Word establishes that. Hundreds of years afterwards the children of Israel were given into the hands of the Babylonians because they had persistently violated the Sabbath,<sup>584</sup> thus showing that it had not been lost; for God would not have punished them for a mistake made through ignorance.

When the Lord lived on the earth He recognized as the Sabbath the day which the Jews were keeping; so we know that the count had been kept straight up to eighteen hundred years ago. Ever since the time of Christ the Jews and many Christians have kept the Sabbath day according to the commandment, while from within two or three hundred years of that time the majority of professed Christians have observed the first day of the week.

The Jews were soon dispersed, and have ever since been found in every part of the world, and observers of the first day are also as widely scattered; yet everywhere we find the Jews agreed as to which day is the Sabbath, and nowhere have observers of the first day of the week been found trying to enforce the observance of the seventh day under the supposition that it was Sunday.

We may rest assured that the day has not been lost.

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<sup>584</sup> *Leviticus* 26:33-35.



## The Example of Christ

### 1 John 2

<sup>6</sup> He that says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked.

No one has yet been found with the hardihood to assert, in the face of the Gospel record, that Jesus ever observed any other day than the seventh,—the same day that the Jews observed. It is true that the Pharisees did accuse the Lord of breaking the Sabbath day, because He did not heed their false notions; but He demonstrated His innocence, and in so doing incidentally showed that the seventh day is the true and only Lord's day.

When Jesus and His disciples were going through the fields on the Sabbath day, the Pharisees accused the disciples of breaking the Sabbath, because they plucked and ate the corn as they walked. That day was the seventh day of the week, for it was the day which the Jews regarded as the Sabbath. The seventh day of the week, and no other, was the day under consideration. And it was of that very day that Jesus said,

### Mark 2

<sup>28</sup> The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

It is most certain, therefore, that Jesus called the seventh day of the week the Sabbath, and himself its Lord, thus demonstrating that the seventh day is the Lord's day. It was the custom of Jesus to observe the Sabbath day, and to meet on that day for worship with those who observed it.<sup>585</sup> Here is an example for us to follow.

## The Testimony of the Spirit

The use of the word "Sabbath" in the New Testament is incidentally one of the strongest evidences that there has been no change in the Sabbath, and that Christians shall observe no other day as the Sabbath than the seventh day of the week. The *Gospels* and the *Acts of the Apostles* were written many years after the events that they record took place. Yet not only is there no hint given

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<sup>585</sup> Luke 4:16.

that the Sabbath was to be different from what it had been from the beginning, but the seventh day is spoken of as “the Sabbath.”

There is no possibility for doubt that the day called “Sabbath” throughout the New Testament is the seventh day of the week. But it is never referred to as “the former Sabbath,” or “the Jewish Sabbath,” or anything of the kind. It is called the Sabbath just as though the writers had never heard of any change, as indeed they had not.

But the Holy Spirit is the Author and Inspirer of the New Testament. The language of the Gospels is the language of the Spirit of God. One great work of the Spirit of truth is to lead into all truth. Therefore we are bound to accept as truth whatever the Spirit says. Since the Spirit of God calls the seventh day the Sabbath, that is evidence that we are to do the same.

In the book of *Revelation* we are frequently exhorted,

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>7</sup> He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.<sup>586</sup>

Shall we not demonstrate that we have ears?

### **A New Creation**

Some people object to the fact that so much is made of the particular day of the Sabbath. They say that the Sabbath is spiritual. So it is, and it should never be considered as anything else. But all must see that we must have a Sabbath day before we can consider its spirituality. “Spiritual” does not mean unreal or non-existent. What use to talk about the spirituality of a thing that has to us no definite existence?

If our friends did not raise the question as to the existence of the Sabbath, there would be no need to talk about it, but let no one think that in dwelling upon the definiteness of the Sabbath day we are unmindful of its spirituality. We may abstain from la-

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<sup>586</sup> Also *Revelation* 2:11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

bor on the very day of the Sabbath, and yet not keep the Sabbath holy unto the Lord. But that does not warrant us in ignoring the day of the Sabbath. We may abstain from taking human life, and still not keep the sixth commandment; but that does not warrant us in killing men.

In the beginning God sanctified the Sabbath as a memorial of His creative power. He set it apart for the use of men, in order to remind them of His power to sanctify them.<sup>587</sup> The Sabbath, which calls attention to the creation, and thus shows God's eternal power,<sup>588</sup> makes known the sanctifying power of God, since sanctification is the exercise of creative power.

### **Psalm 51**

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Or, as the *Revision* has it,

### **2 Corinthians 5 [RV]**

<sup>17</sup> ...there is a new creation.

Christ is Creator and He created all things.<sup>589</sup> The Sabbath comes to us from Eden, when the earth was new, to remind us of the power of God in Christ to make us new creatures, as perfect as man and all things were in the beginning. And this will be its office throughout eternity; for the Lord says of the time when He shall have made all things new, and shall have made men also new, that they may fittingly inherit His new creation:

### **Isaiah 66**

<sup>22</sup> As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.

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<sup>587</sup> See *Ezekiel* 20:12.

<sup>588</sup> *Romans* 1:20.

<sup>589</sup> *Colossians* 1:16.

<sup>23</sup> And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, says the Lord.

# 163. The Prayer of Faith to Save the Sick

Present Truth, April 16, 1903

Is God still willing to give direct answers to prayer, as in the days of Christ's earthly ministry, when a specific demand was made for healing, and immediately the answer came, "Your faith has saved you"? There was no pain attached to the cure, and "Your will be done" was left out of the petition. How much may faith demand now?

**W**HAT is written in the Word? "How do you read?"<sup>590</sup> Does God still live? And, being alive, has He changed His nature and disposition? or is He still the same as ever? Does He not say,

## **Malachi 3**

<sup>6</sup> I am the Lord, I change not?

And is not His unchangeability the reason why we have live at all?

## **Lamentations 3**

<sup>22</sup> It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

<sup>23</sup> They are new every morning: great is your faithfulness.

For,

## **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

We are to follow those whose faith was,

## **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

Therefore just as Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the afflicted, hungry multitude, even so He is today.

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<sup>590</sup> *Luke 10:26.*

## **Hebrews 4**

<sup>15</sup> For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;

–therefore we are to...

<sup>16</sup> ...come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Have you never thought why the Scriptures were written, with all their...

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...exceeding great and precious promises,

–and the record of the “mighty works”<sup>591</sup> done by the Lord? It was not for the sake of those on whom the miracles were wrought, but for our sakes.

## **John 20**

<sup>30</sup> And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book:

<sup>31</sup> But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you might have have through His name.

Remember that...

## **Romans 15**

<sup>4</sup> Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope.

The Bible is the Word of God, which...

## **1 Peter 1**

<sup>23</sup> ...lives and abides for ever.

It was written for all time, and is just as fresh and full of life and power today as it ever was. Its promises are just as sure now as the day they were made; for they are all in Christ; and:

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<sup>591</sup> *Luke 19:37.*

## **2 Corinthians 1**

<sup>20</sup> How many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us.

And what does He say?

## **John 14**

<sup>13</sup> Whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

<sup>14</sup> If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.

## **Matthew 18**

<sup>19</sup> Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

There is no limit to what we may ask of God; for:

## **Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> [He] is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

—and we may be sure that He will do all that He is able to do; for if He should do less than He is able to do, He would be denying himself.

## **Power That Heals**

The 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of *James* has special and unmistakable reference to the last days; for we read of judgments to come upon those who have gained wealth by fraud and oppression, and the down-trodden are exhorted to be patient,

## **James 5**

<sup>8</sup> ...for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

Then directly afterward we find this:

<sup>13</sup> Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

<sup>14</sup> Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

<sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Have we a right to expect the forgiveness of sin? Does the promise of the resurrection of the dead still hold good? You know full well that...

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> He is able to save them evermore that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.

Well, the very same power that forgives sins is the power that heals disease. Jesus caused the paralytic to rise and take up his bed and go to his house, in order that the people might see and know that He has power on earth to forgive sins.<sup>592</sup> He who forgives all iniquities is the One that heals all diseases<sup>593</sup>; therefore as long as we may expect forgiveness of sins, we may likewise expect healing of disease, and as there is no sin too great to be forgiven, so there is no disease that we may not ask Him to heal, with confidence that He will do it. And why? Because...

### **Hebrews 7**

<sup>25</sup> He ever lives,

—and,

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

It is by His life that we are saved, even by...

### **1 John 1**

<sup>2</sup> ...the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

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<sup>592</sup> *Matthew* 9:2-7.

<sup>593</sup> *Psalms* 103:3.



It is His blood that cleanses us from all sin,<sup>594</sup> even His life within and upon us. But,

### **Deuteronomy 6**

<sup>4</sup> ...the Lord our God is one Lord,

—and He has but one life, perfect and infinite. He is not divided into many. Therefore in the forgiveness of our sins by the life which we lay hold of by faith, we have the healing of all our diseases, if we but grasp the fact. The Spirit that seals our adoption as sons of God, is the same Spirit that quickens our mortal bodies,<sup>595</sup> and of this He gives us assurance, in that He gives us...

### **Acts 17**

<sup>25</sup> ...life, and breath, and all things.

Our daily bread, which nourishes our bodies, the life of the Lord renewing our bodies day by day, is God's message to us, telling us that He is our life, and that as the Father with Him freely gives us all things, we cannot make any demand on Him that is beyond His, power or willingness to supply.

### **Philippians 4**

<sup>19</sup> My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory.

## **The Will of God**

But what about His will? You say that in the days when Christ was manifest in the flesh, there was no "Your will be done" in the petitions for help. What do you mean by this?

- Do you think that Jesus ever healed anybody contrary to the will of God?
- Do you think that it was ever against His will that He healed diseases?
- And do you mean that by leaving out the words, "Your will be done," we are to expect or even compel Him to do some-

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<sup>594</sup> 1 John 1:7.

<sup>595</sup> Romans 8:11.

thing whether He wants to or not? Can you imagine that this ever was the case?

Not by any means.

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>11</sup> [He] works all things after the counsel of His own will.

His will is done on earth, whether we will or not; the only question is,

“Shall it be done with our consent, or in spite of it?”

If our wills coincide with His will, it is well for us. The words,

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>10</sup> Your will be done,

—do not mean that we ask Him to do some good thing for us provided He is willing to do it. If we think that, then we greatly misjudge Him. Will an earthly father supply all the needs of his children, as far as lies in his power? Does he not plan not only for their bare necessities, but to surprise them with things that they did not expect? Does he not live for them? Well,

### **Matthew 7**

<sup>11</sup> If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?

We wrong God grievously when we imagine that it is ever necessary for us to overcome His reluctance to do us good, or that it is ever not His will to do every good thing for us. Why, He has already blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.<sup>596</sup>

### **James 1**

<sup>17</sup> Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning.

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<sup>596</sup> *Ephesians* 1:3.

Mind this, every good and perfect gift comes down. The text says not only that every good thing that we have comes from above, but that every good thing that heaven has to bestow, has already come to us. In the gift of Christ not only all heaven, but the whole universe, is poured out to man.

### **Colossians 1 [RV]**

<sup>16</sup> For in Him were all things created, in heaven and upon the earth, things visible, and things invisible,...

<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

What then means the talk about asking according to His will? It means that we are willing to come into harmony with His will. It is a mistake to say that those who were healed in days of old did not ask for His will to be done. The leper said,

### **Matthew 8**

<sup>2</sup> Lord, if You will, You can make me clean;

—and Jesus replied,

<sup>3</sup> I will; be clean;

—and every one that asked showed by the asking that he had confidence that it was the will of the Lord to heal him. The trouble with the most of us is that we want healing as a matter of course,—we want to be well,—but we want it not in God's way. We want God to deny himself, in healing us by His life, when we are rejecting and trampling on that life—transgressing nearly every phase of it.

Do you not see how unreasonable we are? We ask Him to send His Word and heal us, and yet we do not yield to that Word when He sends it.

### **James 5**

<sup>15</sup> The prayer of faith shall save the sick;

—but,

### **Romans 10**

<sup>17</sup> Faith comes by hearing...the Word of God.

Therefore if we do not give diligence to find out how the word of life acts, and come into harmony with it, our request for healing is but mockery. We must not deceive ourselves; God is not mocked.<sup>597</sup>

All this is what the record of the miracles is meant to teach us. They were done to show God's desires for mankind. He can, it is true, snatch us instantaneously from the very jaws of death, and indeed, He often does, even though we deny Him, and go on ignoring His life; but which would you prefer: Instantaneous healing, and a relapse into the same disease, or slower healing that is permanent?

Even though God brings us up from the gates of the grave, we cannot expect that He will hinder the same causes that produced the disease in the first place from having the same effect again, if they are continued. That would be to reverse "the laws of nature," that is, to act contrary to His own Being; and that is not what miracles are. Miracles are not acts contrary to God's laws, or a suspension of natural law, as is commonly supposed, but the natural, free, and full action of God's life, which is the law of nature.

God wants us to become acquainted with...

### **1 John 1**

<sup>2</sup> ...that eternal life...

<sup>1</sup> ...which was from the beginning,...

<sup>2</sup> ...and was manifested unto us.

Thus as we recognize it, and gladly hold ourselves subject to it, healing of all our diseases is as sure as His forgiveness of all our sins; and whether the healing be effected instantaneously or gradually, it will be permanent. Then do not think that the age of miracles is past, or that God's power or willingness is diminished in the least.

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<sup>597</sup> *Galatians 6:7.*

## **1 John 5**

<sup>14</sup> This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us:

<sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petition that we desired of Him.

## **Mark 11**

<sup>22</sup> Have faith in God.

<sup>23</sup> For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be removed, and be cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things that he says shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he says.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore I say unto you, What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

## **Law and Prayer**

The following question also comes in very naturally for consideration in this connection:

Does law leave room for prayer?

Most certainly it does. Law—unalterable law—is the only thing that gives positive assurance to prayer. If it were not for unchangeable law, no one could pray with any confidence. Suppose, for instance, that there were no fixed law; that is to say, that there were not a God,

## **James 1**

<sup>17</sup> ...with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

If such a thing were possible, we should have a chance world; for even allowing that God ruled, but ruled capriciously, it would be the same to us as though the universe were governed by chance, which would be no government at all. In such a case prayer would be utterly useless.

Of course there could be no such condition as we have supposed; for without law there could be no existence. If it were possible that law could cease, speedy or instant destruction would

follow. And why? Because law—the law of the universe—is the life of God that pervades and upholds all things; and if that were suspended, that is, if God ceased to be, instantly everything would cease to be. So you see that a chance world is an impossibility; and if there is any true prayer at all it must be in accordance with law.

Just here comes in an objection that is often put forward, namely, that inasmuch as there is fixed law, there is no necessity for prayer, because everything will come in its time whether we ask for it or not. This is, in reality, the question that we started with. But this objection is based on a misapprehension of what prayer is.

Prayer is not begging, but acceptance. It is either a statement of the fact that we are in harmony with God's will, or a bringing of our minds into harmony with it. We pray that God's will may be done in us, not in spite of us. His will is not something to be *endured*, but something to be *enjoyed*. God is the Saviour; His work is always to create, to build up, to uphold, and to restore. Destruction comes only when God's will is ignored or defied. It is this truth which enables us to...

#### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>16</sup> ...come boldly to the throne of grace,

#### **Hebrews 10**

<sup>22</sup> ...in full assurance of faith.

One thing, however, must not be overlooked, and that is that God's life—His law—is infinite, and thus capable of an infinite variety of expression. We must not fall into the error of supposing that natural law, which is in reality spiritual law, since it is God's life, is limited to the little range of our experience. We have heard only the faintest whisper of Him, and know only the smallest part of His ways<sup>598</sup>; and this is why there may be phenomena and workings so varied that to our narrow and uninstructed vision

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<sup>598</sup> *Job* 26:14.

they may seem to be even contradictory, and yet all be perfectly harmonious parts of His life,—phases of unchangeable law. Thus may we expect Him to do...

**Ephesians 3**

<sup>20</sup> ...exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

## 164. How to Keep the Sabbath

Present Truth, April 23, 1903

I take *Present Truth* every week, and I admire many of the truths and sentiments contained therein, and until last Saturday, through the teaching of *Present Truth* and other reading matter, I had observed the seventh day as a rest day, and tried to keep the Sabbath, for something like nine months.

Thinking the matter up recently, and through reading Farrar's "Life of Christ," I have been brought to face the teaching of Christ on the Sabbath in a light I had not seen before.

Will you point out the truth as it appears to you in *Matthew* 12:1-13? From this account, and also that given by *Luke* and also by *Mark*, I am led to believe that works of necessity and mercy, when in accordance with Christ's supreme authority "to do good," to save life, are lawful, and that by doing such we keep the Sabbath. What do you think?

**I**S IT only "*many* of the truths" contained in *Present Truth* that you admire? Do you mean to say that there are some truths that you do not regard? Are you...

### **Malachi 2**

<sup>9</sup> ...partial in the law?

Do you not know that all truth is one, and that whoever deliberately rejects one truth, rejects all truth? For if any man thinks that his allegiance to some truth will warrant him in disregarding some other, let him know that, on the contrary, his disregard of even one truth shows that he cares only for his own way, and has no respect whatever for truth; that he accepts what he professes to accept, not because it is truth, but because it suits his convenience to do so.

I do not think that it is so with you, but that you did not state exactly what you meant.



You have surely not been a very close reader of *Present Truth*, if it has just dawned on you that works of necessity and mercy are lawful on the Sabbath day, and have not long since learned that they are an essential part of Sabbath keeping. There is no day in the week when the requirement to “love mercy”<sup>599</sup> is suspended. And certainly everything that is in harmony with “Christ’s supreme authority” is right and necessary.

If you read the Scriptures carefully, you will notice that many of Christ’s most striking miracles were wrought on the Sabbath day. They were not all acute cases either, as when Peter’s wife’s mother had fever, and was healed on the Sabbath; the most of them were cases of long standing, and the healing could without doubt have been deferred till another day, without serious detriment to the afflicted one. Why then did Jesus perform the miracles on that day? Plainly in order to teach the people who saw and heard, and us as well, what the Sabbath means.

God does not set people tasks just to show His authority over them, or to gratify His fancy. Whatever God commands men to do is for their benefit, and not for His. God does not have slaves working for Him, but He has children whose welfare constitutes His pleasure.

Most people imagine that religion, Christianity, is a “system” that God has devised to try men,—a sort of exercise that He has invented because it pleased Him to make the way to heaven as hard as possible. So the Sabbath is too often regarded as a hardship to be endured if one would get enough good “marks” to entitle him to enter heaven. But,

## **Mark 2**

<sup>27</sup> The Sabbath was made for man.

It is a rest, not a work; a delight, not a hardship. It is the memorial of God’s wonderful works, by which we triumph over our enemies.

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<sup>599</sup> *Micah 6:8.*

### **Psalms 33**

<sup>6</sup> By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

<sup>9</sup> For He spoke, and it was.

And,

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>11</sup> 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.

The Sabbath, therefore, is given us, to remind us of the power of God's Word,—“the word of life.”<sup>600</sup> Christ healed on the Sabbath day, to show that the Word which in the beginning created all things, is the Word by which we live,—that it is our life. As we rest from our own work on the seventh day, even though it threatens the loss of all our possessions, and even our friends, we signify our knowledge and acceptance of the Word that upholds the universe, and on which we can securely rest. It reminds us that:

That hand which bears creation up,  
Shall guard His children well.<sup>601</sup>

### **1 John 4**

<sup>16</sup> God is love;

—His life is love; so as we rest in His Word of life, His love is shed abroad in our hearts, and it must necessarily work the same in us as in Him; that is, in good works.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before prepared, that we should walk in them.

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<sup>600</sup> *Philippians 2:16; 1 John 1:1.*

<sup>601</sup> Philip Doddridge, Hymn: *How Gentle God's Commands*, 1755.

You will see that this does not mean that we are saved by our good works, but that we are saved to good works—the works which God himself has done.

### **Ephesians 2**

<sup>8</sup> By grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Our faith saves us to the works which God himself has done,—the works which were finished from the foundation of the world<sup>602</sup>; and thus it is that...

### **Hebrews 4**

<sup>3</sup> ...we which have believed do enter into rest,

—into Sabbath keeping.

Do you not see that the healing of men's bodily infirmities on the Sabbath day is an exhibition of the working of the Word that creates, and that upholds all things? Well, that being accepted, the next thing that will naturally occur to the thinking mind is that the Word also cleanses from sin, since His works...

### **Psalms 111**

<sup>7</sup> ...are verity and judgment,...

<sup>8</sup> ...and are done in truth and uprightness.

The Word that gives life gives perfect life; the Word that heals diseases also forgives iniquities; and so the healing of disease on the Sabbath day should, more than on any other day, reveal the loving kindness of our God. God works constantly, but by His Word—the Word by which He healed the sick. Such work pertains to the Sabbath day.

But you will at once see that this work does not bring any personal gain to God. It is all gratuitous. It is done at great sacrifice, solely for the benefit of others. Thus we are guarded against deceiving ourselves with the thought that certain work which we

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<sup>602</sup> *Hebrews 4:3.*

very much desire to see accomplished, and from which we shall derive some direct or indirect gain, is a work of necessity.

If any work can by any possibility benefit us—if we can possibly derive any gain from it,—it is not a work of necessity. It is not a work of mercy, but of selfishness, even though it be lawful in itself, if performed on some secular day. But any work that has in it no possible element of selfishness, and from which we cannot in the remotest manner, or to the least degree, derive any personal gain, but which is wholly for the benefit of others, is lawful on the Sabbath day.

In doing such work with a glad, cheerful heart, we show ourselves true children of Him who bears the burdens of mankind because He cares for them,<sup>603</sup> and loves them.

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<sup>603</sup> 1 Peter 5:7.

## 165. Baptized for the Dead (1903)

Present Truth, April 23, 1903

Note: This topic is also covered in the *Present Truth* of December 4, 1902, found earlier in this collection.

What do you make of the text which speaks about being “baptized for the dead”? I am told that it means that anyone who believes can be baptized for some other person who died out of the faith, and thus the dead person can be saved just as though he had believed and been baptized himself in life. What do you think?

**I** THINK it is altogether best to get so well acquainted with the meaning of baptism from the Scriptures, that loose, irresponsible guesses or assertions will not move us, and that we shall not feel inclined to take counsel of either our own or any other person’s opinions.

No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation; for the Scripture came not by the will of man. Therefore it is not for any man or set of men on earth to read any text, and then say dogmatically,

“This means so and so.”

Not thus are the Scriptures expounded. This “Private Corner,” and, indeed, the entire *Present Truth*, exists solely for the purpose of so setting forth the truths of Scripture that all who read will see that these truths are self-evident, and will accept them, not because some person has said so, but because they themselves see plainly that they are so. Now let us see what we can learn from this text.

The 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of *1 Corinthians* is the famous resurrection chapter. The apostle, in the portion in which the verse occurs, is answering the assertion of some, that there is no resurrection of the dead, and he asks,

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>29</sup> Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

His proof of the resurrection is the positive fact that Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. In reading this scripture we are reminded of the words of Peter,

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

<sup>4</sup> To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that alone, is our hope. By it He was...

### **Romans 1**

<sup>4</sup> ...declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness,

—and by it we are begotten sons of God. Therefore it is that we, as many as are...

### **Romans 6**

<sup>3</sup> ...baptized into Jesus Christ [are] baptized into His death.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

Our hope of the resurrection of the body at the coming of the Lord Jesus, is our resurrection with Him now, to...

<sup>4</sup> ...walk in newness of life.

Every baptism, therefore, has reference to the resurrection—first of all of Christ, and afterwards of those who are Christ's at His coming. Every person who is intelligently, and thus really, baptized, thereby signifies that he yields his body, and his whole

life, to Christ, accepting His death and resurrection. By it he signifies his belief that Jesus died and rose again, for him, and that his own resurrection is, through his faith in Christ, totally sure. Thus, and thus only, can anybody be baptized for the dead.

To say that a person who has not believed, and who has died in unbelief, can be saved through another's baptism for him, is most completely to misapprehend the Gospel of our salvation. God is not a vain, capricious person, to be pleased with mummeries. Everything that He requires in the Gospel, is for a definite purpose. Everything is for the purpose of affecting a radical change in the individual, and not to gratify some arbitrary wish of God.

For one person to be baptized for another who is dead, could not possibly affect that other one's character; and it is change of life in the individual himself that God desires. When one is understandingly baptized for the dead and risen Christ, and for his own death and resurrection in Him, a complete change is wrought in him. He becomes thenceforth a new man.

But if God, who knows the hearts of all, sees that some person who died unbaptized had real, even though undefined faith, He will save that man because of his own faith, and not because ten thousand men have had themselves baptized on his behalf.

Think what would be the result if the idea of the one you refer to, which, unfortunately has too many adherents, were true. It would mean that heaven would be peopled with a lot of people who never desired salvation. It means that unrepentant sinners by wholesale can be saved, if only they have friends to go through the ceremony of baptism for them.

It virtually means universal salvation, and that not through the merits of Christ, nor even through the merit of a large part of the "saved," but through—not the merits, but—the ceremonies performed by a lot of human saviours. Merely to follow the idea out to its natural conclusion is to show the monstrosity of it.

But we do wrong even to speak of people being saved by such means. That would not be salvation, if it were possible. It would be the peopling of heaven with a lot of unsaved people; it would be in fact, the transference of “this present evil world” into the world to come. And that again shows that the idea is opposed to the Gospel, and a perversion of the Scriptures; for:

**Galatians 1**

<sup>4</sup> [Christ] gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world,

—and His very name and existence depend on the fact that...

**Matthew 1**

<sup>21</sup> ...He shall save His people from their sins.

Salvation that does not cleanse the soul from sin is not salvation at all. Thanks be to God, “Jesus saves!”



# 166. Familiar Spirits and Modern Spiritualism

Present Truth, April 30, 1903

Do you think that there is any connection between the “familiar spirits” mentioned in the Bible, and the Spiritualism of the present day? If so, is it not as sinful now to have any dealings with them as it was then? Will you tell us what is meant by “the sin of witchcraft”<sup>604</sup>?

## What Is a Familiar Spirit?

**A** FAMILIAR SPIRIT, as the term as used in the Bible, is an evil spirit, supposed to attend at a call. In modern Spiritualism each Spiritualistic medium is generally supposed to have a spirit which comes whenever a “sitting” or “seance” is desired, and by which the medium is controlled, and under whose influence and inspiration the medium writes or performs. In other words, the medium has a familiar spirit.

God gives His prophets revelations and dreams, not at their call or appointment, but when He desires and sees it would be best for them to have them; but the hosts of darkness, as a rule, come on demand. They are “familiar,” too familiar and common altogether. They should never be called, but resisted always. He who trifles with them is treading on forbidden ground.

The Bible plainly reveals the fall of Satan as well as the fall of man.<sup>605</sup> It shows that many of the angels of heaven also transgressed and fell with him.

### 2 Peter 2

<sup>4</sup> God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.

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<sup>604</sup> 1 Samuel 15:23.

<sup>605</sup> Ezekiel 28:13-19; Luke 10:18; John 8:44.

## **Revelation 12**

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The last text shows to what place Satan and his angels were cast. It was to the earth. It also shows what has been his work since his banishment from heaven, deceiving the world: tempting man through the deceptions of lies, magic, witchery, cunning and craft, as he did Eve, to transgress against God, with whose law and government he is at war.

God, who knows his subtlety and cunning, and the thousands of ways by which he seeks to snare and enslave men, has ever sought to warn men against those deceptions. Thus, just before Israel entered into the land of Canaan, He gave them the following plain prohibition:

## **Deuteronomy 18**

<sup>9</sup> When you are come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

<sup>10</sup> There shall not be found among you anyone that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

<sup>11</sup> Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

<sup>12</sup> For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.

This is plain language, and is as much a command and prohibition against the practice of these things now as when first given. God does not change. Divination, witchery, and the consulting with familiar spirits are as much abominations to Him today as they were anciently. There is the same evil behind them now, and the same deception connected with them, as when...

## **Numbers 25**

<sup>1</sup> ...the daughters of Moab

<sup>2</sup> ...called the people [of Israel] unto the sacrifice of their gods.

Fifteen hundred years later Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

### **1 Corinthians 10**

<sup>20</sup> But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils.

And the nature of these things has not changed in the eighteen hundred years which have elapsed since Paul wrote. They are still abominations and from an evil source. They are still Satan's means of deceiving the world.

### **The Sin of Witchcraft**

When the children of Israel were traveling from Egypt to Canaan, the Amalekites came out to oppose their progress by arms. This was nothing less than an act of armed rebellion against God, under whose guidance the Israelites were marching, and therefore God said,

#### **Exodus 17** [margin]

<sup>16</sup> Because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of the Lord, therefore the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

The Amalekites filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Lord chose the Israelites, in the days when Saul was king, to be the instruments by which He would execute judgment upon them. Accordingly the prophet Samuel came to Saul with the following command from the Lord:

### **1 Samuel 15**

<sup>3</sup> Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

So Saul departed on his mission, and smote the Amalekites;

<sup>9</sup> But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that

was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

This, it will readily be seen, was in direct violation of the express command of the Lord; yet so deceived was Saul, that he thought that he had obeyed the Lord; for when Samuel came to seek him,

### **1 Samuel 15**

<sup>13</sup> ...Saul said unto him, Blessed be you of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.

Samuel, however, was not deceived. The evidences of Saul's disobedience were too numerous; the cattle themselves proclaimed the fact. And so, to Saul's protestation of obedience, the prophet said,

<sup>14</sup> What means then this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

To this pertinent question Saul replied,

<sup>15</sup> They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

It will be seen from this that Saul had so far recovered from his deception that he was willing to excuse himself from any connection with the disobedience, and to lay the entire blame upon the people. Yet he excused the act as a righteous one, inasmuch as they designed ultimately to kill all the cattle that they had taken. He seemed to think that so long as the cattle were finally destroyed, it would make no difference how or when it was done. Indeed, he seemed to think that offering them as a sacrifice to the Lord, would more than make up for the disobedience; for upon Samuel's reproving him for his arrogant disregard of the Lord's commandment, Saul again replied:

<sup>20</sup> Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag, the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

<sup>21</sup> But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord your God in Gilgal.

Even this did not make any difference; the disobedience was too evident, and the prophet of the Lord said:

### **1 Samuel 15**

<sup>22</sup> Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

<sup>23</sup> For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

The reader will notice that the words “is as” in the verse last quoted, are in italics in the Bible, indicating that they have no equivalent in the Hebrew, but are supplied by the translators. The Hebrew language is brief, and a simple connective is often omitted when it would necessarily be understood. In reading “Rebellion, the sin of witchcraft; and stubbornness, iniquity and idolatry,” it would be most natural to supply the copula “is,” but there would be no necessity nor warrant for supplying “as.” So that we may understand the prophet to say, as given in the Jewish rendering, that rebellion is indeed the sin of witchcraft, and that stubbornness is iniquity and image-worship. Wherever therefore we find rebellion, there we find the sin of witchcraft.

This idea is expressed by the Apostle Paul when writing to the Galatians, who were turning away from the purity of the Gospel, and were disobeying the truth of God.<sup>606</sup> To them he exclaimed:

### **Galatians 3**

<sup>1</sup> O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among you?

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<sup>606</sup> *Galatians* 1:6-7.

## The Root of the Matter

Having seen that plain violation of one of God's commandments is the sin of witchcraft, no matter how specious the excuse, let us now go to the root of the whole matter. Writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul said:

### 2 Corinthians 11

<sup>3</sup> I fear; lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

It is evident that in every attempt to beguile men from the truth as it is in Jesus, the devil has used the same arts with which he succeeded in deceiving Eve. Let us, therefore, see by what means she was deceived. Read the account in *Genesis* 3:1-6.

God had commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, saying:

### Genesis 2

<sup>17</sup> In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die.

The devil came with artful insinuations against God, intimating that God was unjust in giving such a commandment.

“Is it so that God has said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Can it be possible that He would be so arbitrary as that?”

This prepared the way for a bolder strike in response to Eve's statement that God had said that they might eat of every tree but one, but that they should die if they ate of that. The serpent said:

### Genesis 3

<sup>4</sup> You shall not surely die:

<sup>5</sup> For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods [literally, like God], knowing good and evil.

Then the record says that:

<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one

wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

But the fact was that the tree was not one to be desired; neither, since God had prohibited it, was it good for food. It was poisonous for her, as has been amply demonstrated; for it was...

—that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe.<sup>607</sup>

How then did the woman see that the fruit of the tree was good for food, and to be desired? She saw it through the representations of the tempter. He caused her to see it by means of his magic arts. She was bewitched. She saw that which did not exist, just as has been the case with many people since, when they have been under the spell of the conjurer. It was witchcraft and magic that caused the sin from which all other sins have sprung. And thus we see why it was that rebellion is the sin of witchcraft.

But what was the magic by which the tempter induced Eve to transgress the express commandments of the, Lord? It is all summed up in one sentence,

### **Genesis 3**

<sup>4</sup> You shall not surely die.

It was the belief of this lie that caused the first sin and all the sins that have followed in its train. It is by the subtlety by which the serpent beguiled Eve that our minds are in danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. False prophets and teachers are threatened with punishment by the Lord, because, as He says:

### **Ezekiel 13**

<sup>22</sup> With lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.

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<sup>607</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1.

Saul's disobedience finally led him to actually consult with a witch before he died. Read the record in *1 Samuel* 28 and *1 Chronicles* 10:13-14.



## 167. As He Walked

Present Truth, May 7, 1903

According to your contention Christians are still under the law, whereas it is evident to readers of the New Testament that they are under grace, Christ having fulfilled the law for them.

**T**HIS is quoted from a letter that was written to us by one who expressed the utmost astonishment that we should keep, and teach others to keep, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment—the seventh day of the week. This expresses a very common idea. Perhaps nine out of every ten who object to keeping the Sabbath of the law of God, will give as their reason for not keeping it, the fact that Christ kept the law.

### Not Under the Law

Before taking up this point, however, we must state again that we do not teach nor believe that Christians are “under the law.” Most emphatically they are not. And the reason why they are not is that they keep the law, even as Christ did. The psalmist wrote,

#### Psalm 119

<sup>45</sup> I will walk at liberty, for I seek your precepts.

#### 1 John 3

<sup>4</sup> Sin is the transgression of the law.

Now the Apostle Paul writes,

#### Romans 6

<sup>14</sup> Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.

<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid.

There is no necessity for any misapprehension as to what it is to be under the law, for the apostle says that those who are not under the law do not sin; that sin has no dominion over them.

That is to say, they do not transgress the law. The man, therefore, who is not under the law is the man who keeps the law. Christians are under grace, and the grace of God saves from the transgression of the law.

### **Fulfilling the Law**

Come now to the thought that we do not need to keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, because Christ kept or fulfilled the law. This is an acknowledgment of two things, namely:

1. That the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and that
2. Christ kept it.

But let us see how it will work to say that we are absolved from the duty of keeping the Sabbath because Christ fulfilled the law.

#### **Luke 10**

<sup>26</sup> What is written in the law? how do you read?

Remember that there is more in the law than the simple keeping of the Sabbath, and that it all stands together as a unit. The answer which the Lord himself approved, and which He himself gave on one occasion, is this:

<sup>27</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

This is the whole law. Now let us for a moment accept as true the statement that we need not keep the Seventh day, according to the law, because Christ fulfilled the law, and see to what it leads us. It is true that Christ fulfilled the law. It is also true that the principal part of the law is,

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, etc.”

Now it is certain that Christ fulfilled this commandment. What then must we conclude, according to the theory before us? Why,

simply this, that we do not need to love the Lord our God, since Christ did it for us! The second great commandment of the law is:

**Mark 12**

<sup>31</sup> You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

But Christ fulfilled the law for us; therefore we do not need to love our neighbors at all! Or, to go into particulars, the commandment says,

**Exodus 20**

<sup>7</sup> You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

But Christ fulfilled the law for us, reverencing the name of the Father; therefore we may curse and swear! The commandment says,

<sup>13</sup> You shall not kill.

And...

<sup>16</sup> You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Christ fulfilled this part of the law also for us, and so Christians may murder and lie!

“No, no,” says our friend, “that is no part of Christianity.”

And so say we. Our friend will say that Christians must reverence the name of God, must honor their parents, must not kill, steal, commit adultery, bear false witness, nor covet; and so say we, because the Bible says so.

The fact that Jesus Christ loved the Father, was obedient to His earthly parents, did no violence to any person, and always witnessed to the truth, is no reason why Christians should not do the same, but is the strongest reason why they should obey those commandments.

So the fact that Jesus kept the Sabbath,—the very day enjoined by the fourth commandment, the seventh day,—is the strongest reason why Christians should keep it also. There is no argument

against the Sabbath that does not strike equally against every commandment of the law. The law is one, and:

## **James 2**

<sup>10</sup> He that offends in one point is guilty of all.

## **Christ's Life in Us**

Christ fulfilled “all righteousness.” What for? Was it in order that we might be free from righteousness? Far from it. We were already free from righteousness. He fulfilled all righteousness in order that we might be free from all sin. God sent His own Son,

## **Romans 8**

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.

## **Romans 5**

<sup>10</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

But bear in mind that the life of Christ does us no good unless it is in us.

## **2 Corinthians 13**

<sup>5</sup> Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?

So that if the life of Jesus is not “made manifest in our body,”<sup>608</sup> we are not Christians at all. It is not the mere fact that Jesus kept the law eighteen hundred years ago that saves us, but it is the fact that He still lives, that His life now is the same as it was then, and that He lives in us, and fulfills the law in us, not outside of us.

## **Romans 5**

<sup>19</sup> By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.

Notice that it is not simply that by the obedience of One we are *accounted* righteous, but that it is by Christ's obedience that we are actually *made* righteous. His obedience is not a substitute for our disobedience, but it is actually our righteousness.

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<sup>608</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:10.

Oneness with Christ is the Christian standard. We are...

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> ...crucified with Christ,

### **Romans 6**

<sup>4</sup> ...buried with Him by baptism into death,

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>1</sup> ...risen with Christ,

—in order that we might also...

### **Romans 6**

<sup>8</sup> ...live with Him.

He set the example when He was on earth, and now He comes to walk over the same road in us.

There is altogether too much failure to recognize what true Christianity is. Too many seem to think it is sufficient to acknowledge that Jesus Christ once came in the flesh, was crucified, buried, and raised, forgetting that true Christianity is the present life of Christ in human flesh.

### **1 John 4**

<sup>2</sup> Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God;

<sup>3</sup> And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.

It is not enough to confess that Jesus Christ *once came* in the flesh; we must confess that He *even now is come* in the flesh, even ours, and that He is...

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...the same yesterday, and today, and for ever,

—and that therefore His life in us must be the same that it was in Him eighteen hundred years ago in Judea and Galilee. Let us not therefore think that since Jesus fulfilled the law we may ignore any part of it, but rather remember:

## **1 John 2**

<sup>6</sup> He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.

# 168. Letter and Spirit

Present Truth, May 14, 1903

How does the following text harmonize with your statements in this week's *Present Truth* about the law?<sup>609</sup>

“But now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” *Romans 7:6*, margin.

**W**HAT is the thing in which we were held, and to which we are now dead?

## Dead to Sin

The 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Romans* is but an expansion of the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter, where we read that we are...

### **Romans 6**

<sup>2</sup> ...dead to sin,

—and that:

<sup>7</sup> He that is dead is freed from sin.

### **Romans 7**

<sup>11</sup> Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are dead unto the sin which held us, because sin also is dead by Christ.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

And so...

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<sup>609</sup> The questioner is referring to last week's article, "[As He Walked.](#)"

## **Romans 7**

<sup>6</sup> ...we are delivered from the law.

It had been transgressed, and therefore it demanded our death,

## **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> ...for the wages of sin is death.

But now that we are dead, it pursues us no further; it has executed the penalty on us, in Christ.

## **Romans 7**

<sup>1</sup> The law has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

When he is dead, there is nothing more that it can do to him.

## **A New Man**

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

That is a good reason why the vengeance of the law no longer pursues us. The man who committed the sin is dead, and the man who now lives is a “new man,”<sup>610</sup> walking in...

## **Romans 6**

<sup>4</sup> ...newness of life.

The old life was a life of sin; the “new man” is after God,

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>24</sup> ...created in righteousness and true holiness.

Since “the new man” has not transgressed the law, he is, as a matter of course, free.

## **The Law is Not Dead**

But the law is not dead. It is as much alive as it ever was. The new man is free from it simply because he is walking in harmony with it. The new man is under as much obligation to keep the law as the old man was; the difference between them is that the new

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<sup>610</sup> *Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10.*



man does his duty, while the old man did not, and could not. The old man was...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>7</sup> ...not subject to the law of God,

–being opposed to the Holy Spirit. The new man is alive through Christ, who died,

<sup>4</sup> ...that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

### **Galatians 5**

<sup>18</sup> If you be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law.

But the verse last quoted [from *Romans* 8:4] tells us that “the righteousness of the law is fulfilled” in those who walk after the Spirit. Therefore we are taught most plainly that the only ones who are “not under the law” are those in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. The transgressors of the law are the only ones who are “under the law.” Those who are “delivered from the law” are the ones who are keeping it...

### **John 4**

<sup>24</sup> ...in spirit and in truth.

This is shown in the statement that we are delivered from the law, in order...

### **Romans 7**

<sup>6</sup> ...that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

We still serve, but as free men, and not as slaves. It is a spiritual service, that is, a real service; for only that which is spiritual is real.

<sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual.

It follows, therefore, that when we were serving in the oldness of the letter, we were not really keeping the law; for since the law

is spiritual, it necessarily requires spiritual service. So it is only when we are delivered from the law that we can keep it.

### **Unlike Human Law**

The common opinion in regard to the letter and the spirit of the law, is most erroneous. The error arises from supposing that the law of God is similar to human laws. It is quite common to speak of the spirit of a law made by man, when all that is meant is the intent of the law. Thus: No human law is perfect; its framers cannot possibly foresee all the circumstances that may arise to be judged by it.

Then, too, the language of the law may be obscure. So the judge often finds it necessary to decide what was the intent of the law-makers. A man might be technically or literally a violator of a law, while still acting fully in harmony with the intent of its framers. This is what is meant by the mistaken use of the term “letter and spirit,” as applied to human laws.

Now the great difference between the nature of human laws and the divine law is that there is no spirit to the former, while the latter is wholly spiritual. Spirit is life; but there is no life in human laws. They cannot give life. No man can get anything more out of a human law than he puts into it. If men ignore any human law, then it is said to be “a dead letter.” But it has no more life in itself when it is obeyed than when it is disregarded; the life is in the people, who make their acts conform to the words of the law.

The law of God is wholly different. It is alive whether people regard it or not. It is alive because it is spiritual. The man who serves in “the oldness of the letter”<sup>611</sup> does not really serve at all, because, no matter how good his purpose, or how strong his endeavors, to keep the law, he is simply reproducing himself, and not the law. In trying to do what the law tells him to do, he is

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<sup>611</sup> *Romans 7:6.*

merely doing what his own nature allows him to do. While in a carnal state, he is...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>7</sup> ...not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

### **The Law is Life**

But,

### **Romans 8**

<sup>2</sup> The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,

—gives freedom from this bondage, so that:

<sup>4</sup> The righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us.

The real law is the life of God in Christ, and that gives life. What is termed “the letter” of the law of God is the verbal statement of the law. This is not the law itself, but only the form of it; as the apostle said, the Jews had...

### **Romans 2**

<sup>20</sup> ...the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

The verbal statement of the law has the same relation to the law itself, as the photograph of a man has to the man himself. It is but the shadow.

When we speak of the spirit of God’s law, we mean the law itself, and not merely the intent of the law. The intent of the law may be learned from the words, since God is not subject to human limitations, but knows what is needed, and can say just what He means. From the words of the law of God we may know exactly what we should do, for it is a perfect form.

But it is only in Christ that we find the living substance. The law in Christ is not only living, but it gives life. It performs itself in those who submit to it, because it is God’s own life. It is not less than the letter; it is not something different from the letter; but it is simply the living thing which the letter perfectly describes.

## 169. Please Harmonize

Present Truth, May 14, 1903

THE request is frequently sent in from some earnest correspondent that some text in the Bible be “harmonized” with some other text that is mentioned. We wish to call attention to the fact, so that those who read may come to the study of the Bible better prepared to receive benefit from it.

Suppose some student of music should take one of the master-piece of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, or Handel, and after glancing it through two or three times, should ask his teacher to “harmonize” it for him, so that he could play it understandingly. The teacher would tell the student that the harmony was already there; that the master put it there when he wrote the piece; and that he must study it until he is able to see the harmony.

To the student it might at first seem a hopeless task, but if he has patience, and a love for music, he will study away at the composition, working out difficult chords, until finally the grand harmony is open to his understanding. Then he can go on for years enjoying it, his appreciation of it ever increasing; and his enjoyment of it will be the greater because of his previous study.

It does not need that one should be a musician to know that there is no other way than this for a person to appreciate the work of the great composers. Why should not the Bible be treated as fairly? David prayed to the Lord,

### **Psalm 119**

<sup>18</sup> Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

The same God to whom he prayed exists today, and is as ready to answer that prayer for any person who prays it, as He was to answer it in David’s case. When the two disciples walked to Emmaus, and Jesus drew near and walked with them, their hearts burned within them, as He opened to them the Scriptures; and afterwards, in the upper chamber, where the twelve were gath-

ered together, Jesus opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.

### **Luke 24**

<sup>45</sup> Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

Although we cannot see Him with our eyes, He is just as near, and just as able to instruct those who ask Him today, as He was then. When the Scriptures were written, the harmony was put in them by the great Master.

### **2 Timothy 3**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

<sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

One Spirit inspired the whole of the Bible, and so there is the most perfect agreement between all its parts. This agreement may not be always apparent to the casual reader, any more than the harmony in the great musical compositions is apparent at a glance; but the right kind of study will always reveal it.

The greatest hindrance to the understanding of the Scriptures is the attitude which people assume towards it. They come at it in a spirit of challenge. They put it on the defensive. When a plain declaration is read in one text, they immediately refer to another text, and say,

“I don’t see how that can be, in view of what this text says.”

So they put the two texts in antagonism. Such a position shuts off the possibility of understanding the Bible.

### **Hebrews 11 [RV]**

<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand.

The truths of God are revealed to faith, not to mere human intellect. There is no discount upon intellect, for it is a gift of God;

but it is to be subject to faith, and to be instructed by it. That means simply that human reason is to be subject to God, for faith is the laying hold of God. Belief, implicit belief, of the Bible, is the necessary condition of understanding it. He who does not believe cannot understand; and nobody believes the Bible, when he comes to it in a spirit that will, even in thought, put one text in antagonism to another.

In order to understand the Bible we must come to it in the positive knowledge that it is inspired by God. We must know that in consequence of that inspiration it is perfectly harmonious throughout. Then when we come to a text that seems to be in contradiction to another, or to a line of other texts, we can say,

“I know that there is perfect harmony between these texts, although I cannot see it now. I will therefore give them careful and prayerful consideration, that I may see it.”

The problem is half solved then. The Holy Spirit was given for the express purpose of leading people into the truth,<sup>612</sup> and will still do it. That Spirit is freely given to all who will sincerely ask for it.

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<sup>612</sup> *John* 16:13.

# 170. The Kingdom of Christ

Present Truth, May 21, 1903

Will the kingdom of Christ be established on this earth before His coming in glory? We sometimes hear it spoken of as though it could be advanced by civil power. Yet in *Luke 19:11-27*, Christ likens himself to one who goes to a far country to receive his kingdom.

WHEN Christ was before Pilate He said,

## **John 18**

<sup>36</sup> My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Christ did not refrain from fighting because His following was too small to cope with the Roman Government; for each one of His loyal disciples, together with himself, could have had a legion of angels at his back.<sup>613</sup> But His kingdom was not of this world, and He could not use earthly power. The using of force would have been His ruin, for He himself said,

## **Matthew 26**

<sup>52</sup> They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

There was a time when the disciples and all the people were going to take Jesus by force to make Him King,<sup>614</sup> and if He had consented, the whole Jewish nation would have flocked to His standard; but He would not listen to the proposition. Surely if the kingdom of Christ could be advanced by civil power, then was the time to make use of it. The fact that Christ would have nothing to do with it, shows what He expects of His followers. By allowing himself to be betrayed into the hands of wicked men, and suffering the cruel death of the cross, Christ showed how only His

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<sup>613</sup> *Matthew 26:53.*

<sup>614</sup> *John 6:1-15.*

kingdom can be gained and advanced. Because of the suffering of death, He was crowned with glory and honor.

Let none of the professed servants of Christ think to gain the kingdom in a different manner. To make such an attempt is to deny Christ, and to make His sufferings of no account. Men have nothing to do with giving Christ His kingdom. All they are called upon to do is to yield themselves to the Holy Spirit, that they may be fashioned into fit subjects for the kingdom which the Lord God will give unto Him. True,

### **Isaiah 9**

<sup>6</sup> ...the government shall be upon His shoulder,

—but it is...

<sup>7</sup> ...the zeal of the Lord of hosts,

—that is to give it to Him. The Father has sworn to give unto Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession<sup>615</sup>; but when He receives them it is that He may dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. But He will do it in person, and not by deputy.

### **Coming in His Kingdom**

Christ himself showed how and when He was to receive His kingdom. He spoke a parable for the benefit of those who thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He likened himself to a nobleman who...

### **Luke 19**

<sup>12</sup> ...went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

<sup>15</sup> And it came to pass that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, etc.

Christ has now gone to that far country to receive the kingdom. The receiving of it is described in *Daniel* 7:13-14. When He comes

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<sup>615</sup> *Psalm* 2:7-8.



the second time, He will come in His kingdom.<sup>616</sup> Then He will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God.<sup>617</sup> Then will those that would not have Him to rule over them be slain before Him,<sup>618</sup>

## **2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>9</sup> ...punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

And when He shall have destroyed all the wicked,

## **Matthew 13**

<sup>43</sup> Then shall the righteous shine, forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Christ is now sitting upon His Father's throne,<sup>619</sup> reigning as a priest, and devising peace for His people.<sup>620</sup> He is the...

## **1 Timothy 2**

<sup>5</sup> ...one Mediator between God and men.

He is Mediator between God and men, not between God and nations. Moreover His authority as Mediator is not that of compulsion, but that of love and entreaty.

## **Revelation 3**

<sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

## **Christ's Ambassadors**

Christ's ministers are ambassadors, not judges nor officers in earthly kingdoms. The ambassador who should presume to interfere in the affairs of the country to which he is sent, or who should even express his opinion about the politics of that country, would at once lose his position.

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<sup>616</sup> *Matthew 16:28.*

<sup>617</sup> *2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.*

<sup>618</sup> *Luke 19:27.*

<sup>619</sup> *Revelation 3:21.*

<sup>620</sup> *Zechariah 6:12-13.*

Christ's ministers are sent as ambassadors to the whole world. They are to know nothing of nations as nations, but only to deal with individuals. Whether those individuals be in a palace or a hovel, makes no difference. Princes and peasants are all the same to them, so far as their mission is concerned, only they acknowledge constituted authority wherever they are. Of the affairs of nations, they have no opinion to express, for they are not sent to judge the world, but to save the world.

The sum of the whole matter therefore is, that while Christ is supreme over everybody and everything, He is to be left to exercise His supremacy in His own way and time. No men, not even His own followers, are to presume to exercise authority in His stead. He is indeed...

### **Revelation 1**

<sup>5</sup> ...the Prince of the kings of the earth,

—but no man nor body of men is authorized to be His deputy in exercising dominion. Christ himself uses no force, neither over men as individuals, nor over nations, and therefore none of His followers can do so. He judges no man now, although all judgment has been committed to Him; because there is a day appointed when all shall stand before His judgment seat. Therefore His followers are to...

### **1 Corinthians 4**

<sup>5</sup> ...judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.

Until that time they are to be content to be in this world even as He was—despised and rejected,<sup>621</sup> pilgrims and strangers.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> *Isaiah* 53:3.

<sup>622</sup> *Hebrews* 11:13; *1 Peter* 2:11.

# 171. A Gloomy Doctrine

Present Truth, May 28, 1903

It seems to me that it is a far more comforting thought that our dear ones have gone to be with the Lord, than that they are sleeping, knowing nothing. Is not this a gloomy doctrine? I should be glad of any light that you can give me.

**T**HERE is nothing gloomy about the Gospel. That is the “good news” of the:

## **Romans 1**

<sup>16</sup> ...power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

It is all brightness and glory.<sup>623</sup>

## **1 John 1**

<sup>5</sup> God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

Therefore nothing but light can emanate from Him.

## **Psalms 119**

<sup>105</sup> His word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

When any doctrine set forth in that word is said to be gloomy, it simply shows that there are some persons whose spiritual eyesight does not enable them to distinguish light from darkness. They do not stand where they can see God in the light that proceeds from Him.

The Bible declares that the dead “sleep;” that they are unconscious, and...

## **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...know not anything;

—that their thoughts have perished.<sup>624</sup> Theology, on the other hand, declares that they are conscious and exist in heaven as disembodied spirits, having greater power and knowledge than be-

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<sup>623</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4.

<sup>624</sup> Psalm 146:3-4.

fore death. The majority of people choose to believe the latter doctrine, as being a bright and cheerful one, and reject the former as something too gloomy and dark to be entertained by any mind but one that repudiates Christianity. But an examination of the two doctrines in the light of Scripture shows that such a view is entirely superficial.

The teaching of theology upon this point is expressed in these words of the poet Longfellow,

There is no death; what seems so in transition,  
This life of mortal breath  
Is but the suburb of the life Elysian,  
Whose portal we call death;

—and again in the lines of the familiar hymn,

Death is the gate to endless joy.

But Christ himself said that He was the gate to endless joy, and the portals through which all men must enter into the life beyond. The record is found in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of *John*.

### **John 10**

<sup>7</sup> Then said Jesus unto them [the Pharisees], Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

<sup>9</sup> I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

To those who love the Lord, who see in Him the One...

### **Song of Solomon 5**

<sup>16</sup> ...altogether lovely,

—the perfection of glory and beauty and majesty, the thought that He is the portal to the life beyond, is far brighter than the thought that that portal is death. Death is the “King of terrors;”<sup>625</sup> but Jesus Christ is the Lord of life, the Prince of Peace, the eternal fountain of love and joy. He is the most glorious portal to ever-

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<sup>625</sup> *Job* 18:14.

lasting life that could possibly be provided or imagined. And no one who loves Him would be glad to believe He had not told the truth.

Theology declares that men go to their reward at death. But while this idea would place some amidst the joys of Heaven, it would consign the great majority who have died to a very different place; for we read that...

### **Matthew 7**

<sup>13</sup> ...wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

<sup>14</sup> But strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.

And certainly, between the thought that some of our dead relatives and friends are in torment, and the thought that they are resting, quiet and unconscious, in their graves, there can be no hesitation in choosing. The popular belief that “there is no death,” but only a transition from one state of life to another, contains much that appeals to the natural desires and imaginations of mankind; but it is far surpassed in grandeur by the Bible doctrine of...

### **2 Timothy 1**

<sup>10</sup> ...the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has *abolished death*, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

This is no figure of speech, but a statement of actual fact. Our Saviour has abolished death, by passing through the grave himself, and taking away with Him the keys of death.<sup>626</sup> So that to all those who believe in Him, the close of this earthly life is but the beginning of “a sleep,” during which they...

### **Revelation 14**

<sup>13</sup> ...rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

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<sup>626</sup> Revelation 1:18.

Nor does the Bible use a figure of speech when it speaks of the death of the saints as a sleep. Sleep and death are two very different things. In the one case there is life, and the other there is no life. In sleep there is a quick awakening to a renewal of the activities of life, but in death there is no awakening. So it is with those who...

#### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>14</sup> ...sleep in Jesus.

They have life, even that life which God has prepared for those that shall live and dwell with Him, and which has been brought to light in the Gospel.<sup>627</sup> Those who believe on His name have not to wait until death before they can enter the portal of eternal life, as would be necessary were death the gate to that life, but enter in the moment they have faith in Jesus as Redeemer. Jesus said,

#### **John 11**

<sup>25</sup> I am the resurrection, and the life.

Christ dwells in the heart of the believer by faith,<sup>628</sup> and wherever Christ is, there is the resurrection and the fountain of life.

#### **John 3**

<sup>33</sup> He that believes on the Son, has everlasting life.

#### **John 5**

<sup>25</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on Him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death until life.

Such a one has already entered the portal to eternal life and happiness, and no power can draw him back, for there is nothing that is able to separate the soul from Him.<sup>629</sup>

In this doctrine there is no gloom, but the brightness of hope and comfort which sustains the soul in the hour of separation from those whom it loves. It is the doctrine of Jesus Christ as the

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<sup>627</sup> 2 Timothy 1:10.

<sup>628</sup> Ephesians 3:17.

<sup>629</sup> Romans 7:38-39.

Life-giver, without which power He would not be the Saviour of sinners. It exalts Him, and in this all those who love Him will rejoice. It is no misfortune to any person to “sleep in Jesus,” any more than to sleep at night during his natural life. On the contrary, we read that:

**Psalm 116**

<sup>15</sup> Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,

—and that,

**Revelation 14**

<sup>13</sup> Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.

While theology may set forth our dead friends as teachers and comforters to us while we remain here, the word of God presents the far more glorious doctrine that our comfort is none other than...

**2 Corinthians 1**

<sup>3</sup> ...the God of all comfort;

—that Jesus is himself our Comforter,<sup>630</sup> and that we have “another Comforter,” which is the Spirit,<sup>631</sup> and that the Spirit is our Teacher, who is able to guide us into all truth.<sup>632</sup> Every true Christian must infinitely prefer this comfort and guidance to all others.

Thus the Bible doctrine of eternal life through Christ far outshines the man-made doctrine of life through the portals of the tomb. That, and that alone, is the gloomy doctrine which interposes the tomb between us and the life which we need, which Jesus Christ, through the Gospel, offers freely now to all, and bestows upon all them that believe on Him.

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<sup>630</sup> *John* 14:18.

<sup>631</sup> *John* 14:16-17.

<sup>632</sup> *John* 16:13.

## 172. Authority for the Sabbath

Present Truth, June 4, 1903

So long as a seventh day of rest is observed, it matters not a bit which of the seven days it is; but it is wise to conform to general custom, for the sake of convenience and order; every day is a seventh day.

THIS statement of the case is worthy of consideration, for it presents a very common idea of the Sabbath question. The only thing that should concern us is to know the exact truth, and not to mistake conjecture for positive evidence. We are told that

“...a seventh day of rest ought to be observed, but that it makes no difference what day it is.”

Query: How does anybody know that a regular rest day ought to be observed? The idea is quite prevalent among certain nations, but what gave rise to by? Let us see if we can find out.

Someone will say that reason teaches it. But no one has exceeded the ancient Greeks and Romans in acuteness of intellect or power of reasoning, yet they never had the idea of a weekly rest day. They had innumerable holidays,—festival days,—when those who were able to do so gave themselves up to amusement and revelry, but there was no thought of cessation of labor. Those who went to the greatest length in the observance of the holidays, were the ones who did little or no work, while for the laboring class there was no respite.

Such a thing as a Sabbath day is not and never has been known among what are termed heathen nations. This disposes also of the supposition that physical reasons are sufficient to account for the weekly rest day. The Chinese are diligent toilers, yet they have never learned the necessity of a weekly rest day. It is the same with other heathen peoples. So then it is a fact that by far the greater number of people on earth not only do not observe a



weekly rest day, but do not recognize the existence of such a thing.

Whence, then, comes the idea of the necessity for a weekly rest day? The only answer that can be given is that it comes from the Bible. Where the Bible has no place, the weekly rest day is unknown. The fourth commandment enjoins it, and gives its origin as well. Here it is:

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

<sup>9</sup> Six days shall you labor, and do all your work:

<sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates:

<sup>11</sup> 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.

Here is the original authority for the observance of a rest day. Whatever ideas men may have about such a day, the idea that there should be a weekly rest day at all sprang from this source, and from this alone. Now the question must arise,

“Since it is to the Bible that we owe our knowledge of the fact that a weekly rest day ought to be observed, why should we not also depend solely on the Bible for our knowledge of all the particulars concerning it?”

Why should men learn from the Bible that a rest day ought to be observed, and then consult custom, or their own taste or convenience, as to how and when it shall be observed? Such a course is manifestly inconsistent in the highest degree.

### **The Definite Sabbath Day**

Note well that in the commandment there is nothing said about “a seventh day of rest.” The language is very definite.

## Exodus 20

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day is the Sabbath.

<sup>11</sup> In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.

The idea of an indefinite Sabbath, regulated by custom, is utterly foreign to the Scriptures.

Just before the commandments were proclaimed from Sinai, the children of Israel were given manna for their food.<sup>633</sup> Six days in the week it fell, but on the Sabbath none was to be found. On each of the first five days only enough for the day's supply was to be gathered, and if more was gathered, and it was kept till the next day,

Exodus 16

20 ...it bred worms and stank;

—but on the sixth day twice the usual amount was to be gathered, and a supply laid up for the Sabbath day, in which case it did not spoil, but kept sweet. By this series of miracles, which was kept up for forty years, the Lord showed His regard for the Sabbath day; and at the same time He effectually guarded against the idea that the day of the Sabbath is to be settled by the caprice or custom of men.

The reader can see at a glance how impossible it was for any of the Israelites to get the idea that the Sabbath is an indefinite day. They might rebel against it, and disregard it, but they knew very well that the Sabbath was fixed by the Lord himself, and not left to man; custom has nothing to do with it.

After the Babylonian captivity the Jews became very strict in the outward observance of the Sabbath, even going far beyond the commandment. They often presumed to rebuke Jesus for what they termed His violation of the day. On one occasion He healed a man on the Sabbath day, and the Jews murmured. That day was the seventh day of the week. If the Sabbath is any day that man

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<sup>633</sup> See *Exodus* 16.

may choose, what an opportunity that was to enlighten the Jews. Did He tell them that it made no difference what day was observed, if only a seventh part of time were kept? Not at all. He simply said,

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>12</sup> It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days,

—thus recognizing the definite Sabbath day, but showing that He had not violated it. Christ was crucified on the day before the Sabbath;

### **Luke 23**

<sup>54</sup> That day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

<sup>55</sup> And the women also which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid.

<sup>56</sup> And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day *according to the commandment*.

### **Luke 24**

<sup>1</sup> Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared.

This first day of the week was the day immediately following the Sabbath day, on which they rested, “according to the commandment,” for the record in *Mark* says that...

### **Mark 16**

<sup>1</sup> When the Sabbath was past,...

<sup>2</sup> Very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre;

—and the record by *Matthew* is still more definite, saying that it was...

### **Matthew 28**

<sup>1</sup> In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.

What do we learn from these texts? This: that the Sabbath day, “according to the commandment,” is the day before “the first day of the week.” The day before “the first day of the week” must be “the seventh day of the week,” since there are but seven days in a week. Therefore we have the fact, stated by Inspiration, that the Sabbath day “according to the commandment” is *the seventh day of the week*.

Moreover, to make the matter more sure, we are told that even “very early in the morning the first day of the week” the Sabbath is already “past.” No matter how early one rises in the morning the first day of the week, he will be too late to find the Sabbath day; it passes before the first day begins.

If one regards the Bible as of no authority, that is another matter. We have no commission to prove the truth of the Bible, for it is its own evidence; but to those who regard the Bible as the Word of God, the evidence above given, although brief, must be conclusive. The Spirit of God expressly declares that the Sabbath “according to the commandment” is the day before the first day of the week, namely, the seventh day of the week; and the words of Christ are,

#### **Luke 16**

<sup>17</sup> It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one little of the law to fail.

### **Custom**

The Bible declares that...

#### **Jeremiah 10**

<sup>3</sup> ...the customs of the people are vain.

The command is,

#### **Exodus 23**

<sup>2</sup> You shall not follow a multitude to do evil.

Again we read:

## **Hosea 10**

<sup>13</sup> You have ploughed wickedness, you have reaped iniquity; you have eaten the fruit of lies; because you did trust in your way, in the multitude of your mighty men.

The correctness of a course is not determined by the number who follow it. In the days of Noah the multitude were opposed to the truth. Noah was in what would be termed “a hopeless minority;” and if the truth of his preaching could have been settled by a popular vote, the flood would never have come. Nevertheless it did come, because the word of the Lord had said so.

When Christ was on earth,

## **John 1**

<sup>11</sup> He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

He was rejected by the church. The question was,

## **John 7**

<sup>48</sup> Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in Him?

They had not, with the exception of one or two who believed secretly, and the fact that they had not was considered sufficient evidence that He was an impostor; yet He was the Son of God, although...

## **Isaiah 53**

<sup>3</sup> ...despised and rejected of men.

There is custom, however, that we are permitted to follow, and that is the custom of Christ; for:

## **1 John 2**

<sup>6</sup> He that says he abides in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

He left us an example, that we should follow His steps.<sup>634</sup> Of Him we read that after His baptism and temptation,

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<sup>634</sup> 1 Peter 2:21.

**Luke 4**

<sup>1</sup> ...being full of the Holy Ghost,

<sup>16</sup> He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Said He,

**John 15**

<sup>10</sup> I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

Reader, whose custom will you follow? the vain custom of the world, or the righteous custom of the Lord Jesus Christ?

## 173. The Best Life Insurance

Present Truth, June 11, 1903

Is it compatible with the faith, duty, and belief of a Christian man to insure his life, and to save a sufficiency for his old age?

Also, How can a Christian justify himself in keeping a Sabbath not ordained by God, and thereby seemingly breaking His holy law?

Why should it be wrong for a Christian to insure his life, and yet not be wrong to insure his property or business?

**Y**OU have asked three questions, but the two relating to insurance properly go together, and I will take them first. The answer to them involves practical, applied Christianity, and I expect that many will say,

### **John 6**

<sup>60</sup> This is a hard saying; who can hear it?

—but if I give no opinion of my own, but simply set forth plain, Gospel principles, the controversy, if anybody has one, will have to be with principles and logic, and not with me. My business is only to declare the Word of God, regardless of custom or convenience; whether it shall be accepted or not rests wholly with the reader.

Is it compatible with the faith of a Christian to insure his life?

That depends entirely on how much faith the Christian has. If he has faith as a grain of mustard seed, that is, faith that lives and grows, and that leads him to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,<sup>635</sup> he will not insure his life; for such texts as these will be to him reality, and not mere empty sound:

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<sup>635</sup> *Matthew 4:4.*

### **Psalms 37**

- <sup>25</sup> I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.
- <sup>26</sup> He is ever merciful, and lends; and his seed is blessed.
- <sup>27</sup> Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.
- <sup>3</sup> Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.
- <sup>4</sup> Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.
- <sup>5</sup> Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.
- <sup>18</sup> The Lord knows the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be for ever.
- <sup>19</sup> They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

### **Psalms 33**

- <sup>18</sup> Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy;
- <sup>19</sup> To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

### **Psalms 103**

- <sup>1</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.
- <sup>2</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:
- <sup>3</sup> Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;
- <sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies;
- <sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your mouth [literally, your age] with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

### **Psalms 116**

- <sup>6</sup> The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He helped me.
- <sup>7</sup> Return unto your rest, O my soul; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.
- <sup>8</sup> For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
- <sup>9</sup> I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.



### **Psalms 118**

<sup>8</sup> It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

<sup>9</sup> It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

<sup>13</sup> You have thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but the Lord helped me.

<sup>14</sup> The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

<sup>15</sup> The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.

<sup>16</sup> The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.

<sup>17</sup> I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

### **Matthew 6**

<sup>31</sup> Take no thought [be not anxious], saying, What shall we eat; or, What shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed?

<sup>32</sup> (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.

<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

<sup>34</sup> Take therefore no thought [be not anxious] for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

But why should I quote farther? I might go on indefinitely with Scripture to the same import. Take the Book and read for yourself, and then say if those to whom it is said,

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>3</sup> You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,

—and,

### **John 14**

<sup>19</sup> ...because I live, you shall live also,

—can with faith in God's word insure their lives. Is not life insurance in reality saying that one cannot trust the promises of God? You have asked if a man should not "save a sufficiency for his old age." I have never read anything in the Bible to that effect. Let the texts already quoted answer.

## **Matthew 6**

<sup>34</sup> Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

<sup>19</sup> Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

<sup>20</sup> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

## **Luke 12**

<sup>33</sup> Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fades not.

I know what you are waiting to say. You would tell me that if I am using these texts against life insurance, consistency demands that I oppose one's working for one's daily bread. There you are mistaken. The same Book that tells us not to be worried over the future, and not to lay up money, also tells us to labor with our hands. But two things must be remembered:

One is that we do not work to earn something for the future, that is, to "earn a living," but we work because activity is the law of life, and as a token of thanksgiving for the living which God has already given us. God gives us a living long years before we could possibly do anything to earn it; therefore we do not have to work in order to live, but live in order to work.

The other thing that must be remembered is that work is not to be compared with gambling.

"What!" you exclaim, "You would not class insurance with gambling, would you?"

What else can you call it? Is it not a game of chance, especially property insurance? Only one thing is sure, and that is that the insurance company, like the faro bank,<sup>636</sup> always gains. To be sure losses are sometimes paid, and so are all gambling debts paid; but

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<sup>636</sup> Faro bank (or Farobank) is a late 17<sup>th</sup> century French card game involving banking and gambling.

who pays them? If insurance is paid on your property, whose money is it? Do the insurance men take it out of their own pockets? Not by any means, the money paid to you is a portion of that paid in by people who will never receive anything for it, just as in a lottery; and you are taking money which does not belong to you, because you have not given any equivalent for it. These are simple, plain facts; you can settle it for yourself.

Property insurance has even less justification than life insurance, inasmuch as the life is more than the meat, and the body than raiment. But life assurance is far better than life insurance; that is, life assured to one by God, the Author of it, is better than money paid by men after life is gone.

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>4</sup> A living dog is better than a dead lion.

A live man with nothing is infinitely better off than a dead man with thousands; and they who trust in the Lord have the promise of life not only for a time, but for evermore. Read again the texts already quoted, and tell me what use a man with that Word has for insurance by any earthly company.

### **Jeremiah 45**

<sup>5</sup> Do you seek great things for yourself? seek them not; for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, says the Lord; but your life will I give unto you for a prey in all places whither you go.

There is one objection that I will anticipate, because I remember it was once put to me when I had written something on insurance. Someone thought to rebut the truth, and overwhelm me with confusion, by naming certain Christians with whom I was quite closely connected, who insured. Well, what of it? Truth does not depend on the actions of any man. If I myself practiced insurance, that would not nullify the argument, although it would convict me of inconsistency. If every Christian engaged in it, that would not make it right, nor would it be any valid excuse for you and me to do the same. Our business is not to apologize for any-

body, or to condemn anybody, but to set forth the truth, which needs no apology, and which cannot be condemned.

The other question is quickly disposed of. You ask how a Christian man can justify himself in keeping a Sabbath not ordained by God. All I can say is, You must ask those who keep a day that God has not appointed. I do not know.

# 174. The Sabbath of the Lord

Present Truth, June 18, 1903

I am convinced that the seventh day is the only true Sabbath, and that I ought to keep it. Can you provide me with work that will enable me to do so, or tell me where I can obtain it?

**T**HIS is a sample of letters that we occasionally receive from our readers. The question shows that the questioner does not yet really know the Sabbath and its Lord.

The Sabbath of the Lord, the seventh day of the week, on which the Lord rested after having created the heavens and earth in six days, is the memorial of God's creative power. It is the sign of the power by which He makes men free.

## **Romans 1**

<sup>16</sup> The Gospel...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.

The power of God is seen in the things that are made.<sup>637</sup> So the Sabbath is the sign of God's power to save. Therefore he who knows the Sabbath as God has given it, has no need to ask for the way to be made easy for him to keep it, because in the keeping of it he finds the way. It marks the measure of the power of God, who can make a way through the midst of the sea.<sup>638</sup>

## **Christianity and Heathenism**

The difference between the two is that the first is trust in a God who cannot be seen, while the second must have a god which can be seen. The Christian who endures...

## **Hebrews 11**

<sup>27</sup> ...as seeing Him who is invisible,

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<sup>637</sup> *Romans 1:20.*

<sup>638</sup> *Isaiah 51:10.*

—does not need to see the way before him; but the heathen, who cannot get along without a god that his natural eyes can see, must be able to see the end before he will begin, since he has to walk alone. The one who must “see his way” before he will begin to walk, is the same as the one who must see his god. If the Israelites had insisted on seeing their way before they proceeded to cross the Red Sea or the Jordan, they would never have reached the promised land.

The Saviour, after showing how God feeds the birds, and clothes the grass, and pointing out that He will much more clothe us, said:

**Matthew 6 [RV]**

<sup>31</sup> Be not anxious, therefore, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

<sup>32</sup> For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.

<sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

In these words the Lord shows us that Christianity means trust, while distrust is heathenism.

## **Death Does Not End All**

But someone will say that we do not touch the real point. They do not fear man, but it is a question of life or death. We know that there are many who see their duty to keep the Sabbath of the Lord, but who are deterred by the fact that the keeping of it would almost certainly mean the loss of their situation. One man wrote to us:

“The thought of hearing my children cry for bread is a very great difficulty in my mind.”

We sincerely sympathize with such, and we know that there are many. But when such ones see the Sabbath not merely as a duty, but as a blessed privilege, as the introduction to the Lord himself, who owns the earth and its fullness, such difficulties will vanish.

It is indeed a sad thing to hear children cry for bread; but He who...

### **Psalm 147**

<sup>9</sup> ...gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry,

–will not disregard the cry of children. The Sabbath, which rests on God’s word, carries with it all the promises of God’s Word to support the man who embraces it. It is the great test of trust in God’s word, and is thus the great seal of Christianity.

But would you counsel a man with a large family depending on him, to begin to keep the Sabbath when it will mean the loss of his sole means of earning a living?

We would simply counsel a man to obey the word of the Lord, and to trust in the promises of the Lord of the Sabbath. God has said that He knows what we need, and that He cares more for us than earthly parents care for their children. The question is,

“Do we believe Him?”

A man must believe Him sufficiently to trust his life in His hands, or else his observance of the seventh day would not be true Sabbath-keeping. The man who says,

“I will keep the Sabbath if you will provide me with employment whereby I can make a living,”

–does not yet know what the Sabbath is, and therefore could not keep it. A man might as well not profess to keep the Sabbath, as to profess to keep it while trusting in man instead of in God. No one but God can ensure a man a living. Everything comes from God. Even the wicked derive their support from Him.

### **Acts 17**

<sup>25</sup> He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

Now since He provides even for those who blaspheme His name, is it not reasonable to suppose that He will care for His own? We may reason thus:

“All these years I have been disobeying God, yet He has fed me; surely He will not cast me off now when I turn to Him to obey Him.”

Let it be remembered, however, that the promises of God are not simply for this life.

### **1 Timothy 4**

<sup>8</sup> Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is, to come.

But while God has promises for the present life, He has not promised that it shall continue for ever. In other words, He has not promised immortality before the coming of Christ. He has had faithful followers in all ages, but except in a few cases they are all dead. Let no one think therefore that it is an absolute necessity that this present life should be preserved at all hazards. Jesus said,

### **Matthew 16**

<sup>25</sup> Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

<sup>26</sup> For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

God alone knows the life and times of men; and when He is willing that one of His servant's should cease from labor, it is well. So if by any possibility a man should starve to death as a consequence of serving the Lord, that would not be the worst thing that could befall him, although it would be the first time such a thing ever happened.

### **Psalms 37**

<sup>25</sup> I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.



Although God does not allow His servants to starve to death, He does suffer them to die for His sake. Thousands of men, with families depending on them, have died at the stake rather than disobey God. Their names and memories are honored; yet many who honor them will refuse to serve the Lord if it means inconvenience. Men discourse eloquently of how their fathers died for the truth's sake; yet they themselves think that they cannot serve the Lord if it will cost them anything.

Now all this talk about people's not being able to serve God, because they are likely to lose their living if they do, is really an outgrowth of the heathen idea that death ends all. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, because he felt that he was about to die, and he thought,

### **Genesis 25**

<sup>32</sup> What good will this birthright do me?

He had no conception of any inheritance beyond the grave. But the promises of God are for this present life only to the end that men may...

### **1 Timothy 6**

<sup>12</sup> ...lay hold on eternal life.

The man who dies in the service of God, gains his life in losing it. God is the living God, and He gives life. His servants know that the present life is of no profit whatever, except as it is the means of gaining the life to come; and if they lose this in gaining that, they have got full value out of it.

So today the Word of the Lord says to people as it did of old,

### **Joshua 24**

<sup>15</sup> Choose you this day whom you will serve.

Happy is the man who can say in the face of the greatest difficulties, and even of death itself,

<sup>15</sup> ...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!

## 175. The One Thing Needful

Present Truth, June 25, 1903

I have read with pleasure and much profit for two years now, the *Present Truth*, especially the "Editor's Private Corner." I have a small Bible class every Tuesday in connection with a mission, and a week ago we were reading the second chapter of *James*. The 25<sup>th</sup> verse seemed rather difficult to some:

"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way."

Could you explain how Rahab was justified in telling an untruth in order to protect the spies, as recorded in *Joshua* 2:4? We should be thankful for light on this subject.

A CLOSER study of the text, and of the transaction to which it refers, and some knowledge of the condition of the people concerned, will clear away the difficulty. Note that the text does not say that Rahab was justified in telling an untruth. It says that she was justified by works. This may seem like a distinction without any difference, inasmuch as that which she did involved the telling of a lie; but there is a difference, nevertheless.

The topic under consideration in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of *James* is, "Faith and Works." The Apostle is not depreciating faith, as some have supposed; but is showing the difference between real and pretended faith. Real faith works; pretended faith does nothing. It is by works that faith is shown to be perfect. The harlot Rahab had real faith, and she showed it by her action. Now men are justified by faith, and therefore she is considered to be justified by the works which demonstrated her faith.

It should be borne in mind that the harlot Rahab was a heathen. She had all her life lived in the midst of the very blackest heathenism. Now it is a well-known fact that among the heathen nations lying is not considered a sin.

Indeed, among some ancient people lying was cultivated as a fine art, the crime consisting only in being found out. Some of the wisest philosophers taught that it was virtuous to lie, if one's ends could be furthered by that means. Consequently, to the harlot Rahab, an uninstructed heathen, her lie was by no means incongruous with her faith in the God of Israel. She believed that God was leading Israel, and that He would destroy the Canaanites, and that only in Him was there salvation. She showed her faith in the only way that she knew, and it was accepted. It was perfect faith, but uninstructed. So far as her state of knowledge was concerned, it was the same to her as though she had shown her faith by the purest works.

The Apostle James confines himself closely to his topic, not thinking it necessary to distract the minds of the readers from the great point before him, by turning aside to note the obvious truth that it is wrong to lie. He seized upon the instance of Rahab and the spies to illustrate the truth, and it was not necessary to deliver a homily on the ethics of the transaction.

The great lesson to be taught by the case of Rahab is that God accepts singleness of purpose, even though the person may be very ignorant and degraded. Rahab's faith saved her life, and brought her among the people of Israel, where she could receive perfect instruction in the law of God. Thus the faith of even the most ignorant and sinful heathen brings the soul into contact with God, into God's kingdom, where it can be better instructed.

God does not measure people by the amount of their knowledge, but by their humble submission. As soon as a man is purged from the sin of rebellion, he can be admitted into heaven. The thief, an evil doer all his life, who surrendered himself wholly to the Lord while being executed, was a fit subject for His heavenly kingdom; because, being admitted to it, he would make not the slightest opposition to its laws, but would ever live in perfect harmony with them. The most degraded man in the street who gets a glimpse of God, and cries out with his whole flesh and soul for

more, can be taken to heaven direct from the gutter; while the highly instructed, cultured man, making a great profession, but still bent on having his own way, would be shut out. Thus it was that Christ said to the self-righteous Pharisees:

**Matthew 21**

<sup>31</sup> The publicans and the harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.

This is not, by any means, intended as a defense of immorality, but to show that God looks upon the heart, upon the motive, and not upon the outward show as man judges.

The church, His kingdom on earth, is not a collection of perfect people, a society out of which everybody is to be shut who cannot give a certificate of an absolutely perfect character, but a company of people who are striving for perfection, and have come to Christ to learn of Him.

# 176. An Incorruptible Sacrifice

Present Truth, June 25, 1903

Would you kindly explain *Mark 9:48-49*. In the *Twentieth Century New Testament* it reads,

“Their worm dies not, and the fire is not put out. For it is by fire that everyone will be preserved, just as salt preserves.”

I have seen in the *Present Truth* that fire cannot burn without burning away; but that scripture that they are preserved by fire just as salt preserves, seems altogether contrary to your rendering.

THIS text is one that many stumble over. Yet a little thoughtful study of texts suggested by it will relieve all difficulty. Let us first read the verses in the *Common Version*. Christ is speaking of the time when the wicked shall be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched,

## Mark 9

<sup>48</sup> Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.

<sup>49</sup> For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

In the *Revision* the last clause is omitted, but it is stated in the margin that “many ancient authorities contain it.” It, however, is immaterial to the present study. There is no doubt but that the reference here is to the custom commanded in:

## Leviticus 2

<sup>13</sup> And every oblation of your meat offering shall you season with salt; neither shall you suffer the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your meat offering: with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

Note the expression “the salt of the covenant of your God.” God’s covenant is “an everlasting covenant,” confirmed in Christ. Every sacrifice and oblation offered to God by the Levitical priesthood symbolized Christ,

## Hebrews 9

<sup>14</sup> ...who through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God.

He is the...

## 1 Peter 1

<sup>19</sup> ...lamb without blemish, and without spot.

Therefore, it was most necessary that there should be no taint of corruption in any of the sacrifices. Now it is well known that the one characteristic of salt is that of a preservative. So, although the sacrifices were offered immediately on being killed, salt was added to them, in order that the slightest taint of corruption might be avoided. For it is a fact that flesh begins to decay the very instant the life leaves it; although the decay may not be perceptible to the senses. It was God's purpose and declaration that His Holy One should not see corruption; and this fact was evidently kept before the minds of the priests and people by the salting of the sacrifices which they offered.

Now come to the case under consideration.

## Mark 9

<sup>49</sup> Every one shall be salted with fire.

It is commonly assumed that this refers to the destruction of the wicked; but a little thought will show that it is just the opposite. It is not the wicked, but the righteous, who are to be salted with fire. For, first, that which is already corrupt is never salted. No one ever wishes to preserve such matter, and it could not be done if one did wish to. Salt does not restore matter that is already corrupt, but preserves that which is sound and wholesome. But the wicked who suffer the judgment of God are corrupt.

Secondly, it must not be forgotten that it was the *sacrifice* that was salted. Now the wicked are not offered as a sacrifice; but God's people offer their bodies...

## Romans 12

<sup>1</sup> ...a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

It is, therefore, highly fitting to speak of them as being salted with fire; for the same power which destroys the wicked as refuse matter, not fit to be offered in sacrifice, does really preserve the righteous who...

### **Isaiah 33**

<sup>14</sup> ...dwell with the devouring fire,...amid everlasting burnings.

The righteous are to be preserved as an everlasting sacrifice to God, holy and incorruptible; while the wicked are to be preyed upon by the worm of corruption, and consumed by the devouring fire, which always destroys that which is corruptible.

In this connection it may not be out of place to say a word about the *Twentieth Century New Testament*, for I have frequently been asked about it. I can say that it is wholly unreliable as a translation, and not worth a place in anybody's library. Whoever depends upon it is leaning upon a broken stick. It is true that in the verse before us a correct *idea* is given; but it is a commentary, and not a translation. Nothing corresponding to the words,

“For it is by fire that everyone will be preserved just as salt preserves,”

—can be found in the Greek text There is no trace of anything like that sentence. It is a marvel how any lover of the word of God can ever bring himself to read that twentieth century perversion of it. Its light, slangy, loose, and irreverent language presents in many cases but a caricature of the sacred text, and cannot be other than repulsive to one who has fed upon the dignified and majestic language of the *Common Version*.

For instance, who that has ever read the simple and refined words of command at the raising of the daughter of Jairus:

### **Mark 5**

<sup>41</sup> Damsel, I say unto you, Arise,

—can ever read the coarse rendering of the *Twentieth Century New Testament*,

“Little girl, I am speaking to you, get up,”

—without feeling that the one who penned those words was either desirous of bringing the sacred narrative into contempt; or else utterly lacking in the sense of beauty and dignity of language?

Students of the Bible, who do not read the languages in which it was originally written, cannot be too careful about following so-called “new translations.” In many cases these seem to be only the product of a desire to get something different from the old accepted translation; and, in most instances, these differences are at the expense of the integrity of the text.

The *Common Version* is not, by any means, an absolutely perfect translation; for an absolutely perfect translation by man is impossible; but it is far more correct than most of the versions which are put forth as improvements. If it be read in connection with the *Revision* as a commentary on certain passages which modern scholarship and a better text has enabled the translators to make more clear, one will get, in the main, as correct an idea of the original language inspired by the Holy Ghost, as it is possible to get in English.



## 177. Editor's Private Corner

Present Truth, June 25, 1903

FROM questions that have been asked, we know that many who have sent questions wonder why the answers to them do not immediately appear. Almost everyone who asks a question requests that it be answered in "the next issue of the paper."

Our correspondents of course do not know how many such requests are received every week. Each one imagines himself to be the only questioner; but as a matter of fact, we receive one, and sometimes several questions every day.

Now when it is remembered that the paper is printed but once a week, and that usually not more than one can be dealt with satisfactorily in one number, it is evident that some must be put off. But they are all saved, and it is the intention to give every one due attention. So do not be discouraged, but keep on sending.

It is but just to say that questions are not always answered in the order that they are received. In answering, the editor selects from the mass the one that appeals most to him at the moment, and which he thinks will best serve the interests of both paper, and people at that time.

Please have patience; and if you do not see your own question answered at once, remember that some other person is being satisfied, even if you are not, and, with thousands of others, profit by what is said to that other one's question.

## 178. Anarchy Against Christianity

Present Truth, July 2, 1903

As a constant reader of *Present Truth*, I shall be very much obliged if you will give me your answer to this question: "Can an anarchist be a believer in Christ?"

**A**N ANARCHIST can certainly become a believer in Christ, just as anybody else can; but faith in Christ will put an end to his anarchistic sentiments.

The word "anarchy" means *without rule*, and an anarchist is commonly understood to be one who is opposed to all government and law; but by faith in Christ we establish the law, instead of making it void.<sup>639</sup>

It is true that this statement in *Romans* 3:31 refers specifically to the law of God; but that does not alter the fact that faith in Christ puts an end to all tendency to anarchy; because whoever is loyal to God, will seek the peace of the country where he dwells. The most law-abiding citizens in any country are those who are most faithful to God.

Reference has been made to anarchy in its completest form, as opposed to all order; but there are, of course, various grades of anarchists. There are some who are not opposed to government in itself, but to oppression, and to the arbitrary exercise of power, which in itself is in reality anarchy. And since some people know no other government than such absolutism, they think that in their opposition to it they are opposed to all government; and hence they style themselves "Anarchists."

The true Christian, however, will never raise insurrection against even such a government. He will not lift up the standard of rebellion on any account; he will not resist evil<sup>640</sup>; but will, for

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<sup>639</sup> *Romans* 3:31.

<sup>640</sup> *Matthew* 5:39.

conscience' sake, endure grief, suffering wrongfully,<sup>641</sup> waiting for the coming of Christ to right all wrongs<sup>642</sup>; for:

### **James 1**

<sup>20</sup> The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.

Take, for example, the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Romans*, where we have the exhortation to...

### **Romans 13**

<sup>1</sup> ...be subject to...the powers that be;

—and the statement that:

<sup>2</sup> Whosoever resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

The same apostle gave this instruction:

### **Titus 3**

<sup>1</sup> Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates.

And Peter wrote:

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>13</sup> Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

<sup>14</sup> Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

These things are written for the guidance of believers in Christ; and so it is evident that whoever lifts up his hand against kings and rulers is not a follower of Christ. Christ's own example is the standard. He would not oppose the government, even to save His own life from being taken by injustice and oppression.

### **1 John 2**

<sup>6</sup> He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

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<sup>641</sup> *Romans 13:5; 1 Peter 2:19.*

<sup>642</sup> *James 5:4-8.*

He who goes directly contrary to Christ's way is certainly not a follower of Christ.

It is not enough to say that the government is bad, and the rulers arbitrary and tyrannical, in order to justify anarchy. The Apostles Peter and Paul, who exhorted people to obey magistrates, and to honor the king, and to be subject to principalities and powers, lived in the days of Nero, one of the most despotic, wicked, and lawless ruler who ever lived. If subjection to such a ruler as that was necessary to the perfection of Christianity, it is absolutely certain that no place ever can be found where a Christian can raise the standard of rebellion and still be consistent with his profession.

## 179. Three Days and The Third Day

Present Truth, July 2, 1903

I had a conversation the other day with a friend of mine, who says that Christ was crucified on a Wednesday, and that He lay in the grave three days and three nights, rising from the grave on a Sabbath. *Matthew* 12:40 was quoted as proof.

I cannot agree with him, as I understand from God's Word that He died on a Friday, resting on the Sabbath day, and rising on the first day of the week.

I would like your view. Please answer through *Present Truth*, as I know there are others who are puzzled about the same question.

**Y**OUR friend is unquestionably correct in saying that Christ lay in the grave "three days and three nights," for His words recorded in *Matthew* 12:40, declare that He would. That text says,

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>40</sup> As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The only point to be decided is the sense in which the Scripture uses the term "three days and three nights;" and this can easily be determined.

It is commonly assumed that the reference to Jonah in the whale's belly fixes the time. But the text simply says that Christ should be three days and three nights in the earth, just "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish's belly;" and we must go to other Scriptures than that to learn the use of the term.

On several occasions Jesus foretold His crucifixion and resurrection, and each time He specified the length of the period covered by those events. For instance, in *Matthew* 16:21 we read:

## **Matthew 16**

<sup>21</sup> From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Compare this verse with the one first quoted. Both verses refer to the same event, and therefore it is evident that the expression “three days and three nights” is exactly equivalent to “the third day.” That is to say that, although it is said that He should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, he was, nevertheless, to rise the third day.

Now read *Luke 13:32*. Jesus, when they said that Herod would kill Him, said:

## **Luke 13**

<sup>32</sup> Go, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

This is not an isolated instance. In *Esther 4:16*, and *5:1*, we read that the queen said to Mordecai:

## **Esther 4**

<sup>16</sup> Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast you for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law.

## **Esther 5**

<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king’s house,

—and so forth. Suppose it had been Friday when Jesus sent His message to Herod, or when Esther spoke to Mordecai; then, “to-day and tomorrow, and the third day,” would reach only to Sunday. And that would be just what we would mean by the expression “the third day.” It includes one whole day, with parts of the first, and third.

Yet in the Scripture, as plainly seen by the texts quoted, these parts of the two days, and the whole of the intervening day, are spoken of as “three days and three nights.” It is plain, therefore, that the latter expression is simply a colloquial term, and not an exact definition of time.

Now read the last verse of the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of *Luke*, and the first verse of the 24<sup>th</sup>, and the case is clear. Speaking of the time of the crucifixion, Luke says:

### **Luke 23**

<sup>54</sup> And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

<sup>55</sup> And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid.

<sup>56</sup> And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

### **Luke 24**

<sup>1</sup> Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared.

I know that some people claim that the Sabbath spoken of in verse 54 means the Passover ceremonial Sabbath. But there is no evidence of this. There is but one day which in the Scriptures is known as the Sabbath, and that is the seventh day. If a temporary or a ceremonial Sabbath were referred to, that would be indicated. In the absence of any qualifying term, the word “the Sabbath” must be considered to refer to the seventh day. So we have Friday as the “today”; Sabbath as the “tomorrow;”—and the first day of the week as the “third day.” And those three days, during parts of which Jesus lay in the grave, are in the Jewish idiom spoken of as “three days and three nights,” just as in the case of Esther.

The case is not one of any vital importance as regards the Sabbath. The vital thing is that Jesus was raised from the dead; and the time in which He should lie in the grave is referred to only for the purpose of establishing the fact that He did rise at the speci-

fied time. If He had risen on the Sabbath day, as some claim, it would have added nothing to the sacredness of that day; and His rising on the first day does not impart any sacredness to it.

Nowhere in the Bible is it intimated that any day is to be observed in memory of Christ's resurrection. But we do have a memorial of that event in baptism, as we read in *Romans* 6:3-5; *Colossians* 2:12.

Those who observe Sunday in memory of Christ's resurrection, have two memorials of that event, unless they substitute sprinkling, which signifies nothing, for the most striking and significant act of immersion; and they have no memorial of God's new creation, which, if it had ever been kept in mind, would have prevented the fall; and which is restored by the death and resurrection of Jesus.



# 180. Souls Calling for Vengeance

Present Truth, July 9, 1903

Suppose we say the soul is not immortal till the resurrection, what can we say about *Revelation* 6:9-11? I should like to hear further on this subject.

YOU say, "Suppose we say the soul is not immortal till the resurrection," but it is not left for us to say, or to suppose. The Scripture tells us that:

## 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>51</sup> ...we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

This is positive, and leaves no room for speculation. Now the fact being settled that immortality is obtained only at the coming of Christ, any text which seems to imply the contrary must be known to be exactly in harmony with this. That is to say, the Scriptures are never self-contradictory, and every portion of Scripture is true in itself; but some subjects are plainly and positively set forth in some portions, and are only incidentally referred to in others; or they are not referred to at all. It is evident that the passages that contain incidental reference must be in harmony with the positive statement. And, further, we are never warranted in drawing inferences from any text, in opposition to the plain statement of some other text.

Now knowing that immortality is not conferred until the resurrection, let us read:

## Revelation 6

<sup>9</sup> And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

<sup>10</sup> And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

<sup>11</sup> And white robes were given unto every one of them: and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

This is one of a series of seven views given to the prophet John. John was in the Spirit, and was looking into heaven, seeing and hearing things that were to come to pass. In this particular line he saw a book held in the hand of God, sealed with seven seals; and as each seal was broken a scene was presented to him. As we read the description of the opening of those seals, we find that all the events portrayed take place on the earth. This is most clearly stated in connection with the second, third, fourth, and sixth seals.<sup>643</sup> The apostle, looking into heaven, was given a vision of things to come to pass on the earth.

Now since the events of all the other seals pertain to the earth, it is certainly unwarranted to assume that the scenes of the fifth seal are in heaven. This assumption, which comes from the careless reading of the text, is the cause of all the misunderstanding concerning the “souls under the altar.”

The altar spoken of is evidently the altar of sacrifice. The souls that cry out are represented as under the altar, just as they have fallen down slain; but nothing of that kind is in the heavens. It is only on earth that such things occur.

It is evident that the word “altar” here is used in the figurative sense that is so common even now; as when it is said that such and such a one was sacrificed on the altar of his country. No one thinks that the man referred to was laid on a literal altar, and con-

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<sup>643</sup> See *Revelation* 6:3-8, 12.

sumed. But the souls here spoken of had in their lifetime offered their bodies a living sacrifice to God<sup>644</sup>; and their death was but the consummation of the sacrifice by which they witnessed to the truth.

This confirms the statement that an altar, such as that described in connection with the tabernacle of Moses, is not referred to. We are called upon to offer our bodies a living sacrifice. A sacrifice implies an altar. Paul said, in writing to the brethren:

### **Philippians 2**

<sup>17</sup> If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

And just before his death he writes:

### **2 Timothy 4**

<sup>6</sup> I am now ready to be offered.

The Apostle Paul was thus sacrificed, and he is one of the souls under the altar; yet his head was cut off by a Roman sword, and his blood and body fell upon the ground, as was the case with thousands of others.

The idea that the glorified saints occupy themselves continually with asking for vengeance is most repugnant; and it is strange that any Christian ever could have imagined such a thing. It is an illustration both of the careless way in which the Bible is read, and also of the desperate efforts to build up a theory that has once been accepted. The idea is handed down from generation to generation, and people exert themselves, not to investigate it, to see whether or not it is true, but to find something that will defend it. And so they impulsively and rashly seize upon any text of Scripture which sounds as though it might favor it, and press it into service.

Christ's followers, even on earth, are commanded to pray for them that despitefully use them and persecute them,<sup>645</sup> and there-

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<sup>644</sup> *Romans 12:1.*

<sup>645</sup> *Matthew 5:44.*

fore it is most certain that they will not begin to call for vengeance upon them as soon as they get into heaven. Nevertheless, it is true that the souls of the saints—the lives that have been poured out—do cry to God for vengeance. He says,

### **Romans 12**

<sup>19</sup> Vengeance is mine, I will repay.

He marks every act of injustice, every deed of oppression, every persecution, every drop of blood shed for the truth's sake, and will certainly bring the perpetrators of such offenses to justice.

When Cain killed Abel ...

### **1 John 3**

<sup>12</sup> ...because his own deeds were evil and his brother's were righteous,

—God said,

### **Genesis 4**

<sup>10</sup> The voice of your brother's blood cries unto me from the ground.

It is thus that the blood, in which is the life, the soul of every slaughtered saint cries to God for vengeance, which will be manifested,

### **2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>7</sup> ...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> In flaming fire.

And this vengeance will not now be long delayed.

## Back Page

Present Truth, July 9, 1903

SEVERAL persons have within the past few months sent questions to the "Private Corner," asking light on "the sin against the Holy Ghost," referring, of course, among other things, to *Hebrews* 6:4-6.

These have been informed by letter that in due time the studies in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* would come to that text, when the subject would be considered in the "Bible Class."

We have now come to that subject, and we wish to call the special attention of those who have been perplexed over it to the fact that it is taken up in this week's study.

## 181. An Irretrievable Fall

Present Truth, July 9, 1903

*Hebrews* 6:4-8

Original title: The Bible Class. An Irretrievable Fall

BEFORE reading the verses that we are to study this week, do not fail to read the closing verses of the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Hebrews*, and the opening verses of the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter. Observe that the key-note is progress, and pay particular attention to the connection. To see how the statement beginning with the fourth verse grows out of and depends on the preceding verses, puts one well in the way of understanding that much discussed statement. We are exhorted to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection.

### Hebrews 6

<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

<sup>5</sup> And have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

<sup>6</sup> If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing [or while] they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

<sup>7</sup> For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings fresh herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God:

<sup>8</sup> But that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

### **Questions Calling Special Attention to the Text**

1. What experience does the apostle say that those of whom he speaks have once had?
2. What have they tasted?
3. Of what has this made them partakers?
4. Having been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of what also have they tasted?
5. Through the good Word of God, what do they taste?
6. If such fall away from all this, what is impossible?
7. Why is it impossible to renew them to repentance?
8. When does the earth receive blessing from God?
9. What does God do to the earth, that it may bring forth fruit?
10. What is the just fate of that which remains impervious to all those efforts to bring forth fruit from it?

### **Either Forward or Backward**

The point of the apostle's exhortation is obvious. It is practically this:

“Let us go on, or else we shall fall back into a condition of hopeless indifference, from which it will be impossible to rouse us.”

There is no such thing as standing still and holding the ground already gained. The battle is continually on, and we in ourselves are weaker than the enemy. As long as we advance in the name of the Lord Jesus, nothing can stand against us; but being in Christ

means constant and everlasting growth, and standing still means letting go of Him; therefore it is that as soon as we rest content with any position we have gained, and think to hold it, we are beaten back by the enemy.

### **What Is Impossible?**

There is a great deal of carelessness in reading the Scriptures. One person takes a half glance as he runs past, and from his confused ideas of what he sees, he presumes to tell others what it means. Many who hear, accept this faulty presentation as correct, without troubling themselves to verify it; and so error becomes established and perpetuated.

Now let us note well that this text does *not* say that people who sin after having received the light cannot be forgiven if they repent. What it does say, and everybody can read it for himself, is that certain persons under certain conditions cannot be moved to repentance. This is quite different.

It does not even say that they cannot repent if they would, but that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. They will not repent, however much they are urged thereto. They are in the position of the Scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus said:

#### **John 5**

<sup>40</sup> You will not come to me, that you might have life.

### **From Highest to Lowest**

Do not fail to note that those of whom these things are said have occupied the very highest position possible to man. They have not merely heard the Word of God, and felt the influence of the Holy Spirit, but they have actually fed upon the good Word, and received it into their very being; the heavenly gift—the Holy Spirit—of which they have been partakers, has unfolded the Word to them and in them, to the extent they have been lighted up with its glory, and have tasted, experienced, the powers of the world to

come. In short, they have been raised with Christ, and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places.<sup>646</sup>

They have really “had the light,” not in the sense in which this expression is commonly used, meaning that they have had light presented to them; but they have both seen it and been persuaded by it. They have had the heavenly gift—all that heaven had to bestow—in their possession, and have known it and rejoiced in it.

And now they fall from this high state, and their fall is like that of Lucifer, to the lowest depths. The higher the place from which one falls, the greater the fall. One who falls, from the highest place, falls to the lowest. This is what is involved in the “falling away” spoken of in the text.

Why can they not now be moved to repentance? Because God has no greater light and power to bring to bear upon them, to move them to repentance, than that which they have had and rejected. The case is exactly the same as that presented in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.

## **Hebrews 2**

<sup>3</sup> How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

## **Sinning Willfully in the Knowledge of the Truth**

*Hebrews 10:26* says that:

## **Hebrews 10**

<sup>26</sup> If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins.

This text will of course be taken up again when we come to it in our study of this *Epistle*, but the thought that it presents coincides so exactly with the one we are now studying that it should be noted here.

These texts are often wrested to the destruction of the unlearned and unstable. It is assumed that if the truth has once been preached to a man, and he does not accept it, or, worse still, if he

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<sup>646</sup> *Ephesians* 2:5-6.



has accepted what he has heard, and afterward gives it up, he is thereby condemned to hopeless ruin. That is a terrible error.

Even the brother in the church, who has trespassed, and, who repeatedly rejects admonition, is to be only “as a heathen man, and a publican”<sup>647</sup>; that is, his conversion is to be prayed and hoped for, the same as that of any other heathen man.

Moreover, not everyone who has heard preaching has heard the truth, much less the whole truth. All preachers do not, like Paul, declare...

**Acts 20 [RV]**

<sup>27</sup> ...the whole counsel of God.

Many, also, receive only the form of the truth, and not the spirit of it. They have *truths*, but not **THE TRUTH**. They have taken hold of certain obvious truths; but truth itself has not taken hold of them, and possessed them. They do not have the truth which holds them, and keeps them satisfied; but they for a time merely hold on to the truth. Accordingly, when they let go of it, not very much difference is seen in their lives, even as professing it did not make any marked change in their character. This is the condition of most “professors of religion.”

But it is far different with one who has entered into the secret place of the Most High, and seen its riches for himself. The Gospel that he holds he did not receive on the testimony of any man, but from the Lord himself. He has seen the Lord face to face, and knows whom he has believed. His soul has been warmed and lighted by “the heavenly vision.”<sup>648</sup>

For such a one there is no middle ground. He cannot give up this truth, and still be “a good, moral man.” If, after such experience, he turns back, there is no stopping place for him except among the mockers and blasphemers.

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<sup>647</sup> *Matthew* 18:15-17.

<sup>648</sup> *Acts* 26:19.

The “sinning willfully” of the text, therefore, refers not to sin that a person commits knowing it to be sin; for everybody has done that, and if it were unpardonable, nobody could be saved; but it refers to the willful abandonment of Christ himself, even while, like Lucifer, occupying a place on the very throne of God. That is a glorious position, but a man’s only safety is to abide there.

## Crucifying the Son of God

It is said of those in this hopeless condition that:

### Hebrews 6

<sup>6</sup> ...they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh,

—and that they make a public exhibition of Him, even as, when He was crucified on Calvary, He was exposed to ridicule, and made to suffer every indignity. But could none of those men who crucified Christ be forgiven? Certainly they could; for Christ prayed for them,

### Luke 23

<sup>34</sup> Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

And they might have known. The 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of *Acts* informs us that many of those who had taken part in condemning and crucifying Christ were converted. But note this: they had to cease their work of crucifying Christ, and repent of it, in order to be converted.

It does not outrage our sense of justice, nor is it difficult for us to see that repentance and conversion are incompatible with continued crucifixion of Christ. Who would believe it possible for a man to be in a state of repentance while he still proceeded to drive nails into the hands and feet of Jesus, and to mock Him?

Now our text does not say that certain ones cannot be saved *because* they have crucified the Son of God, but *while* they do it. There is no word in the Greek of this text that corresponds to “seeing that;” but the word meaning crucify again is the principal

form of the verb, indicating present action. The margin of the *Revised Version* has “while.” These men cannot be renewed again to repentance, not because they have crucified the Lord, but because they persist in doing it.

There is not a man on earth, who has not had a share in crucifying the Lord. It was sin that nailed Him to the tree; and everyone who has ever sinned has helped to drive the spikes into His hands and feet. Every day Christ still suffers the agony of crucifixion. The cross is not a thing of a day, but of eternity; but it is sin alone that makes it a thing of torture and anguish. As long as there is sin in the universe, so long will the Lord suffer all the pain indicated by the cross of Calvary. Only when sin ceases, and is blotted out of the universe, will the shame and suffering of the cross cease, and the cross shine forth in all its glory, to be the song of all creation.

### **Showers of Blessing Received and Rejected**

The rain and the snow that come down from heaven and water the earth do not always cause it to bring forth and bud, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater. *Isaiah* 55:10, strictly rendered, says that it returns not to heaven *except* it cause the earth to bring forth and bud. So with the word of life: it returns to heaven only in works of faith and love and deeds of righteousness.

The Spirit of God is the water of life that falls in refreshing showers on the world of mankind.<sup>649</sup> Received and retained, it will be manifested in:

#### **Philippians 1**

<sup>11</sup> ...the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ.

But if those upon whom it falls bring forth only thorns,—the product of the curse,—both they and their works will be consumed; for:

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<sup>649</sup> *Isaiah* 44:3.

### **Isaiah 1 [RV]**

<sup>31</sup> The strong man shall be as tow, and his work as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

And this again shows how men “crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.” The free gift—“the heavenly gift”—has come upon all men to justification of life.<sup>650</sup> Now although “all have sinned,” and it is sin that crucifies Jesus, if we accept and confess His life in us, we are not counted as having crucified Him, since we give unmistakable evidence that “He lives.”<sup>651</sup> It is we who have died, and He lives.

But if we receive Him and yet do not reveal Him in our lives,—that is, if He is known to have entered our house, but is never afterward seen there alive,—we are justly accounted to be His murderers, and...

### **1 Corinthians 11**

<sup>27</sup> ...guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Thank God, that “better things”<sup>652</sup> may be our lot;

### **Lamentations 3**

<sup>31</sup> For the Lord will not cast off for ever;

—but He loves us with “an everlasting love,”<sup>653</sup> and no matter how deeply we have sinned, He still stretches out His hands to us, saying,

### **Jeremiah 3**

<sup>22</sup> Return unto me, and I will heal all your backslidings.

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<sup>650</sup> *Romans 5:18.*

<sup>651</sup> *Hebrews 7:8; Romans 6:10-11.*

<sup>652</sup> *Hebrews 6:9.*

<sup>653</sup> *Jeremiah 31:3.*

## 182. The Lord's Day

Present Truth, July 16, 1903

Do not the words of the beloved apostle recorded in *Revelation* 1:10, sanction the observance of the first day of the week as a day for rest and worship?

THE beloved disciple had been banished to the isle of Patmos,

### **Revelation 1**

<sup>9</sup> ...for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Just when this took place is not known with positive certainty, but it was certainly many years after the ascension of Christ. While there, he had wonderful visions, and this is how he begins the account of them.

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice.

From this we know that there was a certain day known at that time as the Lord's day, and that John, as a faithful follower of Christ, observed it. We also know that if the Lord had a special day for His own then, He must have it still. Let us see if we can find out what day it is. The only place where we can surely find it is the Bible.

In the 58<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Isaiah* we find the Lord's day mentioned in those words:

### **Isaiah 58**

<sup>13</sup> If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words:

<sup>14</sup> Then shall you delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Here, the day which the Lord himself calls, “my holy day,” is “the Sabbath!” Now what day is the Sabbath? The Lord himself tells us this, also:

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

<sup>9</sup> Six days shall you labor, and do all your work:

<sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work.

It is plain that the Sabbath—the seventh day—is the same day that in *Isaiah* is called by the Lord, “my holy day.” With these two texts alone we have found that the Lord’s day is the Sabbath—the seventh day of the week. Therefore the day on which John was in the Spirit, and received visions from God, was the seventh day, the Sabbath.

Thus, to put the matter into compact form: The seventh day is the Sabbath; it is the Sabbath of the Lord; it is a holy day, and is to be kept holy; the Lord himself calls it “my holy day.” John was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day; therefore John was in the Spirit on the Sabbath day.

We have further evidence. At one time Jesus and His disciples went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples being hungry began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. The Pharisees, who were ever on the watch to find something against Jesus, accused His disciples of breaking the Sabbath. There can be no question as to what day of the week this was, for the Pharisees observed the seventh day of the week strictly, that is, in outward form. So when they said,

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>2</sup> Behold, your disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day,

—they had reference only to the seventh day. This is of value, incidentally, as showing what day of the week it is that is called the Sabbath day in the New Testament. But Jesus would not allow that His disciples had done wrong in plucking and eating corn on

the Sabbath day. Still later, on that same day, when about to heal a man, He said,

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>12</sup> It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.

To the Pharisees He said, in defending His disciples from the false charge of Sabbath-breaking:

<sup>7</sup> If you had known what this means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless.

<sup>8</sup> For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.

Since it was the seventh day that the Pharisees professed to keep, and which they charged the disciples with breaking, it was of the seventh day that Jesus declared himself to be the Lord. For,

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>10</sup> The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

How did Jesus come to be Lord of the seventh-day Sabbath? By making it, and setting it apart for man's use. Thus, after the account of the six days of creation, we read:

### **Genesis 2**

<sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

<sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

The One who created was the One who rested on the seventh day. But the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things, as we read in *John* 1:1-3; *Colossians* 1:12-17, and many other places. Christ is the Lord of the seventh-day Sabbath, therefore, by virtue of His being Creator. He says of His people,

## **Ezekiel 20**

<sup>12</sup> I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.

So the Sabbath is a sign that in Christ as Creator we have...

## **1 Corinthians 1**

<sup>30</sup> ...wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Consequently the Sabbath must endure as long as the facts of creation endure; as long as it is a fact that Christ is Creator, and that He has power to redeem. Hear His words on this point:

## **Matthew 5**

<sup>17</sup> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

## **Luke 16**

<sup>17</sup> And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

And though the present heaven and earth pass, they will be created new, and the promise is:

## **Isaiah 66**

<sup>22</sup> For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.

<sup>23</sup> And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, says the Lord.



# 183. What Do You Believe?

Present Truth, July 23 & 30, 1903

**A** CORRESPONDENT has sent us, with a few introductory words, a series of fourteen questions, prefacing each with the inquiry, "Do you believe?"

Before answering them in detail, we wish to say that what we or anybody else may or may not believe is a matter of no consequence to anybody except the individual believer himself; for nobody's belief of a thing makes it more worthy of credence, and unbelief by anybody in the world does not make the thing disbelieved less worthy of belief.

In short, it is a waste of time either to inquire or to tell what this one or that one believes; for our faith must not be based upon some other person's faith, nor be in any way affected by it; but solely on the Word of God.

So in answering these questions we shall make no reference to what we *believe*, but tell simply what we *know* from God's Word. Of course it will be understood that we do not write anything that we do not firmly believe; but the fact that it is so, and not that we believe it, is the reason for setting it forth. We shall answer the questions in order as they come:

## The Divinity of Christ

1. Do you believe that Christ was a God, and the Son of God, or that He was only a good man?

What does the Bible say of Him? and what did He say of himself?

### John 1

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.

He was in the form of God, and equality with God was His by right.<sup>654</sup> He is...

### **Matthew 16**

<sup>16</sup> ...the Christ, the Son of the living God.

He frequently declared that God was His Father, saying on one occasion,

### **John 14**

<sup>9</sup> He that has seen me has seen the Father; and how do you say then, Show us the Father?

The Jews charged Him with making himself God, and He did not deny it, but defended the claim.<sup>655</sup> Finally read what God the Father himself has called Him:

### **Hebrews 1**

<sup>7</sup> Of the angels He says, Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

<sup>8</sup> But unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom.

<sup>10</sup> And, You Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands:

<sup>11</sup> They shall perish; but You remain; and they shall all wax old as does a garment;

<sup>12</sup> And as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and your years shall not fail.

These words God the Father addresses to Jesus Christ. I believe all that; if anybody does not, I shall have to leave him to settle it with the Lord.

## **The Personality of God**

2. Do you believe that God is a personality, who interferes in human affairs?

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<sup>654</sup> *Philippians 2:5-6.*

<sup>655</sup> *John 10:30-38.*

A personality certainly; but He does not “interfere” in human affairs; for human affairs are God’s own affairs, since...

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> ...we are His offspring.

A father is not interfering when he provides for the wants of his children, and directs their actions.

How do we know that God is a personality? From the fact that we know that we ourselves are personalities; and God is our Creator. The creature is not greater than the Creator. A mere sentiment, a conception, a nonentity, cannot create a personal being. The father is greater than the child.

I know that there are some people who profess not to believe in what they cannot see; yet those same people talk about the air as though it were a real thing, and even take it for granted that they have brains, although they never saw either. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in human philosophy. If God were not a personality, the language of the entire Bible would be meaningless. No language could possibly be more personal than that which is used concerning Him, and which He uses of himself.

### **Direct Answers to Prayer**

3. Do you believe in direct answers to prayer?

Here I am glad to make a confession of faith, and say that I do. Why do I believe in them? Because I have had them. Not to believe that God gives direct, definite answers to prayer, is to disbelieve the Bible, which abounds in statements to that end, and in instances of such answers.

Still, it is a thing which no one can prove to another. Whoever believes must believe for himself alone; and it is by faith that we know. Each one must...

## **Psalms 34**

<sup>8</sup> ...taste, and see that the Lord is good.

### **Miracles**

4. Do you believe that Christ performed miracles?

Certainly; I have seen Him at work, and have experienced the result of His miracles. One of the greatest mysteries in the world is how anybody can disbelieve in miracles, when they are the commonest things in life.

Men speak of the miracle of the standing still of the sun and the moon in the days of Joshua, and the going back of the shadow on the dial ten degrees in the time of Hezekiah, as though they were impossible; but tell me how much greater a miracle either one of them was than that the heavenly bodies move at all, or that they hang in space?

It is true it is most unusual for the shadow to go backwards on the dial; but the infrequency of the occurrence of a thing is not what makes it miraculous; neither does frequent repetition of an act make it less miraculous. The point lies in this: Can you or any other man do it? or do you know how it is done?

An act which is beyond human power to perform is certainly miraculous. Do you believe that there are any such things?

### **The Resurrection**

5. Do you believe in the resurrection of the body?

All these questions really amount to one, namely,

“Do you believe the Bible?”

The entire Gospel—every promise of God—rests upon the one truth of the resurrection of the dead. For example: Those who are Christ’s are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the prom-

ise.<sup>656</sup> All that we can have in the world to come we get as heirs of Abraham.

#### **Romans 4**

<sup>13</sup> For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

God made this promise to Abraham,

#### **Genesis 17**

<sup>7</sup> I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you.

<sup>8</sup> And I will give unto you, and to your seed after you, the land wherein you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.

Yet,

#### **Acts 7**

<sup>5</sup> He gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on.

Therefore my reason for believing in the resurrection is that God must keep His promise; and Abraham and all the faithful must be raised from the dead, in order that God's word may not fail.

I believe in the resurrection of the body because I know it to be a fact. I have experienced the power of it. I know because if there were no resurrection Christ would not be risen; and I know Him too well as a living Saviour to be fooled by anybody's talk that there is no resurrection. It is no more a debatable question than is the shining of the sun.

#### **Acts 26**

<sup>8</sup> Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead,

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<sup>656</sup> *Galatians 3:29.*

–when every day you have proof of it in the renewing of your own body?

## Hell

6. Do you believe in hell as a world or place of punishment, or only as a state of mind?

What says the Scripture?

### Psalm 9

<sup>17</sup> The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

The word “hell” is only another form of the word “hole,” and most commonly in the Bible refers to the grave, as the pit of corruption. To call it a state of mind is to play with the Scriptures, and make them of no effect.

But there is another word also translated hell, and that is the name *Gehenna*, from the valley of Hinnom (which is what the Hebrew word *Gehenna* means) near Jerusalem, where all the refuse matter of the city was burned. There is no place of burning now, for all the wicked are in their graves unconsciously awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the Judgment. At...

### 2 Peter 3

<sup>7</sup> ...the day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men,

–the wicked will be raised to condemnation,<sup>657</sup> when they will be consumed by the fire that will melt the earth. After that, new heavens and a new earth will appear, wherein righteousness shall dwell,<sup>658</sup> and then the wicked will be...

### Obadiah

<sup>16</sup> ...as though they had not been,

–and their place will not be found.<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>657</sup> *John* 5:29; *Acts* 24:14-15.

<sup>658</sup> *2 Peter* 3:7-13.

<sup>659</sup> *Psalms* 37:10, 20, 38.

## The Trinity

### 7. Do you believe in the Trinity?

If I knew what you meant by the term, I might tell you; but from the days of Athanasius until now all discussion about the Trinity has been an attempt to define the indefinable and the incomprehensible. Thousands have been put to death for not professing belief in a formula which even its professors could not comprehend, nor state in terms that anybody else could comprehend.

The Scriptures reveal...

#### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all,

—our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and...

#### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>14</sup> ...the eternal Spirit,

—through whom Christ offered himself and was raised from the dead; but we do not profess any knowledge of them beyond what the Scriptures give us.

In teaching and preaching the Gospel we always confine ourselves strictly to Scripture terms and language; those who manufacture terms must be looked to for definitions of them. It is safest not to presume to define what the Bible has not defined, nor to attempt to explain infinity.

## The Immaculate Conception

### 8. Do you believe in the Immaculate conception?

Let me ask you,

“Do you know what that term means?”

Very many people who use it think that it applies to the birth of Christ; but the fact is, that the Roman Catholics, who invented it, use it with reference to Mary.

Their argument is that the mother of Christ, the Sinless One, must have been conceived and born without sin. But if that were so, it would be equally necessary for her mother to be begotten sinless, and her mother, and so on back to the beginning: for a child inherits the flesh of its great, great, great grandmother as surely as that of its own mother.

No; I do not believe in the “immaculate conception” of Mary, the mother of Christ, because the Scriptures give us the genealogy of Christ, stating that:

### **Romans 1**

<sup>3</sup> [He] was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.

Christ, “the Holy One and the Just”<sup>660</sup> was born of sinful flesh as an assurance to all mankind that, although sinful, God can bring forth from them...

### **Philippians 1**

<sup>11</sup> ...the fruits of righteousness.

Christ may be found in every one of us as really as He was in the virgin Mary<sup>661</sup>;

### **Isaiah 9**

<sup>6</sup> For *unto us* a Child is born, *unto us* a Son is given.

## **The Devil**

9. Do you believe in a devil?

This is the same old question,

“Do you believe the Bible?”

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<sup>660</sup> Acts 3:14.

<sup>661</sup> Galatians 4:19.



Read the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> chapters of *Job*; the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Matthew*; *1 Peter* 5:8; *Jude* 9; and dozens of other texts. I believe...

### **Acts 24**

<sup>14</sup> ...all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

Why should I not? Besides, I have had too painful, personal evidence of the existence of a devil to doubt the fact.

## **The Bible God's Word**

10. Do you believe that the Bible contains the actual words of God, and nothing else?

This is what everybody ought to believe, whether I do or not; but I do:

### **2 Timothy 3**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

But nobody can prove to another that the Bible is the Word of God.

### **John 7**

<sup>17</sup> If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.

### **1 John 5**

<sup>10</sup> He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself.

## **Evolution**

11. Do you believe that man has been slowly evolved from the lower forms of life? or that he was created by God in the likeness of His own image?

### **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

## Genesis 1

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.

## Job 33

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

Here is the plain and the only sensible, creditable account of the origin of man. The normal human mind is so constituted by God that it cannot believe a thing without some evidence; for God always gives the most positive evidence for everything that He asks man to believe.

To believe a thing without evidence is folly; and no man has ever yet brought forward the smallest particle of evidence in support of the theory of evolution. Nobody has ever seen the slightest change of any animal toward a higher state; nor does history record any trace of such a change. The theory is pure fancy, a fabrication spun out of an idle mind, in spite of the clearest evidence to the contrary. In the beginning God said:

## Genesis 1

<sup>24</sup> Let the earth bring forth the living creature *after his kind*, and cattle after their kind, and creeping thing and beast of the earth after his kind; *and it was so*.

And so it has ever been. Not only has no animal shown any tendency toward development into a higher species, but none ever changes its kind to the slightest degree. In the forest, where animals roam wild, each kind is as distinct as at the creation. Animals as closely related as the hare and the rabbit retain their distinctive characteristics. So among birds: the robin does not mate with the sparrow, nor the sparrow with the wren. Fishes swarm in the sea in untold millions, yet the cod, the salmon, the mackerel are as distinct as though they were in different seas.

To believe that man has evolved from lower orders of creation, requires a degree of simple credulity that is not found among those who believe the Bible.

12. Do you believe in the fall of man, as related in the Bible?

Yes; I believe the whole Bible. If it were not for that, the *Present Truth* would have no reason for existence, and would cease to be published. This involves the next question, which will be given and answered with it.

## Salvation From Sin and Death

13. Do you believe that Christ died to save man from hell? or do you believe that He died to save man from sin?

Both.

### 1 Timothy 1

<sup>15</sup> This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

### Galatians 1

<sup>4</sup> [He] gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

In saving us from sin, He saves us from death and hell, since death came by sin, and...

### Psalms 9

<sup>17</sup> ...the wicked shall be cast into hell.

And herein we have a proof that man has fallen, and is not rising by evolution from a lower state; for if man were not fallen, there would have been no need for Christ to come. If we had evolved from a monad<sup>662</sup> to manhood, we would in time by the same process of evolution attain to the highest state.

Because we believe the Gospel, we do not believe in evolution; and we believe the Gospel, because we find ourselves helpless,—

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<sup>662</sup> Monad: a single-celled organism.

unable to do the good thing that we would, and in need of the Saviour whom the Gospel reveals.

14. Do you believe that only by a belief in Christ as Son of God can any man escape hell? or do you believe that only by faith in Christ can man be good?

This is answered in the preceding paragraph. Salvation is from sin; the man who is convicted of sin does not think of the fact that he is in danger of destruction, but that he has grieved the Lord; and the Christian believes and obeys the Lord, not that he may be saved from wrath, but that he may glorify God.

God sent forth His Son...

#### **Romans 8**

<sup>3</sup> ...in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

We need Christ, in order that we may be proper men, real men; for only as we come to...

#### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>13</sup> ...the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

—do we reach the state of...

<sup>13</sup> ...a perfect man.

# 184. What Shall Be the End of the Ungodly?

Present Truth, August 6, 1903

A few weeks ago the *Christian* published a criticism of Mr. R. J. Campbell, on account of his unscriptural teaching that all men will ultimately be saved. The writer of the criticism, however, acknowledges that the doctrine that he himself is upholding,—everlasting torment,—is a “terrible one.”

Is there no escape from universalism on the one hand or eternal torment on the other? Must one of these doctrines necessarily be the truth? Or have we any scriptural ground for believing in the annihilation of those who will not receive salvation through the atonement?

THE best answer that can be given to this question is to give a plain, straightforward, although necessarily brief exposition of the Scripture teaching concerning the atonement. It is not by any means as complicated as theologians have made it, but is so simple that a child can understand it; and when we once understand it, all difficulty as to universalism and eternal torment will vanish.

## Two Classes

### Romans 3

<sup>24</sup> The redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

—is comprehensive enough to include the whole human race, as will presently be made plain; but God, who sees the end from the beginning, has made known to us the sad fact that many souls will go to destruction because they will not walk the way of life. Christ says:

### Matthew 7

<sup>13</sup> Enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat;

<sup>14</sup> Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.

These words occur in Christ's "sermon on the mount," which even infidels often profess to accept as a perfect standard; they require no explanation, for nobody can misunderstand their meaning; they are only to be believed or disbelieved; but whoever believes them cannot believe in universal salvation; and, on the other hand, whoever believes in universalism thereby shows that he does not accept the teaching of Christ.

Shall we have a few more texts before we take up the principles of the atonement? In the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> chapters of *Matthew* we have one of the last talks that Christ had with His disciples before His crucifixion. It was but the week before He was betrayed. It is wholly concerning His second coming, and at the close He describes the two classes that will be on earth when He shall come:

1. Those who have served Him, and
2. Those who have not.

### **Matthew 25**

<sup>46</sup> And these,

—He says, speaking of those who have not followed Him,

<sup>46</sup> ...shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

## **Everlasting Punishment**

Now we want to know what this everlasting punishment will be, and we read the words of the Apostle Paul, with reference to the second coming of Christ. He says that...

### **2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>7</sup> ...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

<sup>8</sup> In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>9</sup> Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

The punishment is to be everlasting, it is true, but it will be destruction; and this is emphasized in *Romans 6:23*, where we read:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Ezekiel 18**

<sup>4</sup> The soul that sins, it shall die.

Thus we see that the punishment is death; and since the punishment is to be everlasting, it will be everlasting death—death from which there will be no resurrection.

Bear in mind that this death, which is the wages of sin, is the direct opposite of life. It is not eternal life in torment, for life, no matter what its conditions, is not death in any sense. The righteous, who have the gift of life, often suffer grievous affliction; but they are alive, and not dead. Death means cessation of existence, even as God said through His prophet:

### **Obadiah**

<sup>16</sup> All the heathen...shall be as though they had not been.

So we read again:

### **Psalms 37**

<sup>20</sup> The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

<sup>9</sup> For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>10</sup> For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

<sup>11</sup> But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

<sup>37</sup> Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

<sup>38</sup> But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end [future] of the wicked shall be cut off.

We cannot suppose that men who stand as preachers are ignorant of these statements of Scripture, and many more like them; therefore we are obliged to suppose that they ignore them. But if one is to follow one's own mind, regardless of what the Bible says, one should announce that fact, and not preface one's sermons with texts of Scripture. The texts that we have quoted make it very plain that there is a middle ground between universalism on the one hand, and eternal torment on the other.

### **Man Not Immortal**

We will now turn our attention to the foundation principles which make all these statements plain.

It should not be overlooked, that the root of all this difficulty is the unscriptural idea that man is by nature deathless,—that God, having once given him life, cannot withdraw it. Many sincere Christians hold this idea, seemingly wholly unconscious of the fact that it was the serpent who said to Eve,

#### **Genesis 3**

<sup>4</sup> You shall not surely die,

—in direct contradiction of God's declaration that they should surely die if they disregarded His commandment. To say that man cannot die, is to say that God spoke falsely, and that the devil told the truth. It is this grave error that has led to all others. Believing it, one is forced to accept either universalism or eternal torment. Believing the Word of God, one is not involved in any difficulty whatever.

An expression that occurs several times in the 37<sup>th</sup> *Psalm* will give us a starting point.

#### **Psalm 37**

<sup>9</sup> Evildoers shall be cut off;

<sup>22</sup> ...they that be cursed of Him shall be cut off;

<sup>38</sup> ...the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

The question is,



“From what shall they be cut off?”

It is evident that they will be cut off from that with which they have been connected; and one needs only to use the faculties that God has given him, to know that all men, whether good or bad, exist solely because of their connection with the life of God, given them in Christ.

### **Acts 17**

<sup>28</sup> For in Him we live, and move, and have our being;...for we are also His offspring.

No one can keep himself alive for a single minute. If God thought only of himself,

### **Job 34**

<sup>14</sup> ...if He gather unto himself His Spirit and His breath;

<sup>15</sup> All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

In the beginning,

### **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living, soul.

### **Job 33**

<sup>4</sup> The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

The Spirit of God in our nostrils<sup>663</sup> is what alone keeps us from returning to the condition of non-existence; that is, to the condition that was when we were not. Recall the statement in *Obadiah*, that those who know not God...

### **Obadiah**

<sup>16</sup> ...shall be as though they had not been.

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<sup>663</sup> *Job* 27:3.

Jesus Christ is the living bread that came down from heaven, to give life to the world.<sup>664</sup> He is...

### **John 14**

<sup>6</sup> ...the way, the truth, and the life.

There is no life in the universe except the life of God in Christ. God is our dwelling place, as He has been in all generations.<sup>665</sup>

### **Job 12**

<sup>10</sup> In His hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

God is; that is His name, His distinctive title; He is the only one of whom it can be absolutely said that *He is*; all others have existence only by being in Him.

Although God gave man dominion over the earth, he had that dominion only as he acknowledged his absolute dependence on God. Assuming himself able to live and reign alone, he fell, and lost the dominion.

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>6</sup> [God is] above all, and through all, and in all;

–but in the fall, man cast off his allegiance to God, asserting his right and power to live independently. This is what constituted the fall.

If God had at once taken man at his word, and had allowed him to go his own way from the beginning of the rebellion on earth, man would at once have ceased to be.

## **God is Longsuffering**

But God...

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>9</sup> ...is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

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<sup>664</sup> *John* 6:51.

<sup>665</sup> *Psalms* 90:1.

He is literally *long-suffering*: He is love, and love suffers long, and is kind. God bears the earth, and all its inhabitants, with all their sins and sicknesses. Thus He actually suffers in the sins and sorrows of mankind.<sup>666</sup> The cross on Calvary is a demonstration of this; it shows what God has suffered ever since sin entered into the world.

Although men believe not, yet God abides faithful;

## **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>13</sup> He cannot deny himself.

So although men have cast off allegiance to Him, denying that they live by Him, or owe Him anything; some even denying that there is a God; He patiently waits and supplies them with His own life, in order that they may repent of their rebellion, and return to their allegiance to Him. He forces none to come into subjection to Him, but gently and quietly draws all by the power of His love.

## **The Extinction of the Wicked**

But there comes a time at last when it is useless to wait longer. Christ comes the second time to earth, not as before in humiliation, but in power and great glory.

## **Revelation 1**

<sup>7</sup> Every eye shall see Him,

—and nobody will need any proof that He is Lord of all. Every knee will bow to Him, and every tongue will confess that God is, and that Jesus Christ is Lord.<sup>667</sup> But even then the wicked will continue to do wickedly. Still they will say,

## **Luke 19**

<sup>14</sup> We will not have this man to reign over us.

They acknowledge that God is just; but they hate justice. They still desire to have nothing to do with Him, and insist that they

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<sup>666</sup> *Isaiah* 43:24; 53:4-5.

<sup>667</sup> *Romans* 14:2; *Philippians* 2:10-11.

are competent to manage their own affairs. So presumptuous are they,—so blinded by the Deceiver,—that they will undertake even to cast God down from His throne, and to seize upon His place.<sup>668</sup>

Then at last God will take them at their own word, and will allow them to try their idea of existing wholly separate from Him. There can be but one result, namely, extinction; for in the first place it is impossible for any creature to live a moment without God's sustaining power, and in the second place, there is no place where men can go away from God. God fills all space, so that the wicked must go into nothingness, where there is no place, in order to set up their independent kingdom. Literally, their place shall not be.

Now it must be apparent to all that there is no injustice in this, and that it is also perfectly consistent with everlasting love; because it is only giving to men what they have worked for, and what they have persisted in having. It certainly would be no kindness to rebellious haters of God, to compel them to live with Him.

If there were a place in the universe where God is not, the wicked, who hate His presence, might be sent there to live if they could; but there is no such place, and they can have their hearts' desire only by going out of existence. God's mercy endures for ever, even in the complete destruction of the wicked.

Thus it appears that the extinction of the incorrigibly wicked is a necessary part of the atonement. For the atonement contemplates the extermination, the blotting out of sin; and when sin is completely blotted from God's universe, those who have so fully identified themselves with sin that they are nothing but sin, must be blotted out with it.

Nor does this fact that there will be incorrigibly wicked men at the last, indicate the least defect in the atonement; it does not show any weakness on God's part. On the contrary, it shows how firmly God has maintained His original purpose of having an

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<sup>668</sup> *Psalm 2:1-6; Revelation 20:7-9.*

earth filled with righteousness, and ruled over by absolutely free men.

Man has his choice, either to reign with God in life, or to ally himself with Satan in death; and in the Judgment every lost sinner will acknowledge that God is clear of his blood, since He has made ample provision for the salvation of all. The wicked will fall by their own counsel; they will be self-condemned and self-destroyed.

### **Isaiah 1 [RV]**

<sup>31</sup> The strong shall be as tow, and his work as a spark; and they shall both burn together;

### **Proverbs 1**

<sup>32</sup> For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

And then when sin and sinners shall have been blotted from God's creation, from every part of it only one song will be heard, of...

### **Revelation 5**

<sup>13</sup> Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

# 185. Some Phases of the Sabbath Question

Present Truth, August 13, 1903

Is it not, according to the New Testament Scriptures, a fact that our Lord was in the tomb all the Jewish Sabbath? He had fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law, and by this He closed the old dispensation; and by rising on the first day of the week introduces a new dispensation, namely a reign of grace, and not law. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." *Romans 10:4*.

**T**HIS question contains several common misapprehensions, which need to be considered in detail. We first note the reference to...

## The Jewish Sabbath

This is a term found not once in the entire Bible. The seventh day of the week, nowadays commonly called Saturday, which the Jews kept, and to some extent still keep, is declared to be...

### Exodus 20

<sup>10</sup> ...the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

In the days when the Easter controversy was raging, the Emperor Constantine, who was a famous theological tinker, said:

"Let us have nothing in common with the contemptible Jewish rabble,"

—and so the festival was transferred from the time of the Passover, which might be any day of the week, to Sunday. From that time, and even before, there has everywhere been a bitter prejudice against the Jews, which has extended to everything that they have had to do with—except money. So the Sabbath of the Lord came to be called in contempt "the Jewish Sabbath," the enemies of the truth well knowing that a contemptuous epithet will have more effect against a man or an institution than will a statement of fact.

If Christians would strictly confine themselves to Bible terms for Bible things, and would call the seventh day by its right name, “the Sabbath of the Lord,” or “the Lord’s day,” it would not be as easy for them to pass it by. Many who never give a second thought to what they have called “the Jewish Sabbath,” would feel very serious over trampling upon the Lord’s “holy day.”<sup>669</sup>

The fact, however, that the Sabbath was kept by the Jews before any of the so called “Christian nations” were in existence, is nothing against it. Jesus himself said,

#### **John 4**

<sup>22</sup> Salvation is of the Jews.

Jesus was a Jew, brought up after the manner of the Jews. The news of His birth was first made known to Jewish shepherds, and it was Jewish fishermen whom He first sent out to preach. The whole Bible, with the exception of two books of the New Testament (if it be a fact that Luke was a Greek), and possibly one of the Old, was written by Jews. Shall we call it “the Jewish Gospel,” “Jewish salvation,” “the Jewish Bible,” etc., and reject the whole thing?

#### **Jesus Fulfilled the Law**

The statement is that Jesus...

...had fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law.

Good. We believe it, because:

#### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>22</sup> [He] did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.

He said,

#### **Psalms 40**

<sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O my God, Yea, your law is within my heart.

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<sup>669</sup> *Isaiah 58:13.*

The common conclusion is that therefore we have nothing to do with the law. Let us see what that means:

- Jesus did a certain thing; therefore we must not do that thing.
- Jesus was baptized to “fulfill all righteousness”<sup>670</sup>; therefore we must not be baptized,

–and must be on our guard against doing any righteousness. The argument, in short, is,

“Avoid following the example of Jesus, as you would the pestilence.”

We wish everybody to see just what is involved in the argument that because Jesus kept the Sabbath and fulfilled every jot of the law, therefore we need not. All that it means is that we must not do as Jesus did. It may seem “absurd” to keep the Sabbath that Jesus kept; but this argument against it is a good deal worse than absurd.

He left us an example, that we...

### **1 Peter 2**

<sup>21</sup> ...should follow His steps.

### **1 John 2**

<sup>6</sup> He that says He abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.

Christ fulfilled the law,

### **Romans 8**

<sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

What propriety is there in people calling themselves Christians, and repudiating the ways of Christ?

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<sup>670</sup> *Matthew 3:15.*



## Luke 6

<sup>46</sup> Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

### A New Dispensation

The statement is that Christ by rising on the first day of the week...

...introduces a new dispensation—namely, a reign of grace.

We call attention, in passing, to the fact that our correspondent makes this statement as confidently as though it were a Scripture truth, as he no doubt thinks it is, without stopping to hunt for or quote the authority for it. It ought to be understood that in a matter of this kind, every statement that is made should have the fullest warrant of Scripture, and that warrant should be given; for a man's assertions count for nothing.

But now as to the matter of “dispensations.” It would be well here, also, if people would confine themselves to Scripture terms. If they did, no such words as “old dispensation,” or “new dispensation” would ever be seen or heard. The Greek word where we have “dispensation” occurs but seven times in the Bible, three of these being *Luke* 16:2, 3, 4, where it is rendered, as it should always be, “stewardship.” The Apostle Paul says,

#### 1 Corinthians 9

<sup>17</sup> A dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me.

The words “of the Gospel” are added by the translators, so that we have the exact rendering in the *Revision*,

“I have a stewardship entrusted to me.”

So has every man who has received the grace of God.<sup>671</sup> But the common idea that there are various “dispensations,” in the sense that God deals with men differently during one period of time from what He does during another period, is utterly unscriptural,

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<sup>671</sup> 1 Peter 4:10.

and most dishonoring to God. The terms, “patriarchal dispensation,” “Levitical dispensation,” “Christian dispensation,” are absolutely destitute of meaning.

### **Malachi 3**

<sup>6</sup> I am the Lord, I change not,

—says God. Jesus Christ is...

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

With God...

### **James 1**

<sup>17</sup> ...is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

All the people that have ever lived on the earth shall at the last day stand together before the Judgment seat; what a spectacle it would then be, if God should divide the multitude into sections, according to the age in which they lived, and judge one by one standard and another by another, so that one man would be condemned in a course that another would be justified in pursuing! Think you that every mouth would be stopped in such a case? Would there not be many complaints of unfairness and partiality? But this matter of dispensations will appear in still clearer light as we consider the statement that the “new dispensation,” supposed to have begun at the resurrection of Christ, is...

## **A Reign of Grace—and Not Law**

If this means anything, it means that before the resurrection of Christ there was no grace for mankind; but God lived before that time, and if there were no grace it was only because He was not gracious. Who dare say it in that way? Who dare bring such a charge against God?

When people lightly use terms coined by men, without thinking of their meaning, they often say things that they would not if they gave heed to their words. It is well to have these statements analyzed. We repeat: The statement that at the resurrection of

Christ “a new dispensation—namely, a reign of grace,” began, is the same as saying that before that time there was no grace—that God was not gracious. Now let us see the facts in the case.

Hundreds of years before the resurrection, the psalmist wrote:

**Psalm 84**

<sup>11</sup> The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory.

And again:

**Psalm 86**

<sup>5</sup> For You, Lord, are good and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon You.

Solomon wrote that God...

**Proverbs 3**

<sup>34</sup> ...gives grace unto the lowly.

Again:

**Psalm 111**

<sup>4</sup> The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion.

Nehemiah prayed to God, saying:

**Nehemiah 9**

<sup>17</sup> You are a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.

For this he had the warrant of God himself, who revealed himself to Moses by name as:

**Exodus 34**

<sup>6</sup> The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth,

<sup>7</sup> Keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

Take particular notice that this was at the very time of the giving of the law. So the reign of grace was in progress then. Indeed, the case is even stronger, for we read that:

## **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> ...the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

<sup>21</sup> That as sin had reigned unto death even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

If there were any such thing as the *beginning* of the reign of God's grace, one might from the hasty reading of this text conclude that it began at the giving of the law on Sinai. But although grace reigned there, it did not begin even there; the giving of the law simply made the already existing grace to abound.

## **Galatians 3**

<sup>21</sup> Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid.

Moreover the grace was not limited. God said by Isaiah,

## **Isaiah 45**

<sup>22</sup> Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.

God preached the Gospel unto Abraham, saying,

## **Galatians 3**

<sup>8</sup> In you shall all nations be blessed.

And this Gospel which was preached to Abraham was identical with the Gospel that Paul preached; for there is but one.<sup>672</sup> The "blessing of Abraham" comes on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ<sup>673</sup>; and that blessing was the blessing of cleansing from sin.<sup>674</sup>

We see, therefore, that the reign of grace is not only compatible with Sabbath-keeping, but that the proclaiming of the law of the Sabbath even made grace to abound. God was just as good and kind and merciful in the days of Moses as He is today.

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<sup>672</sup> *Galatians* 1:6-8.

<sup>673</sup> *Galatians* 3:13-14.

<sup>674</sup> *Romans* 4:6-9.

## A Counter Charge

Now we wish especial attention to be given to this charge which we bring against the Sunday. Everybody knows that the statement that we “are not under the law, but under grace,”<sup>675</sup> and that a change from law to grace began at the resurrection of Christ, is the great argument for Sunday observance. Nobody ever seeks to uphold Sunday observance without repeating it. Without this, Sunday-keeping would have no excuse for existence, for nobody is so foolish as to believe that it dates from before Christ.

But we have already shown that the statement that grace began at the resurrection of Christ, and effected a change in the law, is the same as to say that God was not gracious before that time, and that therefore there was no salvation, which is contrary to the Bible, and a libel on God’s character.

So then, the Sunday can exist as a supposedly “Christian institution” only by directly denying the unchangeability of God’s righteousness, and the grace of Christ the eternal Son of God; in short, by denying the Gospel.

We do not by any means say that Sunday observers intend to do this; far from it; but by the use of unscriptural terms which have no meaning, and of scriptural expressions without thinking of their meaning, they unconsciously deny the very first principles of the Gospel.

Sunday is anti-Christian, and just to the extent that it is defended is the everlasting Gospel of God’s grace denied.

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<sup>675</sup> *Romans 6:14.*

# 186. For Ever and Ever

Present Truth, August 20, 1903

I believe that the wages of sin is death, but certain texts of Scripture have confused me for a long time; and I should be thankful if you would take the trouble to enlighten me. They are *Revelation* 14:11; *Revelation* 20:10; *Revelation* 19:3; and *Isaiah* 34:10.

THE Scriptures themselves contain the enlightenment that you desire, and it is a pleasure and not a trouble to me to bring it to you. First, however, we must have the words of the texts themselves before us. Here they are in the order given above:

## **Revelation 14**

<sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.

## **Revelation 20**

<sup>10</sup> And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.

The next one refers to the great harlot, Babylon, saying,

## **Revelation 19**

<sup>3</sup> And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

The fourth is concerning...

## **Isaiah 34**

<sup>6</sup> ...a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

<sup>8</sup> [In] the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion,

<sup>9</sup> [When] the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

<sup>10</sup> It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall be waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

You cannot fail to notice that all of these texts have reference to the same event—the punishment of the wicked; and before paying any attention to the use of the term “for ever,” or “for ever and ever” the proper thing to do is to have clearly in mind some of the explicit Scripture statements as to the fate of the wicked. Here are a few:

### **Psalm 37**

<sup>20</sup> The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume, into smoke shall they consume away.

### **Malachi 4**

<sup>1</sup> The day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

<sup>3</sup> And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.

### **Matthew 3**

<sup>11</sup> He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;

<sup>12</sup> Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into His garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

### **Obadiah**

<sup>16</sup> And they shall be as though they had not been.

### **Psalm 37**

<sup>9</sup> For evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>10</sup> For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Many more of the same nature might be added, but these are sufficient, especially since you already believe that the end of the wicked is death. The question then resolves itself into this:

“Since the wicked are to be cut off, and be as though they had not been, how can it be said that they shall be tormented for ever and ever, and that the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever?”

Of one thing we are sure, and that is that the Bible does not contradict itself. Every word is sure. This being fixed, goes a long way toward settling the question. Then we are shut up to the conclusion that “for ever and ever” must sometimes mean less than endless; and this we shall find to be the case.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of *Exodus* we find certain regulations for the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, and the first is concerning servants. The rule was that a Hebrew servant should serve six years, and in the seventh year he should go out free, for nothing. But if the servant had been given a wife by his master, he could not take her with him when he received his freedom, but must go out by himself. If, however, the servant should say,

#### **Exodus 21**

<sup>5</sup> I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,

—then the rule was this:

<sup>6</sup> His master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

Here we have the same term applied to the time of service by a servant. Under certain conditions the servant was to serve his master for ever; yet we know that he could not serve him longer than the term of his natural life. Nobody who began to serve in the days of Moses is still in service. So we see that while “for ever” may, and commonly does, mean without end, it often is lim-



ited, meaning only as long as the person or thing spoken of could naturally exist.

We have but to note the context of *Isaiah* 34:10, to see that this is the case in the judgment upon the wicked. Read the first portion of the chapter, and you will see that the judgment spoken of is upon the whole earth. Idumea is used to represent the earth. It is the judgment of the last day. Now we have to read no further than the next chapter, to find that there will come a time when the land will be inhabited again:

### **Isaiah 36**

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

<sup>2</sup> It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

<sup>6</sup> Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

<sup>7</sup> And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.

We also read of the new earth, when God says,

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I make all things new.

<sup>1</sup> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

<sup>2</sup> And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

<sup>3</sup> And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

<sup>4</sup> And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

The wicked are to be cast into...

### **Matthew 3**

<sup>12</sup> ...unquenchable fire,

—into fire...

### **Mark 9**

<sup>43</sup> ...that never shall be quenched.

Now what's the natural, inevitable result to any person or thing when cast into the fire, if left there, and the fire is not put out? You have no hesitation in saying,

“To be burned up—utterly consumed.”

That is just what the Bible says of the wicked. The fire into which they will be cast will not be quenched, and since they are but chaff and stubble, they “burn up,” and are as though they had not been. Then when there is nothing more for the devouring flames to feed on, they will go out of themselves.

This often happens in the case of houses that take fire, and the flames cannot be quenched by the firemen. When the firemen see that they cannot save the building, they turn their attention to saving surrounding buildings, knowing full well that the fire will go out when the house is consumed.

So though the destruction of the wicked will undoubtedly cover a long period, the time will at last certainly come when the last sinner, and finally even the devil himself, will be consumed, and then the fire will give place to the reviving, healing beams of...

### **Malachi 4**

<sup>2</sup> ...the Sun of righteousness.

# 187. Predestination

Present Truth, September 10, 1903

I should be pleased to receive some help on the doctrine of “final perseverance,” or “once in grace always in grace,” also concerning predestination.

**W**E WILL consider predestination first. The Scriptures are clear on this subject, and there is great comfort to be gleaned from them for every one.

## **Ephesians 1**

<sup>4</sup> [God has] chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

<sup>5</sup> Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.

<sup>11</sup> In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

So you see, if you have given your heart to Jesus Christ, you have connected yourself with something that goes back to a time before Adam fell, or the earth was created. You must not look at yourself, and think,

“Now I have just given myself to the Lord, I wonder if I can stand the trial of my faith, and whether I shall be holding on still six months from now?”

When you fall on the Rock,<sup>676</sup> coming to Him as unto a living stone, you are built into the living foundation, which is Christ Jesus, and partake of its solidity and strength.<sup>677</sup> That foundation has stood the fiercest storms that can come, and for thousands of years it has been steadfast and unmovable.<sup>678</sup> In Christ you have

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<sup>676</sup> *Matthew 21:44.*

<sup>677</sup> *1 Peter 2:4-5.*

<sup>678</sup> *Matthew 7:24-25.*

the same standing, you have a life that has not wavered since the days of eternity.

It was not you that chose Christ, He chose you.<sup>679</sup> It was not because of your will that you were born again. It was because of God's will.<sup>680</sup> When you knew that God had chosen you, you were willing to be His. You surrendered to His will, that He might...

### **Philippians 2**

<sup>13</sup> ...work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.

When you are tempted to think that you are too frail and vacillating to endure to the end, remember that what has made you a Christian has not wavered once, in all the past, that the life you receive by faith is an everlasting life, and that He who has begun the good work is able to carry it forward to the glorious end.<sup>681</sup>

Although God has willed our salvation and predestinated us to eternal life, there is perfect freedom with Him, and no one is compelled to take what God provides. We have a will of our own, but the best use we can make of it is to will that we will accept God's will. Our little will, like the little switch, has power to connect us with God or break the connection. We may have very little will power, but it only takes a very small switch to make the connection. When our life is thus willingly connected with God, the current flows through us, and we have the everlasting life, and learn that the Gospel is the power of God.

God has made known our predestination to us, because:

### **Hebrews 6**

17 [He is] willing...to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel.

We partake of the root as well as of the fatness of the olive tree.<sup>682</sup> But this assurance is not for a few only. Those of whom

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<sup>679</sup> *John* 15:16.

<sup>680</sup> *John* 1:13, *James* 1:18.

<sup>681</sup> *Philippians* 1:6.

<sup>682</sup> *Romans* 11:17.

Paul speaks in the *Epistle to the Ephesians* were not specially deserving of being predestinated to sonship and inheritance. It was when they were “dead in sins” that they were quickened together with Christ.<sup>683</sup> Who then can be counted out of God’s predestination? Not one.

### **Romans 8**

<sup>30</sup> For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Some hold an entirely erroneous view of predestination, which is opposed to the Scripture. They believe that God foreordained some to be lost, and some to be saved. Now God could not predestinate some to be lost without knowing which they were, but the text we have just read states emphatically that everyone whom God knew of beforehand was predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. This proves that God had no thought whatever of condemning any to be lost. Such a thing did not enter His mind.

If you will look through the passages that speak of election, you will find that every one of them speaks of election to salvation.

### **Romans 9**

<sup>15</sup> He said to Moses, I *will have mercy* on whom I will have mercy, and I *will have compassion* on whom I will have compassion.

Notice that it is mercy and compassion that God is determined on, not mercy on some and wrath on others.

Even Pharaoh is quoted as an instance of this. God raised him up to make him a witness, and that the name of God might be declared through him in all the earth. Pharaoh resisted God’s gracious purpose, but it was carried out nevertheless. It might have been done through Pharaoh as a willing instrument, but since he would not yield, it was done through him against his will. His very effort to defeat God’s plan was the means by which the plan was carried out.

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<sup>683</sup> *Ephesians* 2:1, 5.

In Pharaoh's case, we see how it is that some will be lost, although God has predestined them to life. They resist the gracious purpose of God, and in so doing they harden themselves. They will not be pliable in God's hands, as the clay is in the hands of the potter. They become stiff, so that while God in mercy is dealing with them, seeking to mold them aright, they break in His hands, as Pharaoh did. Their lives are spoiled and wasted, and they fail of the design that God planned for them.

If they had been passive in God's hands, His eternal purpose would have been fulfilled in them. God does all that He can do to make His predestination effective.

### **Romans 8**

<sup>30</sup> Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.

God does all that He can for every man.

### **Ezekiel 18**

<sup>29</sup> O house of Israel, are not my ways equal?

The question may be asked,

“Why are not all saved?”

God asks that question, too. There is no reason that any man will dare to offer when he stands before the great white throne. No deficiency will be alleged there so far as God is concerned.

...once in grace, always in grace...

On this point, little needs to be said. There is no reason why men should not always be in grace.

### **Romans 5**

<sup>20</sup> Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

The great difficulty usually is to get men to believe at all in the grace of God, and we would not say a word to lessen anyone's

courage in the Lord's power to take care of their past, present, and future. Here is the best by which we may know if we are in grace or not.

### **Romans 6**

<sup>14</sup> Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.

This is the work that grace does. I have met men who have perverted this truth, and say,

“I have once been in grace, therefore I cannot be lost.”

That is wrong. As long as sin does not have dominion over them they will not be lost.

Sometimes a man will learn that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and he sees that he ought to keep it, but he is afraid to face the consequences. He will say,

“It does not make any difference to my salvation whether I obey God in this matter or not. I have been in grace once, and so I am sure of being saved at last, even if I do not keep the Sabbath.”

Such a man shows that he does not know what grace is. He is no Christian at all. Jesus saves His people from their sins, and the man who makes Christ's work a reason for his remaining in sin, is putting a cruel dishonor upon the Saviour.

As long as a man abides in Christ he is saved from sin and is under grace. When he walks in sin he is not abiding in Christ,

### **1 John 2**

<sup>6</sup> For he that says he abides in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

# 188. Learning Righteousness

Present Truth, September 17, 1903

Will you tell me what is the meaning of the ninth to eleventh verses of the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Isaiah*?

Let us read the words first from the *Revised Version*:

## **Isaiah 26 [RV]**

<sup>9</sup> With my soul have I desired You in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek You early; for when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

<sup>10</sup> Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

<sup>11</sup> Lord, your hand is lifted up, yet they see not; but they shall see your zeal for the people, and be ashamed; yea, fire shall devour your adversaries.

THE judgments of God are a means of instruction to those who will learn. In them we see His ways, and by watching them in the light of His Word we may understand God's thoughts. God's judgments do not consist only of plagues and famines and sudden destruction.

## **Daniel 4**

<sup>37</sup> All His works are truth, and His ways judgment.

We may see His judgments in everything that He does, and learn righteousness from them. The wicked do not recognize God's judgments unless they come in afflictions and punishments. They have no desire to learn His gentler lessons, and do not heed them. Hence God has to speak to them in some way that will arrest their attention. We read of the wicked:

## **Psalms 10**

<sup>4</sup> All his thoughts are, There is no God.

<sup>5</sup> His ways are grievous at all times; your judgments are far above out of his sight.



It is not so with the righteous.

### **Psalm 18**

<sup>21</sup> I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

<sup>22</sup> For all His judgments were before me.

So the one who speaks in *Isaiah* 26, says:

### **Isaiah 26**

<sup>8</sup> Yea, in the way of your judgments, O Lord, have we waited for You.

He had observed the judgments of God, found His way, and waited for God in that way, with the result that:

<sup>7</sup> The way of the just is uprightness: You that are upright directs the path of the just.

It is not so with the wicked. He is not teachable, and he is not seeking instruction. Favor is thrown away on him, and simply confirms him in his wrong-doing.

### **Ecclesiastes 8**

<sup>11</sup> Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is emboldened to do evil.

Even if a wicked man were admitted to heaven, he would still sin. The beauty of character there would not affect him. He would still do wrongfully, and not regard the excellence of Jehovah. That this is so, was seen from Christ's experience. He was on earth what God is in heaven, but those who loved wickedness saw no beauty that they should desire Him.<sup>684</sup> They hated Him without a cause.<sup>685</sup>

### **Romans 1**

<sup>18</sup> The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

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<sup>684</sup> *Isaiah* 53:2.

<sup>685</sup> *John* 15:25, *Psalm* 69:4.

But the wicked see not that God's hand is lifted up. Yet they will see God's zeal for His people, and if they still remain untouched and impenitent, they will at last see the judgment of God in the fire which devours them.

## 189. Christ and Vegetarianism

Present Truth, September 24, 1903

I should like you to enlighten me about vegetarianism from the Bible. I should like to be a non-flesh eater, but I am confused about *1 Timothy* 4:3, also *John* 21:13, *Luke* 24:41-43, *Matthew* 15:38, and *1 Corinthians* 6:13.

THE texts quoted from the Gospels refer to Christ's eating fish and feeding others with the same. The passages in Paul's epistles do not necessarily refer to flesh food at all. The word "meat" simply means food. It is translated "victuals" in *Matthew* 14:15, and means manna in *1 Corinthians* 10:3. We know that there was no flesh food in the "spiritual meat" that Israel ate in the wilderness. The old use survives in the word "sweetmeat," which has no connection with flesh food.

If you will read carefully Paul's words to Timothy, you will see that the seducing spirits will command men to abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving. He goes on to say that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

Whatever false doctrine is referred to here, either past or future, the words certainly cannot apply to those who practice and teach a return to the diet which was provided for man at his creation, the fruits of the earth. If anything was created to be received with thanksgiving, it was this class of food, which is distinctly sanctified or set apart by the word of God.<sup>686</sup> You will notice also that these fruits are spoken of at the beginning as man's meat.

On the other hand, it is equally clear that Christ partook of fish and fed others with it. This is no reason why we should turn from a diet of fruits, grains and nuts and live on fish. Christ came to

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<sup>686</sup> *Genesis* 1:29.

this earth in our flesh. He was made in all things like unto His brethren. He came as near to men as possible. He made himself one with them in eating and drinking and social relations, so far as He could, and yet do His work. He came to save from sin, and He did not permit this work of reform to be obscured by minor questions.

He might perhaps have opened up more of the treasures of knowledge if men had been more ready to receive His message of deliverance from sin. When they stumbled at that, it was no time to talk of minor matters. Christ would not raise any question concerning His own way of living that could draw the mind from thinking of Him as the Saviour from sin.

Here is a lesson for us. If we see that a natural diet is the will of God for man, and adopt each ourselves, we are to take care that our advocacy of such a diet does not in any way hinder the more important work of revealing Christ as a Saviour from sin. If we lack His Spirit, even the reforms we urge will destroy souls. God has given men permission to eat flesh, without the blood.<sup>687</sup> Christ ate it, and whoever says that flesh eating is a sin condemns Christ.

The Spirit of God has given us this instruction:

#### **Romans 14**

<sup>3</sup> Let not him that eats despise him that eats not; and let not him which eats not judge him that eats: for God has received him.

Unfortunately for a good cause, many who embrace vegetarianism condemn those that eat flesh food, and thus separate themselves from the Spirit of Christ. Any work of reform that has lost the spirit of love for others is an unprofitable parade of human vanity.

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<sup>687</sup> *Genesis 9:3-4.*

## Romans 14

<sup>13</sup> Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

<sup>21</sup> It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak.

If we realize that:

- the associations of the slaughterhouse and other features connected with the traffic, in flesh food, are detrimental to those engaged in them;
- men are suffering in body and mind as the result of ignorance of proper and natural food;
- many diseases, like cancer and rheumatism, are largely due to the use of flesh foods;
- the use of stimulating flesh foods is a natural cause of the craving for strong drink which is destroying thousands; and that
- the food provided for Adam is available now in sufficient quantity and quality to make animal products almost or altogether unnecessary;

—then it will be right to throw our own influence and example into the work of diet reform, not in condemning others for what they eat, but in a humble, loving, self-sacrificing effort to remove every stumbling-block from our brother's way.

# 190. The Last Generation

Present Truth, October 1, 1903

What is to be understood by the word “generation,” as it is now nearly seventy years since the last of the signs mentioned in *Matthew 24*, the falling of the stars, occurred?

THE word “generation” in this chapter has the same meaning that is ordinarily attached to it. We speak sometimes of the average length of a generation, and this is about thirty years at the present time, but Christ was speaking of the generation itself, not of its average length.

There were to be signs in the sun and moon and stars.

## **Matthew 24**

<sup>29</sup> 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.

The first two were given in 1780, in New England, where they abundantly fulfilled their purpose. Men were convinced that the sign promised by Christ had been given, and believed that the judgment day was at hand. Scientific writers acknowledged that they could not account for the darkness by natural causes.

A great fall of stars was the third sign, and this was given in 1833. It was seen over a large part of the earth's surface. Concerning this sign, it is not necessary to say much. In November, 1899, scientists predicted that there would be another great fall. They stated that the stars fell in vast numbers every thirty-three years, and based the statement on the fact that most wonderful falls had been seen in 1833 and 1866. All will remember that for a few days in November, 1899, the newspapers had a great deal to say on the subject of falling stars, and large numbers sat up all night when the fall was due. It will also be in the memory of all that the stars did not fall that night, and thus it was made clear that the expla-

nation of science was wrong, that the great fall of 1833 was not a regular occurrence, but was the sign promised by Christ. It had been so accepted in 1833, and the experience of 1899 confirmed it.

The next thing to take place will be the shaking of the powers of the heavens, and the appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven.

### **Matthew 24**

<sup>29</sup> ...and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

<sup>30</sup> 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.

These phenomena, however, will not be in the nature of signs. They belong to the event of which the signs give warning. Hence we may conclude that the tokens in the heavens promised by Christ, to serve as signs, were finished in 1833.

<sup>32</sup> Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh:

<sup>33</sup> So likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Now is the time to learn a parable of the fig tree. When its leaves are put forth, it is a sign that summer is at hand. So when we have seen all these things, we may know that the coming of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

<sup>34</sup> Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

The people who are thus in a position to know that the end is near may be assured of one thing more, and that is that they have reached the generation which will not pass away until all things are fulfilled. That means that people who were alive in 1833 will be alive when the Lord comes.<sup>688</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> PP Editor's Note: Waggoner was not correct in his understanding of "generation." See the Appendix article, "[This Generation Shall Not Pass.](#)"

In your question you call attention to the fact that it is seventy years since the last sign was given, and this fact shows that the end must now be very near. The last generation is seventy years old. When a man reaches that age, we say that he has not long to live. This is true of the world. Every year that passes brings nearer the end that cannot long be delayed.

People who read this chapter *Matthew 24* carelessly, will sometimes say:

“We cannot know anything about the end. Christ believed it was at hand in His day, for He said, ‘This generation shall not pass until all things are fulfilled.’”

But Christ was not speaking of the generation then living. He spoke of the generation that should have seen the signs.

Some say that Christ’s coming cannot be near, or He would have come before this, if we had entered on the last generation seventy years ago. He does not come because His people are not ready for Him; He is at the door, but He tarries there in mercy. Those who profess His name would be destroyed if He came upon these and found them unready. His coming is death to those who obey not the Gospel.

## **2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>8</sup> ...taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

By lives of obedience and loving service we may hasten the coming of the Lord.

## **2 Peter 3**

<sup>11</sup> Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

<sup>12</sup> Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?



But if His people delay, He will not tarry always. His word has been pledged that He will come to the generation that was alive seventy years ago.

The world is laying its plans on the basis that all things will continue as they are. But it is time for all Christians to awake and watch, with their lamps trimmed and burning. There is a great work to be done. The Gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness.

When Christ's people give themselves to Him to do His will and follow Him fully; when their means are withdrawn from selfish gratification and invested in the work of the Gospel, and their lives are devoted to His service, it will not be long before the glad message of the kingdom does its work and Christ appears to crown His saints with everlasting life.

# 191. The Seventh of Romans

Present Truth, October 8, 1903

A READER of the paper sends a request that we will take up the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Romans* in the “Corner,” as he does not understand it. It is impossible to deal with the chapter fully in one paper, but we will try to point out the lessons that it teaches.

Every Christian ought to be familiar with the epistle to the *Romans*. It deals comprehensively with the righteousness of God, and shows how He justifies sinners. The way to study the epistle is to read it all through, at one time, over and over again until you see the meaning in it, and at the same time believe and apply to yourself every statement that you find in it.

Nothing clears up the more difficult passages of Scripture like believing them. The Word is alive and it gives life. When you receive the life of the Word, you have the Word in yourself, and your eyes are opened to understand what God has written, for you are in harmony with it.

The 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Romans* must be read with the chapters that precede and follow it. If you will do this carefully, and often enough to become familiar with the terms used, so that you appreciate their force and meaning the chapter will be plain.

The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter deals with dying to sin and being raised up to walk in newness of life. This experience is the one represented in baptism, by immersion. We are baptized into Christ's death, and arise to the life which He received at His resurrection. This death delivers us from our sins.

## **Romans 6 [RV]**

<sup>7</sup> He that has died is justified from sin.

This point is amplified in the first part of the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter. The law has dominion over a man...

## **Romans 7 [RV]**

<sup>1</sup> ...for so long time as he lives.

The sinner has broken the law, and is condemned to death. Death would satisfy the claim of the law, but as long as a man lives he cannot get away from its condemnation. But when the law is satisfied by the death of the sinner, the sinner is no more. He has paid the penalty with his life. God has made a way of escape, so that the sinner can die, and yet live again, freed from the condemnation. The sinner must die, however, to attain the freedom.

Paul illustrates the situation by a marriage. A man and a woman are married. Both are bound by the law to each other as long as both are alive. The union may be an irksome one, but the law demands that it continue until one of the parties die. For one to leave the union and marry another would be adultery.

**Romans 7 [RV]**

<sup>3</sup> But if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man.

The union is between the law and the flesh.

<sup>5</sup> When we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

That is, even when the flesh tries its hardest to bring forth that which shall be according to the law, the result is only sin. The marriage of the law and the flesh is hopeless bondage. It brings forth nothing but sin, and the harder the flesh tries to obey the law the more it receives condemnation, for its efforts only multiply its sinfulness. There is only one way to dissolve the partnership. One of the parties must die.

Some think to solve the difficulty by saying that the law has died. But God's law cannot die. The man who thinks it is dead is deceived, and will continue in bondage, because he will not realize that it is he who must die to terminate the union. He will find at last that the law is alive and condemns him to death, if he does not accept God's way of escape, which is that he shall die.

Now we see the advantage of being baptized into the death of Christ.

**Romans 7 [RV]**

<sup>4</sup> Wherefore, my brethren, you also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that you should be joined to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God.

In baptism into Christ's death, we die to the law, and that terminates the old marriage, all the offspring of which were sins, and we are free to contract another marriage, this time with Jesus Christ. Then we bring forth fruit unto God.

<sup>6</sup> Now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held: so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.

The life of Christ is not less righteous than the law was. In fact, both are in perfect harmony. How is it that now we bring forth good, whereas under the former union we could only give birth to evil?

The change is here. Two utterly discordant principles were joined together in the union of the spiritual law and the flesh. The law was something apart from the flesh. The flesh in itself is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

**Romans 8 [RV]**

<sup>7</sup> Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.

The conditions were perfect for an unhappy marriage. When we are joined to Christ, it is an actual union. He makes us one with himself in everything, so that it is He in us and we in Him. Thus the same righteousness which characterizes Him is also revealed in us. Because it is His life, it is ours also. So our goodness is not a striving to obey an external command, but a manifestation of life. We serve in the spirit.

The question may arise, and Paul anticipated it,

“Is the law bad, if its effect is to bring forth sin?”

God forbid. We had not known anything about sin but for the law.

**Romans 7 [RV]**

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, You shall not covet.

We were alive apart from the law once; then came the commandment, and as soon as it entered it revealed sin.

<sup>9</sup> And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

I, who was alive, apart from the law, died, and sin took my place. It used to be myself. Now there is a change, and myself has become two, the law and sin, the same as in the first marriage.

The law of God is in my mind, and I consent to it that it is good.

<sup>16</sup> But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good.

The law of sin is in my members, and whenever I try to do good, it is sin that appears and overcomes.

<sup>18</sup> For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not.

<sup>19</sup> For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice.

<sup>20</sup> But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwells in me.

<sup>21</sup> I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present.

Sin is so hateful that it even uses the law of God to mock me. It holds up a vision of goodness, and when I strive to attain to it, sin defeats me:

## **Romans 7 [RV]**

<sup>11</sup> For sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me.

<sup>13</sup> Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good;—that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful.

Then follows the description of the hopeless struggle on the part of the flesh to do what it sees by the law to be right. Everyone knows that it is truly told. The law is spiritual. I am carnal. What I hate that I do. What I want to do, I cannot.

<sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

<sup>15</sup> For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that I do.

It is no longer my old careless self. The awakening has brought to me the bitter conviction that I am sin. Sin is in me, it is my nature. I cannot be what I want to be, and the more I try to, the more hopelessly I am sunk in failure. The more I see of that which is right and true, the deeper is my condemnation.

<sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am I who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?

## **2 Corinthians 9**

<sup>15</sup> Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!

Because Christ has died in my flesh, I can die with Him by faith, being baptized into His death. This includes also being raised with Him, and what this means can only be understood by experience. It brings into my life the righteousness and power of God. Thus I am set free from my lawful marriage, and am closely united in marriage to Him who is raised from the dead. Then there is no condemnation for me.

## **Romans 8 [RV]**

<sup>2</sup> The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.

I am not terrified now by the law, for the life in which I have hid my life reveals the righteousness of the law.

**Romans 3 [RV]**

<sup>21</sup> Now apart from the law a righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

Henceforth I do not walk in the flesh, which is enmity against God, and wholly sin, for:

**Romans 8 [RV]**

<sup>9</sup> You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Are you struggling in the miry clay depicted in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter? If you are, you need not flounder there any longer. God's plan is simple. The labor and the failure and the bondage are for those who reject God's way. Simple faith in His word sets our feet on the rock and puts the new song in our mouths.

**Romans 6 [RV]**

<sup>11</sup> Even so reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

If you will reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, you will find His own freedom from sin.

<sup>7</sup> For he that is dead is freed from sin.

# Appendix

*Some of these articles  
were written by other authors.  
Credits are given below the title.*



# 1. A Story of True Love

Present Truth, September 20, 1900<sup>689</sup>

**I**T BEGINS with the time when the foundations of the earth were laid, when God spoke, and it was, when:

## **Genesis 1**

<sup>31</sup> God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.

And:

## **Job 38**

<sup>7</sup> The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

That was the wedding song, celebrating the union of God and His creation; for since the world to come will be only the restoration of the world that was, it could be said as truly then as ever that:

## **Isaiah 54**

<sup>5</sup> Your Maker is your husband...the God of the whole earth shall He be called.

As the woman was taken from the man, to be his wife, it was but the continuation of God's order, that His spouse should be the entire new creation which proceeded from Him. The earth and its inhabitants were joined to the Lord:

## **2 Corinthians 11**

<sup>2</sup> I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

<sup>3</sup> But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

This shows us plainly that Eve was created the bride of the Lord. But it was not Eve alone, but all men in her; for when God

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<sup>689</sup> This article is referred to in article 6, "[Living Without Sin.](#)"

made man, He made him male and female, and called their name man.

### **Genesis 5**

<sup>1</sup> This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God He made him;

<sup>2</sup> Male and female He created them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

In Adam all the generations of mankind were created. The creation is the manifestation of the love of God. In it He gave His life; for it is His offspring; and His life is love.

### **Jeremiah 31**

<sup>3</sup> The Lord appeared of old unto me, saying, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

In everything that He has made, His everlasting power and Divinity—His own Being—are clearly seen. Man in Eden, with the delight of God in him, and his land married, formed the perfect picture of the bliss of true love.

### **The Marriage Covenant Broken**

But into this Eden the tempter came. By his subtlety he seduced man from his allegiance to his Lord. He did this by instilling doubts into their mind. Doubt is the death of love, and as soon as the first pair began to doubt God's love, the bond of union was broken.

By his artful wiles, the tempter succeeded in beguiling them away from their Maker and rightful Husband, and inducing them to yield themselves wholly to him. Here was the first adultery, which has bred a host of evils. It...

Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden.<sup>690</sup>

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<sup>690</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

## **James 4**

<sup>4</sup> You adulteresses! know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God.

## **James 1**

<sup>14</sup> Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

<sup>15</sup> Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished brings forth death.

That in the first sin man committed adultery, is evident from this: It was the attraction of the world that led them astray, for in the yielding to the temptation that was presented, we see the power of...

## **1 John 2**

<sup>16</sup> ...the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,

—which constitute the world. The pride of life was appealed to in the words,

## **Genesis 3**

<sup>5</sup> ...you shall be like God...

<sup>6</sup> And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

Thus they became wholly joined to the world, which is adultery. The former perfect union between God and his Maker, wherein they were “one flesh,”<sup>691</sup>—for the Word was made flesh in the beginning when man was created,—was completely broken, and a new union with Satan and sin was entered into. Then men began to walk:

## **Ephesians 2**

<sup>2</sup> According to the course this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of

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<sup>691</sup> *Genesis 2:24.*

disobedience.

## God's Faithful Love

Then began the long career of marital infidelity. But God did not break His covenant, which is everlasting, nor did He cast off the unfaithful bride.

### 2 Timothy 2

<sup>13</sup> If we believe not, yet He abides faithful; He cannot deny himself.

The faithful one had left His house; but instead of saying, "Let her go; she went of her own free will, and can come back when she gets ready," or, worse still, "she has rejected me, and I will have nothing more to do with her," He came to seek the erring one, and to beg her to come back.

There is nothing more humiliating than for a man to beg for reconciliation with one who has willfully turned away from him, despising his love, and publicly putting him to shame; yet that is just what the Lord did. Read the 3rd chapter of *Jeremiah*, and the whole of the book of *Hosea*. He says:

### Jeremiah 3

<sup>12</sup> Return you backsliding Israel, says the Lord; and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever.

<sup>13</sup> Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed my voice, says the Lord.

<sup>14</sup> Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

## Dying Broken-Hearted for Love

But the love of God is not merely in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. He gave the utmost proof of His everlasting love that could possibly be given:

## **Titus 2**

<sup>14</sup> He gave himself for us.

Life for Him was not worth living without the loved one, and so in His effort to reclaim her He humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross.

## **John 1**

<sup>11</sup> He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not.

They would not believe in His protestation of love, and they laughed Him to scorn. He was made the sport of the drunkards, and they that sat in the gate mocked Him. The very worst indignity was heaped upon Him, and spitting in the face was added to blows. Even this did not shake...

## **Ephesians 3**

<sup>19</sup> ...the love of Christ which passes knowledge,

—but it broke His heart, and He died literally broken-hearted, for love of those who were all unworthy of love.

In those blows and in that spitting we all had a part, for all we like sheep have gone astray.<sup>692</sup> When He was despised and rejected of men, and hid not His face from shame and spitting, we denied Him, and...

## **Isaiah 53**

<sup>3</sup> ...hid as it were our faces from Him.

And it was for us, for love of us, that He endured the cross.

## **Drawn by Power of Love**

And He is not dead in vain.

## **John 12**

<sup>32</sup> I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all unto me.

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<sup>692</sup> *Isaiah 53:6.*

## Jeremiah 31

<sup>3</sup> I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you.

That exhibition of love has broken down the enmity, the middle wall of partition<sup>693</sup> that we had built between us and Him, and as we gaze upon His cross, we say:

Love so amazing, so Divine  
Shall have my life, my soul, my all.<sup>694</sup>

And we give ourselves to Him, even as He gave himself to us.

## The Marriage Forbidden

But behold! There is an obstacle in the way. Just as, ravished by His love, we say,

“Lord, I am Yours,”

—forth steps “the old man,” “the body of sin”<sup>695</sup> and says:

“I forbid the bans; this marriage cannot take place.”

And why not, pray?

“For the reason that this woman is my wife; I am married to her, and I can bring the law to witness to the fact.”

## Romans 7

<sup>1</sup> Know you not that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

<sup>2</sup> For the woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives.

<sup>3</sup> So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another she shall be called an adulteress.

What a complicated case! The woman (we ourselves) is already an adulteress, because she is living in unlawful union with the

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<sup>693</sup> *Ephesians* 2:14.

<sup>694</sup> Isaac Watts, Hymn: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, 1707.

<sup>695</sup> *Romans* 6:6.

lust of the flesh; and she cannot go back to her lawful husband as long as the old man of sin lives; because the law will not allow any such double union. What shall be done?

### **Death the Only Way of Escape**

There is only one way out of the difficulty, and that method is so drastic that it looks like the end of everything. It is nothing else than death. The woman is a criminal, and worthy of death; for death is still the punishment of adultery. If we could only get rid of this seducer, whose presence is now hateful, since he is seen to be nothing but a death's head, we could be married to Him whom our soul loves.

Ah, but that is not so easy a matter. Marriage means the union of two, so that they become "one flesh,"<sup>696</sup> and just that intimate relation we sustain to the body of sin. Every fiber of our being is linked to sin, and sin is our own lord and master. Our wound is incurable; the disease is in the blood. So close and vital is the union between us and the body of death that it cannot be broken except by death. We are inseparably joined together until death us do part. When the body of sin dies,—the unlawful husband,—we must die too.

Well, why not? We must die anyhow, for we are but united to a body of death. Its embraces have infected us with the poison of death, and the fruit of the union is death. The question is, shall we wait until we are forced to die, against our will? or shall we, like our rightful Lord, lay down our life voluntarily, that we may take it again? We choose the latter.

Since we are united to death, and our life is nothing else but a living death, why not die at once? Let the separation from sin be effected, even though it wrench every nerve and fiber of our being, and drain our heart's blood. We choose rather to die with Him whose love is life, than to live with him whose love is hatred, sin, and death.

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<sup>696</sup> *Genesis 2:24.*

## United in Death

### Romans 6

<sup>3</sup> Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?

But death in Christ does not end all; for He laid down His life only to take it again.

### Romans 6

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

<sup>8</sup> If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

## This Seducer Destroyed

But what about the old man of sin? Ah, Christ is not the minister of sin. He loves us well enough to die for us, and since His love is life, it delivers us from death, and raises us up, that we may live with Him.

But do not for a moment think that He who does this to win us back to our rightful union with Him, will do the same for our seducer, who must necessarily die when we do, since He is bound up with our flesh.

No; we were crucified with Christ, and buried with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. It will never again have a resurrection without our consent—never as long as we abide in Christ:

### Romans 6

<sup>7</sup> For he that is dead is freed from sin.



## Dead to the Law

### Romans 7

<sup>4</sup> Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Mind, it does not say that the law is dead; far from it; it is the law that has put us to death as criminals.

### Galatians 2

<sup>19</sup> I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

A dead law could not put anybody to death. It was the law that gave me the knowledge of my sinful condition:

### Romans 3

<sup>20</sup> ...for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

By the law I knew that I was living in adultery, and therefore doomed to death. I consented unto the law, that it is good, and delivered myself up, to receive the death penalty. But I died with Christ, and not alone, so that I have a resurrection in Him.

### Galatians 2

<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I; but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The person who committed the sin is dead, and another has taken his place, and therefore I am...

### Romans 7

<sup>6</sup> ...delivered from the law,

—inasmuch as I am dead to that wherein I was held, namely, sin. The same law which before condemned me as an adulteress, now witnesses to my lawful union with Christ. It reckons me, the sinner, a dead man; and as long as I reckon myself likewise to be

dead unto sin, but alive unto God, and yield myself unto God, as one that is alive from the dead, it will not condemn me, for:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

### **Alive Unto God**

Being now married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, we...

### **Romans 7**

<sup>4</sup> ...bring forth fruit unto God.

The fruit is unto holiness:

### **Romans 6**

<sup>22</sup> But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Now we are in harmony with God, and so in harmony with all His perfect creation. His law—His life—fills us, and directs our movements. We are one with Him, and He is the head of the body. The love that drew us holds us. The cords of love drew us to Him, and we are bound to Him by the ties that bound Him to the cross. His goodness brought us to repentance, and the contemplation of it keeps us faithful. Yea, we are kept by His faith.

### **Galatians 2**

<sup>20</sup> The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Think of it!

### **2 Timothy 2**

<sup>13</sup> If we believe not, He abides faithful; He cannot deny himself.

He was faithful in all our wandering from Him.

## **1 John 3**

<sup>5</sup> In Him is no sin.

Now being one with Him, we live not by anything that pertains to ourselves, but by Him.

## **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>17</sup> Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who has reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ.

So we live by His faith, and therefore as long as we abide in Him, we are as secure from sin as He himself.

## **The New Creation**

The new creation has begun, even while we are in this tabernacle, for the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal flesh.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>8</sup> They that are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Since “all things are become new,” we experience the joy, the blessedness, and the power of the world to come. The Spirit is the firstfruits of our inheritance. We are thenceforth to live (not merely is it our duty so to live, but the grace and strength thereto are given to us) as we shall continue to live in the new earth.

The only difference between the condition now and in the future world is this: Then we shall live perfect lives, free from sin, having no temptations, no sinful flesh, nothing to contend with; whereas now we live the selfsame life in spite of all these difficulties. We live in the flesh as though the flesh were dead and buried, and we had already received the resurrection body. This glorious freedom is possible only by our death with Him who is the resurrection and the life; but it is possible:

## **1 John 2**

<sup>6</sup> He that says he abides in Him, ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.

Do you say that this is a hard saying? Oh say not so; it is a glorious saying. It is the good and joyful news of salvation. It is the proclamation of emancipation...

### **Romans 8**

<sup>21</sup> ...from the bondage of corruption, and the deliverance into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

How can it be hard to live that life of righteousness, when it is no more I, but Christ, that lives in me?<sup>697</sup> What marvelous love, and what a transforming power it has! It changes us into the Divine image. And it is...

### **Song of Solomon 8**

<sup>6</sup> ...stronger than death,

—since it has conquered death. Our union with Christ was effected in death. It was at the worst state that sin and Satan can reduce men to, that we were united to Him in love; therefore:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>38</sup> I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

<sup>39</sup> Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Have you this persuasion?

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<sup>697</sup> *Galatians 2:20.*

## 2. A Royal Visitor

Present Truth, October 11, 1900<sup>698</sup>

### Revelation 3

<sup>20</sup> Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

**W**HO says this? Is it some beggar seeking shelter and food and rest? Ah, no; it is the King of kings, who has:

### Ephesians 3

<sup>8</sup> ...unsearchable riches.

It is the One who is the Bread of life, and whose birthplace is the house of bread; the one who is:

### Psalms 90

<sup>1</sup> ...our dwelling place in all generations.

It is He who is...

### Isaiah 25

<sup>4</sup> ...a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat.

And He who gives rest to the weary and heavy laden.<sup>699</sup> It is not as a suppliant, asking favors for himself, but as the dispenser of priceless gifts, that He seeks admission. And to whom does He appeal for admission? Is it to the noble, the wealthy, the esteemed? No; it is to the...

### Revelation 3

<sup>17</sup> ...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

To the wretched He comes offering ease; to the miserable, joy and gladness; to the poor, everlasting inheritance; to the blind; the light of heaven and clear vision; and to the naked, the pure,

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<sup>698</sup> This article is referred to in article 27, "[God's Long-Suffering and Justice](#)."

<sup>699</sup> *Matthew* 11:28.

white robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation. He comes to every need...

### **Philippians 4**

<sup>19</sup> ...according to His riches in glory.

He comes to satisfy every longing of the human heart, and to fill the hungry soul with goodness. In Him all fullness dwells, and He freely gives it to all who will receive.

“But how can I let Him in? How can I get the door open? I am helpless and ignorant; I do not know what to do.”

Who has not had that feeling of helpless despondency? Let us see if we cannot remove it, and make the way clear. The answer is at hand:

### **John 1**

<sup>12</sup> As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

Unbelief is the only thing that shuts Him out; whoever believes Him receives Him.

You are doubtless aware of what well-meaning friends have told you, that you must get the pile of rubbish away from the door of your heart, in order that it may open to the royal visitor; and your heart sinks, because you have tried to remove it, but in spite of all your efforts it still remains. You say that there is not possibly room for Him and the sin both together, and that you cannot get rid of the sin, so you cannot do what you would, namely, welcome Jesus as an abiding presence.

Well, others have had the same difficulty, until they found out that this door swings outward, so that no amount of rubbish of sin piled up inside can keep it from opening. They let go the latch of unbelief that held it, and, lo, it swung wide, open, and there was nothing to hinder the Saviour from entering.

Christ is the light of the world, and when the true Light shines the darkness must flee away. So as soon as the veil of unbelief

falls from the windows of the soul, the bright shining of the Sun of righteousness must necessarily dispel all the darkness of sin. You do not have to drive it out; it goes because the light scatters it. In that light of life the blindest cannot help seeing.

But you say that you are bound, and cannot move hand or foot. Your iniquities have taken you, and you are held with the cords of your sins, so that you cannot rise to open the door and let the Saviour in. This difficulty is provided for also.

Suppose you were ill in bed, unable to rise, and your attendant was away, and a visitor should call on you; you hear his knock, but you cannot go to the door. What can you do? You can say, "Come in," and your friend will walk in. Even so with Christ. Nothing but unbelief can bar the door of the heart; believe that He means what He says, when He knocks for admission, and say:

"Come in, Lord; the door is unlocked; there is nothing to hinder your entrance; come, and welcome."

Do not fear that He will not hear your invitation, no matter how feeble your voice, He who bends down from the highest heaven,

### **Psalm 102**

<sup>20</sup> ...to hear the groaning of the prisoner,

—and who hears the groaning of the speechless, inanimate creation, will certainly hear your cry, when He stands at the door. He understands your thought afar off, even before you do, and He responds to it.

Once more you ask:

"How may I know that He is knocking at the door of my heart?"

Have you never felt your heart beat? Have you never felt the thrill of life in your body? Do you not know that He is the life, and that in Him we live, and move, and have our being? Your life-

blood, and the life-breath that purifies it and keeps it coursing through your arteries and veins, is the revelation of His presence. Every second since you were born He has been knocking, knocking, knocking, while you, perhaps, have been denying His existence. Oh, what infinite patience and longsuffering!

What blessed assurance there is in this! Even though it be the last hour, so long as He continues knocking there is the certainty that He will come in if given permission. Do not fear that after He has so long and patiently sought for admission He will turn away when at last your dull ear is roused to hear His voice. "While there's life there's hope," because the life that we have is His, and He is the hope of His people.

Yes; our existence is the proof of the presence of the Lord; and since...

### **Acts 17**

<sup>26</sup> [He] gives to all life, and breath, and all things,

—that is the proof of His right to have complete possession and full control. That is what He is knocking for. Every pulse beat, every heaving of the chest, is a knock, reminding you of His right to rule in your heart and life.

He is the Prince of peace, yes, the King of righteousness and peace, and your sole duty is to...

### **Colossians 3**

<sup>15</sup> Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.

If you receive Him with thanksgiving,

### **Philippians 4**

<sup>7</sup> The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Christ is the rightful King of the universe. Our part, therefore, is to say to Him,



### **Matthew 6**

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

We are to say:

“Lord, I belong to You; I recognize your right to reign in me, and I give You full liberty to have your own way, to live your perfect life in me; live in this earthly temple just as You do in your sanctuary in the heavens.”

The prayer given by Him is not a vain one; He can live as sinless a life in sinful flesh as in the paradise of God.

“In what am I to yield to Him? How shall I know?”

### **Romans 3**

<sup>20</sup> By the law is the knowledge of sin.

And the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, uses it to send conviction, that we may know in what places we are still harboring rebellion in the realm of our lives.

### **Isaiah 55**

<sup>3</sup> Hear, and your soul shall live.

He says:

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>3</sup> You shall have no other gods before me.

And, hearing it, we respond:

“Lord, I thank You for the commandment and the promise; take away everything that usurps your place.”

He says,

### **Exodus 20**

<sup>7</sup> You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

And we say,

“Lord, I confess that I have profaned your name; and I thank You that You will write it upon me, so that it will be my life.”

Again He says.

**Exodus 20**

<sup>8</sup> Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

And we reply,

“Let your presence, dear Lord, abide with me, that I may have rest indeed from all sin, and as I triumph in the works of your hands I will ever delight in your holy memorial.”

When He says,

**Exodus 20**

<sup>13</sup> You shall not kill.

**1 John 3**

<sup>15</sup> Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer.

We can only say,

“Lord, let your love be shed abroad in my heart continually by your Spirit, so that all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, may be put away from me, with all malice, and that I may be kind and tender-hearted, forgiving all even as You have forgiven me.”

He says,

**Exodus 20**

<sup>14</sup> You shall not commit adultery.

And again we respond,

“Dear Lord, my Master, live in me your own pure life, that I may be faithful to You in every thought; let me ever be joined to You, a member of your body, of your flesh, and of your bones; let us be no more twain, but one new man.”

If we are perfectly joined to Christ, we cannot be unlawfully joined to anybody else.

And so we might go through the list. Whenever we become convicted of a sin, we simply say:

“Lord, it belongs to You; do with it according to your will.”

When a hitherto unknown duty is presented to us, we say:

“Lord, I have taken You, not for worse, but for better, even for all that You are, and I pray You live this new phase of your life also in me.”

If we thus heartily receive the Lord, no longer holding Him in the inner sanctuary, living face to face with Him, we shall find day by day that even though supping with Him involves drinking deeply of the cup of suffering, nevertheless in His presence in fullness of joy. When He abides in us, we abide in Him, and we can say:

### **Psalm 23**

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies:  
You anoint my head with oil: my cup runs over.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

### 3. Fallen Angels

Present Truth, August 7, 1902<sup>700</sup>

By Augusta W. Heald

**T**HERE is much obscurity in the popular mind as to the origin and nature of Satan, and as Scripture is its own interpreter, a few passages on the subject of “fallen angels” may give a ray of light to those who desire it.

Evil angels were not created *as such*, but fell from their first estate through sin:

#### **2 Peter 2**

<sup>4</sup> God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

The instigator of this revolt was the most exalted angel in heaven, second only to the Son of God. To him it was said:

#### **Ezekiel 28**

<sup>12</sup> You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

<sup>13</sup> You have been in Eden, the garden of God...

<sup>14</sup> You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so...

<sup>15</sup> You were *perfect* in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

The sin of Satan was *pride*:

#### **Ezekiel 28**

<sup>17</sup> Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty.

#### **Isaiah 14**

<sup>12</sup> How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!...

<sup>13</sup> For you have said in your heart,...I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north;

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<sup>700</sup> This article is referred to in article 123, “[The Personality of Satan.](#)”

<sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be *like the Most High*.

In consequence of Satan's sin, there was war in heaven:

### **Revelation 12**

<sup>7</sup> Michael [Christ] and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

<sup>8</sup> And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

They were cast out into the earth:

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

They never repent, but are...

### **Jude**

<sup>6</sup> ...reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Satan shows his enmity toward the Son of God by accusing and persecuting those for whom Christ shed His blood.<sup>701</sup> Satan and fallen angels will finally be destroyed, together with wicked men:

### **Matthew 25**

<sup>41</sup> Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

They will be cut off, root and branch:

### **Malachi 4**

<sup>1</sup> For, behold the day comes, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

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<sup>701</sup> See *Revelation* 12:10, 17.

## 4. Earth's Future Glory

Present Truth, August 14, 1902<sup>702</sup>

By Wm. Covert

ON the other side of the resurrection come to view, upon our earth, scenes and fields of matchless splendor. Even to a murmuring people the Lord made a happy promise saying,

### **Numbers 14**

<sup>21</sup> As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

The expression, "As truly as I live," signifies that the Father's life is pledged to the accomplishment of the promise. This pledge was not intended alone for the wandering Jews, but was given to encourage all people to press toward the promised land.

It will require a complete agreement in righteousness between the earth and the people upon it to bring about the condition of glory promised. The people must all be righteous, that they may inherit the land for ever. The prophet says,

### **Isaiah 60**

<sup>21</sup> Your people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

In writing of this blessed condition, John said,

### **Revelation 22 [RV]**

<sup>3</sup> There shall be no curse any more.

The curse being removed from the land, and the people all made righteous, there can be nothing to hinder the manifestation of glory.

### **Isaiah 60**

<sup>18</sup> Violence shall no more be heard of in your land,

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<sup>702</sup> This article is referred to in article 127, "[This World and the World to Come.](#)"

—says the prophet. And evidently it cannot be, for righteous people do no violence. Neither...

### **Isaiah 60**

<sup>18</sup> ...wasting nor destruction [will be seen] within your borders.

Under the influences above stated, nothing amiss can take place. Not only is there to be an absence of things evil, but all good things shall abound.

### **Isaiah 35**

<sup>10</sup> The ransomed of the Lord...

—those who will be called to the court in heaven during the millennial judgment,

<sup>10</sup> ...shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Then the riches of God's grace within the earth will manifest itself in beauty and fragrance through the whole vegetable kingdom. The adaptability and cooperation of all things will be perfect. Then:

### **Isaiah 35**

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

<sup>2</sup> It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

Continuing to write of the glory that shall be everywhere manifested, the prophet says,

<sup>6</sup> In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Thus the havoc wrought by sin shall be corrected, and righteousness in all things maintained. In the good time coming, the

love of God will reveal itself through all nature. By all their physical senses men will perceive this goodness. The psalmist says,

### **Psalms 34**

<sup>8</sup> Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Take honey in the mouth, and let the palate know its sweetness. Eat the rosy peach, and relish its pleasantness. Smell the lily and the rose, and enjoy their fragrance. Look, and admire their beauty, and understand that in all these ways God is manifesting His life. By these He is adapting himself to man's understanding.

This is not pantheism, but God manifested. Satan through sin is endeavoring to blind the perceptions of mankind, so that God cannot be known. But the curse that sin has wrought is to be so wholly removed, that the knowledge of the Lord may fill the earth as water fills the sea. Then all shall know Him from the least to the greatest.

Even the lower animals will be affected by the restoration to such a degree that the viciousness of their natures will be removed. Then shall be fulfilled the scripture where it is written,

### **Isaiah 11**

<sup>6</sup> The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:

—and the reason assigned is,

<sup>9</sup> ...for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

The above promises make known the glorious future of our earth. No orbit holds a world more beautiful than ours will be. No place can furnish blessings more sweet than will then be known by the inhabitants of our earth.



## 5. Moses and Elijah

Present Truth, October 16, 1902<sup>703</sup>

Unknown Author (credited to *Signs of the Times*)

**A**MONG the difficulties which face those who are journeying from the wilderness of pagan falsehood, concerning the immortality of the soul and consciousness in death, with its innumerable quagmires, is the account given in the Gospels of the transfiguration of Christ. It is recorded in *Matthew* 17:1-9; *Mark* 9:1-10, and *Luke* 9:28-36. We give the story as told by Luke:

### Luke 9

<sup>27</sup> But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

<sup>28</sup> And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

<sup>29</sup> And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening.

<sup>30</sup> And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elijah:

<sup>31</sup> Who appeared in glory, and spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

<sup>32</sup> But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him.

<sup>33</sup> And it came to pass, as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah: not knowing what he said.

<sup>34</sup> While he thus spoke, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

<sup>35</sup> And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear Him.

<sup>36</sup> And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

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<sup>703</sup> This article was referred to in article 132, "[Christ the Firstfruits.](#)"

A few facts will make plain this interesting scripture.

1. It was given as encouragement to the disciples. At the baptism of Jesus, God had acknowledged Him as His Son; but as time passed on, as Jesus did not meet the disciples' wrong idea of the Messianic kingdom, it was necessary to teach them what the nature of that eternal kingdom should be. Therefore Jesus declared,

**Luke 9**

<sup>27</sup> I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

Matthew says,

**Matthew 16**

<sup>28</sup> ...till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom;

Mark,

**Mark 9**

<sup>1</sup> ...till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

2. Now when Christ comes, His reign in glory and power will begin; for:

**Matthew 25**

<sup>31</sup> When the Son of man shall come in His glory,...then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.

3. There will be two classes among His subjects who will share with Him that glory:

- a) There will be those who sleep, who will at that time be raised from the dead, and
- b) Those who are translated without seeing death. This the apostle clearly shows in *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-17; *1 Corinthians* 15:50-54.

4. To show His disciples that coming and kingdom in its glory, there must be manifest the glorified King, and the two classes of heirs upon whom Christ's power will be manifest at His coming. Did He reveal this?

5. He did. Christ was the glorified King, clad in regal robes of shining white, with glorified countenance. The saints who will be raised from the dead at His coming were represented by Moses, who had died, but who, raised from the dead, “appeared in glory.”<sup>704</sup>

Michael is the name of our blessed Lord as Archangel, or Chief of all the angels. It means, “Who is like God.” The devil claims the dead as his lawful captives. Christ, or “Michael your Prince,”<sup>705</sup> is the Prince of Life, by whose voice and power the dead are raised.<sup>706</sup> When, therefore, the controversy arose between Michael and the devil over the body of Moses,<sup>707</sup> we may be sure that the Prince of Life was the victor, and Moses was raised from the dead, the representative of all the righteous dead who sleep in Jesus. Elijah, who was translated without seeing death, was there, representing the living saints, who will be changed to immortality when Jesus comes.

6. Thus Christ showed some of His disciples His coming glory, to encourage them in the dark hours through which they were soon to pass; and if they had not suffered themselves to sleep, they would have heard, from the conversation of Moses and Elijah with Jesus, that the Master was to die, and would not have been surprised when death came. God permitted them to hear that conversation concerning Christ’s death, and He gave them a glimpse of the triumphant glory beyond.

7. It was thus that Peter understood it when he became enlightened. He says:

## **2 Peter 1**

<sup>16</sup> For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

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<sup>704</sup> *Luke 9:31.*

<sup>705</sup> *Daniel 10:21; 12:1.*

<sup>706</sup> *1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:27-29.*

<sup>707</sup> *Jude 9.*

<sup>17</sup> For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

<sup>18</sup> And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.

The Mount of Transfiguration was God's assurance of the hope beyond the tomb.

Studying this story in the light of the Word, we clearly see that it lends no support to the doctrine of an immortal soul, or a conscious state of the dead. Rather, it shows the necessity of the resurrection, and Christ's second coming, at which time only, the hope of His children of all ages will be consummated.

## 6. Our Defense Against Evil

Present Truth, November 20, 1902 (also in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 323-325).<sup>708</sup>

By Ellen G. White

CLOSELY connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart.

### Matthew 12

<sup>34</sup> Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are.

It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said,

<sup>36</sup> Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

<sup>37</sup> For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.

Then He added a warning to those who had been impressed by His words, who had heard Him gladly, but who had not surrendered themselves for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not only by resistance but by neglect that the soul is destroyed.

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<sup>708</sup> This article is referred to in article 142, "[The Unpardonable Sin \(1903\)](#)."

## Matthew 12

<sup>43</sup> When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, [said Jesus,] he walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

<sup>44</sup> Then he says, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished.

<sup>45</sup> Then he goes, and takes with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there.

There were many in Christ's day, as there are today, over whom the control of Satan for the time seemed broken; through the grace of God they were set free from the evil spirits that had held dominion over the soul. They rejoiced in the love of God; but, like the stony-ground hearers of the parable, they did not abide in His love. They did not surrender themselves to God daily, that Christ might dwell in the heart<sup>709</sup>; and when the evil spirit returned, with "seven other spirits more wicked than himself," they were wholly dominated by the power of evil.

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan.

But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place.

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<sup>709</sup> *Ephesians* 3:17.

The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>45</sup> The last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so, [said Jesus,] shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven's invitation to repent. Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.

In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead listen to the agents of Satan, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope or pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God.

## 7. This Generation Shall Not Pass

This article is referred to in article 190, "The Last Generation."

By Frank Zimmerman

### Matthew 24

<sup>34</sup> Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

THERE was a common misunderstanding prevalent among Adventists in the mid to late 1800's, that the "generation" referred to in this prophecy given by Christ, was a period of time, covering the average lifespan of a human on this earth (i.e., about 70 years). Most likely the length of this "lifespan" was based on texts such as:

### Psalms 90

<sup>10</sup> The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Josiah Litch dated the "generation" from the dark day of 1780, and wrote in 1842:

But if it is understood of a generation of *threescore years and ten*, the age of man, and applied to those who saw the beginning of these signs, sixty-two years ago, then seventy years, or a generation, will not pass away before the last event will take place. About seven years more remain of the generation; but they cannot be fulfilled before Christ comes, without destroying his word of promise.<sup>710</sup>

James White wrote, in 1868:

And the very generation of men that live after the three great signs are fulfilled, and who hear and reject the warning message, will drink the unmingled cup of the wrath of God. And those of this very generation who receive the message, suffer disappointment and endure the trials of the waiting position, will witness

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<sup>710</sup> Josiah Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, Vol. 1, Chap. 5: "The Signs of the Times".



the coming of Christ, and exclaim, “Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him.”<sup>711</sup>

J. N. Loughborough explained it this way:

The Lord’s appointed time for the people to learn a parable of the fig-tree dates this side of 1833. Here is the Lord’s time for the world to be aroused to the great truth that his coming is at the doors, and that his coming will be before the generation who hear that parable shall pass away.<sup>712</sup>

And again here:

The last of these events—the falling of the stars—was fulfilled in 1833. Since that date we have entered upon the last generation, the generation that shall not pass away until Christ shall come.<sup>713</sup>

Stephen Haskell said:

- Luke 21:28-31. The signs began to come to pass in 1780, and now they have come to pass.
- Matt. 24:33, margin. Saviour at the door.
- Luke 21:32; Matt. 24:34. This generation shall not pass till all these things are fulfilled. DA 632. It must be either the generation addressed by the Saviour or the generation that saw the signs fulfilled.
- Luke 11:29. The generation living in Christ’s day had only one sign, and therefore could not be the one that would not pass away until all things were fulfilled. DA 632, 406.
- Matt. 24:35. God’s word can not fail. DA 234, 235.
- Luke 21:34-36. Need of preparation.<sup>714</sup>

A. T. Jones wrote:

And the very generation of men that live after, the three great signs are fulfilled, and who hear and reject the warning message

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<sup>711</sup> James White, *Life Incidents*, “Present Position and Work,” 1868.

<sup>712</sup> J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement*, Chapter V, “The Second Advent Message,” 1905.

<sup>713</sup> J. N. Loughborough, *Last Day Tokens*, Chapter 4, “The Last Generation,” 1904.

<sup>714</sup> Stephen Haskell, *Bible Handbook*, “Second Advent of Christ,” 1919.

of Heaven, will drink the cup of the unmingled wrath of God.<sup>715</sup>

Jones wrote yet more clearly:

It is a solemn to contemplate, yet we firmly believe it is truth, the signs have been fulfilled, and that the generation which saw the wonderful shower of falling stars in 1833, the last of the signs, will not pass away till the Lord himself shall descend from heaven.<sup>716</sup>

E. J. Waggoner wrote:

Nothing can possibly be more clear than that He will come within one generation from the fulfillment of the signs which He has named, and that no one knows, other than God himself, what date within that generation will be the day of His coming.<sup>717</sup>

So, according to these statements, many Adventist expositors took a generation as 70 years, and dated it from the last of the “signs in the heavens,” namely the falling stars of 1833. 70 years added to 1833 would be 1903. They never actually mentioned the date, but it was clear from what they expounded that 1903 would mark the very near termination of that time period.

Even in 1903, the last year for this fulfillment according to their understanding, Waggoner still wrote:

His word has been pledged that He will come to the generation that was alive seventy years ago.<sup>718</sup>

However, Waggoner started to entertain the thought that Christ might “tarry” because of His people not being ready:

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<sup>715</sup> A. T. Jones, *An Exposition of Matthew 24*, “This Generation Shall Not Pass,” 1890.

<sup>716</sup> *Idem*, “This Generation”.

<sup>717</sup> E. J. Waggoner, *The Present Truth*, “Therefore Be Ye Also Ready,” April 15, 1897.

<sup>718</sup> E. J. Waggoner, *The Present Truth*, “The Editor’s Private Corner. The Last Generation,” October 1, 1903.

Some say that Christ's coming cannot be near, or He would have come before this, if we had entered on the last generation seventy years ago. He does not come because His people are not ready for Him, He is at the door, but He tarries there in mercy. Those who profess His name would be destroyed if He came upon these and found them unready.<sup>719</sup>

This makes me wonder if there was a mini-disappointment when it became clear that the work was not going to end at that time. This could explain some of the anxiety around re-organization in 1901 and how A. T. Jones was very discouraged that this reorganization did not go as he thought was necessary for the quick finishing of the work.

William Miller, by the way, understood the *Matthew 24* statement differently. He interpreted "this generation" to mean the elect of God:

Here is the great stumbling-block to many. Christ is talking about His elect, His children, and His generation; and not, as some will have it, about the generations that then lived on the earth; for they did undoubtedly pass off, a large share of them; for it was about thirty-six years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

But His kingdom has never been taken from the earth. Although they have been hunted from one part of the earth to another; although they have been driven into caves and dens of mountains; have been slain, burnt, sawn asunder; have wandered as pilgrims and strangers on the earth;—yet the "blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church;" and Christ has had, and will have, a people on the earth, until His second coming. 1 Peter 2:9; "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," etc.

The Psalmist says, "A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Psalm 22:30. I humbly believe that Christ has quoted the sentiment contained in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Psalm, 25<sup>th</sup> to last verse:

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<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*

“Of old have You laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of your hands. They shall perish, but You shall endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall You change them, and they shall be changed; but You are the same, and your years shall have no end. The children of your servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before You.”

Here we see the Psalmist has expressed the same sentiment that I understand Christ to have given in these two verses, which I conclude is the proper explanation.<sup>720</sup>

Charles Fitch explains it this way:

What then? “A seed shall serve Him; it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation.” The generation of Christ’s seed, then, shall not pass away from this world, until the things which Christ spoke of are fulfilled.<sup>721</sup>

The Millerite interpretation has stood the test of time, and if anything, may even have more luster, when considered in the light of the question “How long?” in *Daniel* 8:13. I quote from the book, *God’s Way in the Sanctuary*, the first Chapter, “The Landmarks Stand”:

“Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spoke, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

For a very long time prior to the giving of this vision, the sanctuary and the host had been trodden underfoot with the consequent loss of the daily and the deprivation of the land. It was still to go on for a long time into the future but not forever. There was to come a time when never more would the sanctuary and the

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<sup>720</sup> William Miller, *Miller’s Works, Volume 2, Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ about the Year 1843*, Lecture 1, “The Second Appearing of Christ,” 1842.

<sup>721</sup> Charles Fitch, *The Glory of God in the Earth*, “Conclusion,” 1843.

host be trodden underfoot and the daily taken away. That time would be at the end of the two thousand, three hundred days.

With the advent of that date would be the assurance that, inasmuch as God's true people would never again be brought into Babylonian bondage, and would never again be deprived of the sanctuary and the daily, the work would be finished, an end made of sin and sinners, everlasting righteousness brought in, and Christ exalted forever as the King of kings and Prince of Peace.

It must never be overlooked that *Daniel* 8:14 is the answer to the question put in the previous verse. Therefore, the determination of the date when the time period ends is the declaration to God's army that they have before them the perfect opportunity to complete their commission, for they know that never again will they be enslaved, lose the sanctuary and its marvelous High Priest, or the daily ministrations of that priesthood.

Thus the Scripture, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," ("...restored to its rightful state." RSV), is of priceless value to God's true people. No wonder it is regarded askance by the enemies of God's truth. Let it be. The true sheep will rejoice in possession of so wonderful a gem of living truth. Inspired by its promise, armed by the power of the God who spoke it, they will go forward as the mightiest army in human history, filled with the love, wisdom, character, and power of the Almighty to vanquish the forces of darkness—forever.

Then "...those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." *Daniel* 12:3. RSV<sup>722</sup>

The question, "How long?" of *Daniel* 8, is answered "unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (or properly restored)." After 1844, as Fred Wright explained, the message of the gospel, and the connection of the people of God to the Sanctuary in heaven and Christ's work there, would never be lost again, so it would go on to completeness.

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<sup>722</sup> F. T. Wright, *God's Way in the Sanctuary*, Chapter 1, "The Landmarks Stand."

That's exactly what *Matthew 24* states: "this generation," that is, the people "generated" or "created anew" by the gospel message that the Lord brings at that time, just after the three signs appear in the heavens, will not pass away; there will be a continuous line of spiritually-born people who carry the message unto completion, to the "perfect day."<sup>723</sup> There will be no more sliding into bondage and darkness so that the message is entirely lost, and the work of recovery has to start all over again.

*Revelation 10:7* states:

### **Revelation 10**

<sup>7</sup> In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished.

And the seventh angel includes:

### **Revelation 11**

<sup>18</sup> And the nations were angry, and your wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should give reward unto your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear your name, small and great; and should destroy them which destroy the earth.

The time of the dead to be judged started in 1844. The nations were angry shortly after that. In this volume of Waggoner's articles, there are plenty of references to current events that showed the preparations for war which were taking place in Waggoner's day, and which eventually culminated in the two world wars, as well as many other battles. And the destroying of the earth is going ahead quite well, with the changes in climate, effects of pollution, extinction of species, etc.

The generation of God, those who were regenerated by His everlasting gospel, those who have tasted of the "powers of the world to come,"<sup>724</sup> will never pass from the earth, until Christ comes. He will have a seed to greet Him at His coming, in spite of

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<sup>723</sup> *Proverbs 4:18.*

<sup>724</sup> *Hebrews 6:5.*

their small numbers, and the massive powers arraigned against them, and the very real danger of the extinction of human life on the planet. But they “will not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” Thank the Lord!

