

# Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

December 1999

*“Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (1 Timothy 1:2) We only have one month to go before the year 2000. None of us can be sure what will happen, but there is one thing we can be sure of. If we love God, and build a close relationship with Him, He will cause all things to work together for our good. I pray that you will take this month to focus on your relationship with God, and trust in Him completely to supply all your needs. *“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”* (Isaiah 54:17)

## Is God’s Moral Law Still in Effect?

by Lynnford Beachy

In recent months we have been examining the issue of the Sabbath. For those of you who have read these articles there should be no doubt in your minds as to which day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord. (If you have not read these articles, please contact us and request the *Present Truth* articles dealing with the Sabbath.) Yet, it appears to me that this is not the issue with many. Although many Christians know that Saturday, the seventh day of the week, is the Sabbath of the Lord, rather than Sunday, the first day of the week, they believe that the Sabbath commandment is no longer in effect, and therefore neglect to keep holy the seventh day of the week. So in reality it is not a matter of whether Saturday is the Sabbath, but whether the Sabbath commandment is a requirement for Christians today. This study is designed to examine what the Bible says concerning this issue.

Let’s consider the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai. *“And God spake all these words.”* (Exodus 20:1) God did not entrust the giving of the Ten Commandments to any man, but spoke them Himself. *“For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?”* (Deuteronomy 5:26) It was an awesome thing for humans to hear the voice of the living God.

What does God say concerning those things that have come out of His mouth? *“My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”* (Psalm

89:34) God says that He will not change anything that has gone out of His lips. More specifically God says that He will not alter the Ten Commandments. *“The works of his hands are verity and judgment; **all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.**”* (Psalm 111:7, 8)

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, wrote, *“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.”* (Ecclesiastes 3:14) Whatever God does, it will last forever. Man is not permitted to add anything to it or take anything away from it.

John wrote, *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man*

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*shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*" (Revelation 22:18, 19) "*What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*" (Deuteronomy 12:32) It is a very serious thing to attempt to alter those things which God Himself has spoken.

Did the Lord change His mind after He spoke the Ten Commandments at Sinai? He said, "*For I am the LORD, I change not.*" (Malachi 3:6) God does not change. Man may go to great lengths to prove that God has changed His mind concerning the moral law which He spoke at Sinai, yet the Scriptures say that God does not change.

### Did Christ change the law?

As we have seen, God, the Father, did not change His law which He spoke at Sinai, but did Christ change the law? Prophesying of Christ's mission on earth, Isaiah wrote the following: "*The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.*" (Isaiah 42:21) Christ's mission did not include changing the law of God for it is written that He will "magnify the law and make it honourable."

Jesus said, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matthew 5:17-19)

According to Jesus the law of God is to stand until "*heaven and earth pass.*" Obviously this has not occurred yet, so naturally the law has not been done away with. Jesus went on to say that it was a dangerous thing to teach men to "*break one of these least commandments.*" It is very plain that the law which Jesus was referring to is the Ten Commandment law for the rest of the chapter deals with Jesus expounding on certain points within this law.

The testimony of Jesus agrees with that of Solomon. He wrote, "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14)

Not only does God require us to keep His commandments, He also makes it clear that if we want to enter the kingdom of heaven we must "*do his commandments.*" "*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.*" (Revelation 22:14)

God will have a group of people in the last days who will keep His commandments. Concerning the final generation upon earth John wrote, "*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*" (Revelation 12:17) "*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*" (Revelation 14:12)

The prophet Zephaniah expounded on this great truth when he wrote, "*The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.*" (Zephaniah 3:13) Speaking of God's remnant people John wrote, "*And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*" (Revelation 14:5)

As we can clearly see, God will have a group of people in the last days who will keep His law. What is the biblical term for those who break the law? "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*" (1 John 3:4) Consequently, one who transgresses the law of God is called a sinner.

What does the Bible say will happen at the time of the second coming, to those who transgress His law? "*Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.*" (Isaiah 13:9) That is a very solemn warning. It is no wonder the Lord says, "*prepare to meet thy God.*" (Amos 4:12)

Certainly there are some who will quickly protest, claiming, "We cannot keep the law of God, we can never stop sinning." It is true that we cannot keep the law of God in our own strength. "*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" (Romans 8:7) Yet the Lord has told us that we must keep the commandments to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Surely there must be some remedy for sin.

Paul wrote, "*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath 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.*"

(Romans 3:24, 25) Praise God that He has made a way of escape! God, through His infinite wisdom, has designed a way in which we can be forgiven of our past sins. That is wonderful! Notice that the verse said that we can have “*remission of sins that are past.*” Nowhere in the Bible is there any indication that we can be forgiven of sins that are yet future. In fact the Lord has made it clear that once we are forgiven we are expected not to continue in that sin. “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*” (Romans 6:1, 2)

Suppose a known thief comes to your church seeking membership, claiming that he wants to give his life to the Lord and asking for prayer that he might give up his habit of stealing. Suppose the pastor tells this man, “*My friend, you have it all wrong; don’t you know that we can never stop sinning? Just accept Jesus as your Saviour and everything will be okay.*” Certainly any conscientious individual would immediately see that the pastor’s reply is wrong. Yet many pastors make similar statements without raising the slightest suspicion in the listeners. If it is true that we cannot stop sinning, then where do we draw the line? Is it only that we cannot stop sinning when it comes to seemingly small sins such as lying and coveting, or would we say that we cannot stop sinning when it comes to such sins as adultery and murder? One may say that these sins cannot be avoided. Why stop there?

If it is true that the compulsive liar cannot give up lying, then it must also be true that the murderer cannot give up murdering and the thief cannot give up stealing. If this were the case then this world would be filled with nothing but the vilest of criminals. It is very obvious that the assertion “we cannot stop sinning” is completely contrary to common sense, but is it contrary to the Bible?

Paul shared a wonderful promise when he wrote, “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*” (1 Corinthians 10:13) Praise God! He has promised us that there is no temptation that will ever come upon us from which we cannot escape. God always provides a way out of sin. Thank God that Satan cannot force us to sin.

### What shall I do when I am tempted?

“*And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*” (Psalm 50:15) If

we will call upon the Lord when we are being tempted, He will give us the victory over every temptation. “*For in that he [Christ] himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour* [Greek: βοηθεω “to run to the cry of those in danger.” *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*] *them that are tempted.*” (Hebrews 2:18) If we do not call upon the Lord when we are tempted, He will not help us and we will be left to our own strength. When we call upon the Lord at the time of our temptation it does not have to be in an audible voice, but cry unto Him in your thoughts. Silent prayers are heard by Him who “*searcheth the hearts.*” (Romans 8:27)

Some say that it is a grievous burden to keep God’s commandments. We are assured that His commandments are not grievous. “*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*” (1 John 5:3) John wrote, “*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*” (1 John 2:3, 4)

### Answering some objections

The main reason why most Christians believe that the Sabbath is no longer a requirement for Christians is that it is part of the Old Covenant and they think it has nothing to do with the New. They say, “We are under the New Covenant, not the Old, therefore the old Jewish Sabbath commandment does not apply to us.”

This argument seems to be very persuasive, yet let us take a few moments to examine what the Bible says about the Sabbath and the Old and New Covenants.

The Bible nowhere refers to the Sabbath as the Jewish Sabbath, but always refers to it as the Sabbath of the Lord. The fourth commandment states, “*But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.*” (Exodus 20:10) When a stranger, a gentile, wished to give his life to the Lord, or if he was just visiting with the Jews he was commanded to keep the Sabbath. “*Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.*” (Isaiah 56:6, 7)



## The Old and New Covenants

Let us take a few moments to examine what the Bible says about the New Covenant.

We read the following in Hebrews 8:6-9. *“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. [Notice that the Old Covenant was established on promises.] For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. [There were faults in the Old Covenant. What were those faults?] For finding fault with them, [The first covenant was based on promises that the Israelites made to God. God found fault with them because they did not keep their promises.] He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.”*

It is plain that the Old Covenant was faulty, not because God’s promises were faulty, nor because His law was faulty, but because the Israelites failed to keep their promises. After God spoke His Ten Commandments the Israelites said, *“All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.”* (Exodus 19:8) The law was what the Israelites covenanted to keep. The covenant was the promise that the Israelites made to God. The covenant made with Israel was established on faulty promises. The law played an intricate part of the Old Covenant, and, as is clear from the above verses, the Law plays an intricate part of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was based on promises that men made and failed to keep. The New Covenant is based on the promises of God, who promised to write the LAW within our hearts. Notice, it is the exact same law, just based on better promises.

The Old Covenant was based on the promises that the Israelites made and failed to keep. This covenant was done away with, not the Law. According to Scripture, it is as much a sin to worship false gods and idols as to profane the Sabbath day.

The New Covenant is a placing of the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath, in our minds and hearts. God said, *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”* (Ezekiel 36:26, 27) God will cause us to walk in His ways.

Concerning the New Covenant Paul quoted the Scripture that says, *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith 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: [Notice that the Old Covenant was based upon the promises of Israel to keep the Ten Commandments. The New Covenant is based on God’s promise to write those same Ten Commandments in our hearts, and to cause us to walk in His ways.] And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”* (Hebrews 8:10-13)

What was decaying and waxing old was not the Ten Commandments, for they stand fast forever. The covenant based on the Israelites’ promise to keep the law was what was ready to vanish. The New Covenant is now based on God’s promise to fulfill His law in our lives. This can only happen if we let Him have His way in our lives.

Concerning the ratification of the New Covenant Paul wrote, *“For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament [or covenant] is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”* (Hebrews 9:16, 17) The New Covenant was ratified by the death of Christ, and was not in force until His death. *“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.”* (Galatians 3:15) After the death of Christ nothing could be added to the New Covenant. Some say that Sunday keeping is part of the New Covenant and point to the resurrection of Christ on that day as proof of this assertion, yet that Sunday came three days too late to be part of the New Covenant. Any assertion that Sunday is part of the New Covenant is proven untrue by the Scriptures.

The Old Covenant, which was based on the promises of the Jews to keep God’s law, is done away with. The New Covenant is now in force, which is the writing of God’s law in our hearts, and His promise to cause us to walk in His law.

## Christ is the end of the law

*“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”* (Romans 10:4) Many conclude

that this means that Christ abolished the law, but Jesus said that He “*came not to destroy the law.*” The Greek word that was translated “end” is “*τελος*,” meaning “the point aimed at as a limit, a goal.” (*Strong’s Greek Dictionary*) Hence, Christ is the ultimate goal to which each of us are striving to become like. “*Till we all come 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 fulness of Christ.*” (Ephesians 4:13) The same author used the word “*τελος*” in this way, “*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end [τελος] everlasting life.*” (Romans 6:22) Clearly, Paul was referring to everlasting life as the point being aimed at, or the goal of our Christian walk. Even so, coming to “*the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*” is the end, or goal of the law.

A man cannot ever be justified by the works of the law. Being justified is to be forgiven of sins, and there is no way that by keeping the law we can make up for even one sin that we have committed. Only by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ can we be forgiven of sins. “*I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*” (Galatians 2:21)

“*Sin is the transgression of the law.*” (1 John 3:4) If the law has been done away with, there can be no law to transgress. If this were true, then there could be no sin, and hence, no sinner, and no need for justification. Doing the works of the law will not save you, but not doing them can cause you to be lost unless you repent.

Would you consider it a bondage to have a law telling you not to kill your neighbor? No! that law is for your benefit. Even so, the commandments are for our benefit. “*And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?*” (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13)

### The blotting out of ordinances

Paul wrote concerning what happened at Christ’s death, “*Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.*” (Ephesians 2:15)

He also wrote, “*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.*” (Colossians 2:14) Some claim that the above verse

proves that the law has been nailed to the cross. Is this really what Paul was saying? Paul said this concerning the law: “*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*” (Romans 7:12) This agrees with the testimony of David. “*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*” (Psalm 19:7)

Notice that Paul did not say that the law, or the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross. So what was Paul talking about when he said “*the handwriting of ordinances*” was nailed to the cross? We read in Exodus concerning the feast of Passover, “*And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.*” (Exodus 12:14) The Jewish Passover, the sacrificial system, and the priesthood, which were “*a shadow of things to come,*” were called ordinances. This is what Paul was referring to which was done away with. God’s moral law, known as the Ten Commandments, was not “*the handwriting of ordinances that was against us.*”

Paul continued his thought concerning what took place at the cross by stating, “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*” (Colossians 2:16, 17)

Concerning these verses Adam Clarke wrote, “The apostle speaks here in reference to some particulars of the hand-writing of ordinances, which had been taken away, ... There is no intimation here that the Sabbath was done away, or that its moral use was superseded, by the introduction of Christianity. I have shown elsewhere that, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, is a command of perpetual obligation, and can never be superseded but by the final termination of time. As it is a type of that rest which remains for the people of God, of an eternity of bliss, it must continue in full force till that eternity arrives; for no type ever ceases till the antitype be come.” (*Clarke’s Commentary on Colossians 2:16*)

Another Bible Commentary states, “‘SABBATHS’ (not ‘the sabbaths’) of the day of atonement and feast of tabernacles have come to an end with the Jewish services to which they belonged (Leviticus 23:32, 37-39). The weekly sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the completion of creation in six days. Leviticus 23:38 expressly distinguished ‘the sabbath of the Lord’ from the other sabbaths.” (*James, Fausset, Brown Commentary on Colossians 1:16*)

Here is another strong argument concerning this, “The days referred to are those required to be observed in the ceremonial law—days associated by God with meats, drinks, and new moons. The passage does not refer to the Sabbath of the moral law, associated with the commands forbidding theft, murder, and adultery. This weekly Sabbath was never against men or contrary to them, but was always for them, and promotive of their highest good.” (*Family NT Bible Notes* on Colossians 1:16)

It is quite clear that Paul was not referring to the Ten Commandments when he stated that the handwriting of ordinances was nailed to the cross.

## A disannulling of the commandment

Paul wrote, “*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.*” (Hebrews 7:12) “*For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.*” (Hebrews 7:18) Paul is referring to a law that is weak and unprofitable. He said that since the priesthood has changed there must also be a change of the law. It is obvious that the law Paul was referring to was not the Ten Commandments, for they had nothing to do with laws concerning priests. Moreover, the Ten Commandment law is not weak and unprofitable, but “*holy, and just, and good.*” (Romans 7:12) The law that was changed due to the changing of the priesthood is the ordinances concerning the sacrificial system, the priests, and the earthly sanctuary service, for they were unprofitable.

Paul wrote, “*For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*” (Hebrews 10:1-4) Here we can plainly see that the law which was changed and done away with was the law or ordinances which dealt with the sacrifi-


cial system, the priesthood, and the earthly sanctuary service.

## The law as our schoolmaster

“*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, ... Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*” (Galatians 3:19-25) The law of God speaks only to them who have broken that law. “*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*” (Romans 3:19) Once we have come to Christ and have been justified (literally, made innocent), the law has nothing to say to us for we stand before God as if we had not sinned. Hence we are no longer in need of a schoolmaster. The moment we again break that law, the law is there to testify that we are a sinner. Hence we again need that schoolmaster to bring us back to Christ. If there were no law to tell us that we have sinned, we would continue in a deplorable condition.

“*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*” (Romans 7:7) Thank God for His law, for without it we would be liars, thieves, murderers, and such like.

John wrote, “*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*” (1 John 2:1) God wants us to cease from sin, which is transgression of the law. If the law has been done away with, I confess to you that it is not possible for anyone to sin, for how can one break a law that does not exist? If the law was done away with, it is perfectly just and right to murder, steal, commit adultery, etc. It is clear that God’s moral law is still in effect, and those who violate God’s law are sinners.

“*Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.*” (1 Corinthians 7:19) 

**Pokémon** is a new fad that is quickly spreading among young children today. Few adults understand what all of this is about. Pokémon is short for Pocket Monster, a game where kids collect cards representing any of 150 monsters. Each card displays the monster’s hit points, special powers, and various other details about the monster. The children use these cards to battle other children’s cards. If you are at all familiar with the game Dungeons and Dragons you will see very quickly that Pokémon is merely a modified children’s version of Dungeons and Dragons with a new name. Most of you are aware of the game Dungeons and Dragons and therefore should realize the dangers of Pokémon. For more information on the dangers of Pokémon go to <http://www.crossroad.to/text/articles/pokemon5-99.html>



# Lessons on Faith

by A. T. Jones

In order to be able to know what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, it is essential to know, first of all, what is faith.

Plainly, it must be to little purpose to urge upon a person the necessity of cultivating faith, while that person has no intelligent idea of what faith is. And it is sadly true that, though the Lord has made this perfectly plain in the Scriptures, there are many church-members who do not know what faith is. They may even know what the definition of faith is, but they do not know what the thing is. They do not grasp the idea that is in the definition.

For that reason the definition will not be touched now, but rather there will be cited and studied an illustration

of faith—an instance which makes it stand out so plainly that all can see the very thing itself.


Faith comes *“by the word of God.”* [Romans 10:17] To the Word, then, we must look for it.

One day a centurion came to Jesus and said to him, *“Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. ... When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”* (Matthew 8:6-10)

There is what Jesus pronounces faith. When we find what that is, we have found faith. To know what that is, is to know what faith is. there can be no sort of doubt about this, for Christ is *“the Author... of faith,”* and He says that that which the centurion manifested was “faith”—yes, even “great faith.”

Where, then, in this is the faith? The centurion wanted a certain thing done. He wanted the Lord to do it. But when the Lord said, *“I will come”* and do it, the centurion checked Him, saying, *“Speak the word only,”* and it shall be done.

Now what did the centurion expect would do the work? *“The word ONLY.”* Upon what did he depend for the healing of his servant? Upon *“the word ONLY.”*

Now, brother, sister, what is faith? (*Review and Herald*, December 6, 1898) 

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## KEPT BY THE WORD

by A. T. Jones

In the Christian life everything depends upon the word of God. It is true that God is able and desires to keep us from sinning, but this must be done through His word. So it is written, *“By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.”* [Psalm 17:4] *“Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.”* [Psalm 119:11] This is the way that God has appointed and there is no other way to have this thing accomplished.

Nor is this way appointed merely because He arbitrarily chose that this should be the way and then laid it upon men that this must be the way that they should go. His word is the way of salvation and the way of sanctification (Christian living) because this is the way that the Lord does things, because this is the way that He manifests Himself. It was by His word that He created all things in the beginning. It is by His word that He creates men anew, and it will be by His word that He will recreate this world and all things pertaining to it. *“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. ... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”* [Psalm 33:6, 9] *“Being born again... by the word of God.”* [1 Peter 1:23] *“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. ... And he said unto me, It is done.”* [Revelation 21:5, 6]

It is not only that the worlds were created by the word of God, but they are also sustained by the same word. *“By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby [by the word of God] the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store.”* [2 Peter 3:5-7] So also it is not only that the Christian is created by the word of God, but by that same word He is sustained, nourished, and caused to grow. God holds up *“all things”* by His powerful word. And the Christian is among this *“all things”* no less than any or all the worlds.

There can be no question whatever that all the worlds are held up and held in their places by the Lord. But it is not only all the worlds, it is *“all things”* that are held up and held in place by the Lord. And it is as true of the Christian as it is of any star in the firmament or any world on high. Nor can there be any question that the stars and the worlds are held up and held in their courses by the word of the Lord. And no less than this can there be any question that the Christian is held up and held in his right course by the word of the Lord.

This is to be believed and depended upon by every one who professes the name of Christ. You and I can no more

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hold ourselves up and in the right way than can the sun or the earth. And as certainly as the worlds are dependent upon His word, so certainly is the Christian to depend upon His word. And when this is so, the Christian is kept in the way of the Lord as certainly and as easily as is any planet in the universe. It is written that He *“is able to keep you from falling.”* [Jude 1:24] And He says, *“I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”* [Isaiah 41:10] *“Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.”* [Romans 14:4]

O struggling, failing Christian, is not that word which holds up great worlds able also to hold up you? Trust that word. Depend implicitly upon it. Rest wholly upon it, and then you will find rest in it. Trust the Lord to hold you up, just as you trust Him to hold up the sun. His word holds up the sun, and His word is over and over to you, *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee. ... I will uphold thee.”* [Isaiah 41:10] I will keep thee, thou art mine. *“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”* [Hebrews 13:5] I will never leave thee till I have done that thing which I have spoken to thee of.

*“The word of God is quick [‘living,’ R. V.] and powerful.”* [Hebrews 4:12] “Powerful” means “full of power.” the word of God is living and full of power, to do for you, with you, and in you, all that that word says. Believe that word, trust it, for it is the word of the living God. It is the word of

the pitying Saviour. *“Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your soul.”* [James 1:21] *“I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.”* [Acts 20:32] *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”* [Colossians 3:16] You *“are kept by the power of God through faith.”* [1 Peter 1:5] The power of God is manifested through His word and therefore it is His powerful word. Faith comes by hearing the word of God; therefore, it is the faithful word, the word full of faith. Therefore when He says, you *“are kept by the power of God through faith,”* it is only saying in another way, You are kept by the word of God, *“unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* [1 Peter 1:5] Believe that word, trust it, and find its keeping power. (*Review & Herald*, October 13, 1896) ✍

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