

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

July 2004

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Galatians 1:3-5) God is so good to all of us. The West Virginia camp meeting was a real blessing. I was challenged to dedicate myself to God more fully, and I know others were as well. I really enjoyed getting to know several new people who had not attended before. For those who were not able to attend, I feel sorry for you, that you missed the blessings. (You may order the cassettes or videos from the camp meeting, which are now available.) I hope you can make it to another meeting soon. Please notice the Upcoming Meeting Schedule on page 7.

Is it Possible to Live Without Sinning?

by Joe Crews

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

Recently I read the amazing account of a man who submitted to a scientific hypnosis experiment. While under the influence of a light hypnotic trance the subject was ordered to pick up a glass from the table. Although he was a strong, athletic type, the man could not budge the glass from its position. His most strenuous exertions could not lift the glass that was light enough for any child to remove.

Why could he not do it? Because the scientists, after placing him in the trance, had told him that it was impossible to pick up the glass. Because his mind was convinced that it could not be done, his body was unable to carry out the command to lift it. What a dramatic demonstration that no person can really obey commandments which he believes to be impossible of performance!

Is this the reason so many Christians are living weak, defeated lives? There is no question that the popular, modern theology has been teaching millions that no one can really live without sinning. The Ten Commandments have been portrayed as an idealistic code produced only for the purpose of making people conscious of their need.

Many modern Christians are turning more and more to a soft, lenient stance on the subject of law-keeping.

They believe God’s love is incompatible with strict rules and penalties for violation.

That is a very comfortable doctrine but completely foreign to what the Bible teaches. Millions are being conditioned to break the great moral law of the universe—without feeling any guilt! The Word of God gives no one an excuse to feel relaxed about sin. It is the central problem of every person who has been born. Like a highly contagious disease, sin has infected every soul with the germs of death, and no earthly cure or deterrent has been found to halt the fatal progress of the sickness.

From the first appearance of sin in the Garden of Eden it has been totally disruptive of everything good. Never in one instance has it been able to coexist with righteousness and holiness. The requirements of God make it utterly impossible for sin or disobedience to be a part of the Christian lifestyle. The new tolerance for it is not biblical in any sense of the word. Jesus came to save people from it; He came to destroy it. It will never enter

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Meeting Schedule page 7

Something for Marriage Hopefuls page 8

by Lynnford Beachy

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made page 11

by George McDaniel

into Heaven. Our attitude toward it must be uncompromising. There can be no question of making it more acceptable by diminishing the amount of it or changing its form. It must be destroyed. And the only means of eradicating it is by receiving the fullness of Jesus Christ and His grace into the life.

How strange it is that so many church members have now become apologetic for sin, as though it cannot be prevented from triumphing in the life of a Christian. How dare we misrepresent the power of God's grace in the gospel! Jesus has already defeated the devil, and no Christian should be intimidated by an inferior, defeated foe. We have no business justifying the transgression of the Ten Commandments.

It is serious enough to engage willfully in an act of sin, but it is infinitely more deadly to defend it as something which cannot be prevented. To say that victory is impossible is to deny the adequacy of the gospel and to negate a large portion of the inspired Scriptures. In addition, it adds support to the original charge of Satan against God, and gives a paralyzing, false security to everyone who believes in it.

Often people are defensive of sin because they have not been able to stop doing it in their own strength. For example, when they can't stop smoking, they must find a rationalization for its presence in their lives. Instead of making the humiliating confession that they can't conquer it, they fabricate arguments that it really doesn't hurt them or that no one can be perfect. Or the popular, convenient doctrine that no one can really live without sin anyway.

It is probably safe to say that the majority of Christians today are resigned to falling short of the moral law. In fact, they are quite satisfied that God doesn't even expect them to fulfill that law completely, either in the flesh or in the spirit.

The effect of such a teaching is exactly what one would expect—multitudes of emotionally happy, but disobedient, church members who feel that any concern about keeping the commandments is nit-picking and legalistic.

What a delusive strategy of Satan! As the inventor of the doctrine, the evil one is simply supporting his ancient accusation that God was asking too much. He accused God of being unfair by requiring something that was impossible.

He was able to convince a third of the angels that God was unreasonable to expect obedience to His law, and he has been trying to make everybody else believe it since that time. Think about it for a moment, and the

entire scheme begins to make a lot of diabolical sense. Satan knows that sin is the only thing that will keep anyone out of heaven. Since sin is the "transgression of the law," he had to perfect a plan to make people look lightly upon breaking the law and also cause it to appear unobjectionable. (1 John 3:4) To make the idea acceptable to Christians, Satan actually was able to disguise it as a doctrine and foist it upon a compromised Christianity.

In every evangelistic crusade, we meet it in one form or another, usually at the point of the law and the Sabbath. The inconvenient claims of obedience are shrugged off with a "Well, nobody can keep the Ten Commandments, anyway."

But the problem doesn't end there. Even Christians who have accepted the claims of the moral law are not too concerned about how well they fulfill it, either. In a subtle way they have been affected by the prevalent belief that too much concern about obedience is a form of salvation by works. Incredibly, some seem to be so fearful of keeping the law too closely that they actually make provision to break it. By doing so they perversely comfort themselves for not being legalistic.

How could people committed to commandment-keeping ever come to such a confused contradiction within themselves? Exposure to a false concept of righteousness by faith is only part of the answer. Much of the problem is based upon human failure and weakness of the flesh. Because they found themselves stumbling in their efforts to be perfect, they finally concluded that it was impossible not to sin. From that point it was easy to start interpreting Bible texts to support their weak experience. Satan exploited the psychological bent of the human mind to rationalize, and soon they had developed a comfortable doctrine that accommodated their occasional deviations from the law. Consequently, most Christians today are resigned to an alternating experience of victory-defeat, victory-defeat. To them it is the approved life-style of normal Christianity.

But something is fearfully wrong with this position. In the first place, doctrine should never be based on feeling or human experience. It must be rooted in the plain, unequivocal teaching of the Word of God. It is true that Bible texts can be assembled which seem to support the doctrine of spiritual imperfection. We are assured that all have sinned, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and that man's righteousness is as filthy rags. But all the verses about failure, sin and defeat are in reference to the unregenerate experience of a person. There are literally scores of other texts which describe an

opposite experience of total victory and sinless living. In every case they are referring to the Spirit-filled life of a converted, committed child of God.

This distinction must always be recognized in the reading of the Scripture. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation. His grace is stronger than all the concentrated forces of evil. Jesus came to save His people from their sin. No one who reads the sixth chapter of Romans intelligently can believe that the Christian is free to practice sin. Paul utterly devastates the doctrine that a believer should keep on falling into sin.

It is true that provision is made for cleansing in case sin is committed, but God's perfect plan made it possible for man to overcome every sin and to live a life of perfect obedience through Christ. In fact, the promises of the Bible are so clear and specific on this point that it is hard to get confused. No secret meaning or hidden reservation can be found in the myriad of texts which describe the victorious experience of the born-again child of God. And just because one may not have grown into that fullness of faith which brings constant victory, he should not, therefore, deny the power of God to give such deliverance. When Peter began sinking in the Sea of Galilee, it was not because God's plan or power had failed. Peter could have rationalized, like so many modern Christians, and said, "God didn't want me to walk on the water, and besides, it's impossible for anybody to do such a thing anyway." Like our first parents we still tend to place the ultimate blame on God when we fail to follow His plan of holy living.

Total Victory Promised

The Spirit of God seemed to anticipate the struggle many would pass through in accepting the biblical assurances of total victory. Consequently the inspired writers were moved to use almost fanatical language in describing the possibilities for overcoming sin. Superlative expressions are utilized which actually boggle the mind. Instead of saying we may be saved, the Bible says we can be "saved to the uttermost." (Hebrews 7:25) Instead of saying we may conquer, it assures that we can be "more than conquerors." (Romans 8:37) Instead of being told that we can just triumph, we are told that we may "always triumph." (2 Corinthians 2:14) Instead of promising whatever we might ask to help us in our spiritual battles, the Bible says He will give us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Ephesians 3:20) And the verse just prior to that one clearly

guarantees that we may "be filled with all the fullness of God." (Verse 19)

Admittedly, many of these promises are too vast for our human minds to comprehend fully, but surely they are intended to impress us with the magnitude of God's resources in our behalf. If the language sounds exaggerated it is only because we are too feeble in faith and too weak in the flesh to believe such purity and sanctification could ever be fulfilled in us. We tend to trust our feelings quicker than the Word of God.

Is it important to believe the promises exactly as they read? Yes, because it is only through those promises that deliverance can be accomplished. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:4)

Notice that it is "by these" that we escape the corruption of sin. What are "these"? The promises of God. The sequence of victory is plainly marked out in this fantastic text. By faith in the promise we become a partaker of the divine nature, and through the power of that new nature in us we are able to escape the corruption of sin. In other words, everything depends on the surrender and commitment of one's self to the indwelling Spirit of Christ. "Without me," Jesus said, "ye can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Equally important is the inspired comment of Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13) That little expression "all things" is the key to victory for every one of us. It includes power over drugs, immorality, appetite, pride, and every act of sin that would rob us of eternal life.

All Things Available

The big point here is that when you get the power of Christ in your life, you have everything else you could ever desire. "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?" (Romans 8:32) There is that term again—"all things." You will find it also in 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..."

When you put those texts together, an incredible picture emerges. By claiming the presence of Christ in your life, you also receive everything that Christ possesses. Paul described it this way: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30)

Here the “all things” are broken down into very particular, individualized experiences, and we begin to see that Peter was right in stating that God has given us all things that pertain to godliness. Those Christians who doubt the possibility of overcoming sin completely should read these verses carefully. What do those words “righteousness,” “redemption,” and “sanctification” include? All three of those words promise us more than deliverance from the guilt of our past sins. The word “redemption” is not limited to redemption from the guilt of sin, but from the power of sin also. “Sanctification” is a word that describes continuous, daily growth in overcoming sin. “Righteousness” literally means right-doing and applies to a dynamic fulfillment of God’s will. They are all big words, but they all have the connotation of being set free, both from the guilt and the practice of sin.

Every child of Adam needs two things desperately—forgiveness for the past, and power for the future. Redemption includes both of them; and the idea that full deliverance from the guilt of sin is included, but only partial deliverance from the power of sin, is a perversion of the gospel. Jesus did not come to save us from the consequences of sin only, but to save us from the sin itself. Salvation is not a negative thing; not just the absence of something. He did not come just to take away something—our guilt, but to give us something—victory over sin. For God to forgive us and leave us under the power of continued sin would make God an accomplice of sin....

After thoughtfully reading the entire sixth chapter of Romans, if you need more assurance that victory can be yours, read the following:

1 Corinthians 15:57—“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 John 5:4—“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

Philippians 2:5—“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”

2 Corinthians 5:21—“...that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

1 John 3:6—“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

Let us return for a moment to the analogy of the hypnotized man. He could not physically lift a small glass from the table because his mind was so fully convinced that it couldn’t be done. Has Satan been able to immobilize the church through the power of his hypnotic, lying

assertion that obedience is impossible? It certainly seems so.

No one is going to put forth any serious effort to do something that he believes to be impossible. Obviously then, those who believe they cannot live without sinning are not attempting to live without sin. No reasonable person will waste time and effort in a vain struggle to accomplish nothing.

That brings us to an interesting question: Can a person believe that there is no way to stop sinning, and yet make plans not to sin? Logically, it would seem highly unlikely, if not impossible. Yet the Bible commands us to “make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14) Do we indeed make provision for sin by holding that it is impossible not to sin?

To Him That Overcometh

The entire book of Revelation is addressed to the seven churches of Asia. In each of the churches certain ones received high commendation and glorious promises of heavenly reward. Without exception the blessing was extended “to him that overcometh.” Those seven churches symbolize every period of the Christian church from the apostles to the end of time. If victory over sin is not possible, no soul will be saved from those centuries of time.

To deny the possibility of total victory over sin is to rob God of the glory of His mission.... If no one claimed His power to overcome sin completely, the devil’s accusation would be confirmed. The requirements of God would be exposed as too difficult to obey.

Jesus stated that He had come “to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10) Here He indicated that more than just people needed to be restored. “That which was lost” included a sinless character. His mission was to counteract and neutralize the entire program of sin-defilement introduced by Satan. Restoring the image of God in man is a very important part of the everlasting gospel. That work of the gospel must be done before Jesus comes and not as some magical afterthought of our returning Lord.

The book of Revelation identifies the crowning characteristic of the redeemed as obedience. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Revelation 14:12) “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) “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)

How significant it is that man’s condition for remaining in Eden is also the condition for being restored to Eden. Anyone who believes obedience is unimportant should read again the dramatic story of Adam and Eve. A tiny, physical act of sin led to all the stark tragedy of the past 6,000 years. Those who are restored to that lost paradise will have demonstrated that they can be trusted with eternal life. Through faithful obedience in the face of death, they will have proven Satan’s charges to be utterly false. Their steadfast loyalty will be an eternal guarantee of the security of God’s restored dominion.

What can we say, then, concerning those who look so lightly upon the good works of obedience? They are subjects of grave deception and are playing into Satan’s deadly sin-trap. The most glorious experience of the truly converted is to break the pattern of self-indulgence and sin. Under the rule of the Spirit of God, fleshly habits may be conquered and expelled from the life. Through faith in the promises unbelievable power may be released into the life of one who is willing to give up the enjoyment of sin.

The heart of God longs for us to take Him at His word and to claim the power He has promised. It is the only road to real victory. But no one can experience victory who does not believe victory is possible. Read again the assurances of the Bible. Do not try to twist them to match the weaknesses and failures of your human experience. They mean what they say. Deliverance is yours for the believing and the asking.

Right here we need to pause and consider an objection which is always brought against those who believe in total victory.

It goes something like this: If you believe it is possible to live without sinning, are you able to say that your own life is free from sin?

Although the question deserves an answer, it should be pointed out that the objection is not relevant to the issue. If the Bible establishes a truth, it should be received on the grounds of its inspired authority and not on the basis of the messenger’s experience. If victory over all sin is possible through Christ, it is true, whether the preacher has claimed it or not claimed it. Further, the work of sanctification is a progressive, lifelong experience and can never be considered as finished in point of time. Even if one could be unconscious of any known sin, he could never boast of being sinless. In fact, the person who is closest to perfection would surely be the

least likely to recognize it. Because the nearer he gets to Jesus the more imperfect he will appear in his own eyes.

The claim might also be made that the doctrine of victory over sin is highly idealistic and too theologically complicated to be practical. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Even a child can understand the simple faith-transaction of appropriating the promises of the Bible. There is not a habit or sin known to man that cannot be conquered through faith.

In the next few minutes you will be able to appreciate the beauty of this divine victory plan. You will learn how to stop smoking, cursing, overeating, gossiping, or committing any other sin. Let nothing distract you as you proceed to the next paragraph. It could be the turning point of your life and mean more than all the money in the world. Since so many are struggling with cigarettes, I will use that indulgence as an illustration of the victory we are describing. Put your own problem into the text, and then take the four steps to glorious victory.

The Secret of Victory

Have you heard about the evolutionary way of getting the victory over tobacco, or any other sin? It is sometimes called the “tapering” method, but generally it just doesn’t work. Oh, it partially works, of course, because old age takes care of some temptations and sins, and time settles the rest when death comes. But do you know why “trying” does not work in overcoming the devil?

Why can’t we fight the devil for a few months and finally drive him away? Because the devil is stronger than we are. We could fight him for a year, but he would still be stronger than we are at the end of the year. Trying will never break the power of sin in a single instance, because we’re facing an enemy who will always be stronger than we are. What, then, is the answer to our weakness and defeat? This question leads us to the sweetest and most sublime secret in the Word of God. Let us study it thoughtfully and with much prayer.

First of all, one must understand that all of Heaven’s gifts are available to us through the promises of the Bible, and we receive them by faith. Peter describes the “exceeding great and precious promises” and assures us that “by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:4) Mighty power is stored within the promise to fulfill itself to all who claim it in faith. So few are willing to believe that the promised blessing becomes theirs the very moment they believe it. Why is it so hard to believe implicitly that God will do what He promises?

Now let us come down to the very heart of victory and consider the four simple scriptural steps that any believer may take in claiming God's power. Four texts will illuminate the amazing transaction. First: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57) Allow your mind to savor the fantastic message of these words. Victory is a gift! We do not earn it by our efforts, or deserve it because of any supposed goodness. The only thing we need do is ask for it, and the victory will be given to us freely by Christ. He is the only one who has ever gained complete victory over Satan, and if we ever possess the victory, it will have to come as a gift from Him.

Let me ask you something. Do you need victory in your life over some binding, miserable habit of sin? Some are slaves to appetite, to alcohol, or tobacco. Others are struggling helplessly against impurity, anger, or worldliness. The Bible says you may have the victory as a gift through Jesus Christ. Do you believe He will give you that power if you ask Him? How certain can you be that God will answer your prayer for victory immediately? Here is how sure you can be—just as sure as Christ's words are true! Our second text is Matthew 7:11, "If ye 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?"

Is it a good thing when you ask for victory over tobacco, or any other fleshly or moral evil? Of course it is! And you don't even have to ask if it is God's will! He has already told us in the Bible that it is His will to destroy the works of sin and the devil. If we pray for more money or a better job we should always ask according to His will but the victory over sin is promised to every one who asks in faith.

Will God give the victory when we ask Him? Jesus said He was more willing to give this good thing than we are to feed our children when they are hungry. He is waiting to honor your faith and to "supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19) These assurances are so open-ended and unlimited that our minds are staggered by it. Why have we been so reluctant to apply for the provisions of grace? Why is it so hard to believe that God means exactly what He says? He will keep every promise.

Faith Makes It So

Here is the next question. How do we know we have the victory after we ask Him? Simply because He said

we would have it. We know God did not lie. We can believe His promise. The very moment we ask, we should accept the fact of fulfillment, thank Him for the gift, get up and act like it has been done. No kind of proof-feeling or sign should be demanded or expected. The self-fulfilling power in the promise is released in response to our faith alone.

This brings us to the third text, found in Romans 6:11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The word "reckon" means to believe, or to consider it done. Every particle of faith should be focused on that one request for victory and then it should be accounted as done. Do you remember how Peter walked on the water? He asked Jesus if he could step out of the boat onto the raging sea, and Jesus told Peter to come. But how long did Peter do the impossible by walking on the water? The Bible says, "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." (Matthew 14:30)

What was Peter afraid of? He was afraid of sinking and drowning. In spite of Christ's assurance that he could safely walk on the water, Peter began to doubt the word of the Master. That is when he began to sink. As long as he believed the promise of Jesus and acted in faith, he was safe. When he doubted, he sank.

Now, what is the impossible thing as far as you are concerned? It is not walking on water. It is overcoming that tobacco habit. And Christ says, "Come to me. I will give you the victory." As long as you believe that you have been delivered, you will have the victory. It is as simple as that. The very moment you ask for victory it will be placed in your life as a reservoir of power. You won't feel it, but it is there. It will remain there as long as you accept it in faith.

For some people the deliverance is so dramatic that they lose even the appetite for the sin. Tobacco addicts have sometimes been delivered from the craving, but this is not the usual way God does it. Usually, the desire remains, but in the moment of temptation, the power to walk past the temptation springs forth from within. Faith accepts the fact of deliverance and constantly claims the victory which is in the secure possession of the believer.

The final step to victory is described in our fourth text, Romans 13:14. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." So strong is the confidence in the

appropriated power of God that no consideration is given to falling under the power of that sin again. Under the old “trying” plan, provision was made to fail in most cases. Cigarettes were placed on a shelf, and the smoker said to himself, “I’m going to try never to smoke again, but if I don’t make it I know where they are.” But under the “trusting” plan, we have no reason to fear failure on the grounds of human weakness. Victory does not depend on our strength but on God’s power. We might fail, but He cannot fail. Cigarettes are thrown away. All plans that might involve any degree of compromise are abandoned.

Little Jimmy was in trouble because he had gone swimming against his mother’s orders. When asked why he had disobeyed her, Jimmy answered, “Because I got tempted.” Mother then said, “I noticed that you took your bathing suit with you this morning. Why did you do that?” Jimmy answered, “Because I expected to get tempted.” How typical of those who do not quite trust their own strength to win the victory. They make provision to fail. They take their bathing suit along. With God there need be no provision to fail.

Someone might raise the objection that this could be discouraging. Suppose the person does fail? Even Peter began to sink. Would it not shake confidence in God if the victory was not maintained? No. Peter’s sinking had nothing to do with the failure of divine power. It did not change Christ’s will for him to walk on the water. It only revealed Peter’s need of stronger faith to enable him to obey Christ’s command. Our faith could weaken. We might need to be reminded of our total dependence upon His strength. But this does not diminish the beautiful plan of God to impart power and victory through “exceeding great and precious promises” of the Bible. Without faith by the receiver not even God’s promises can be appropriated. The limits are clearly defined in the words of Jesus, “According to your faith be it unto you.” (Matthew 9:29)

There it is, friend, in all of its simplicity. And it works! If you are willing to be delivered, it works. Nothing will help the one who is not willing to give up the cigarettes. But if you want it, it is there. Victory, power, deliverance—just reach out in faith and it is yours. Believe it and claim it this very moment. God wants you to be free. ✍

(This article was taken from a small booklet distributed by Amazing Facts, available online at www.amazingfacts.org. Smyrna Gospel Ministries does not agree with everything published by Amazing Facts, specifically in regard to the trinity. Used by permission from Amazing Facts. Editor)

Meeting Schedule

We would like to inform you of some upcoming meetings that will be held in several cities across the country in July and September of this year. Lynnford Beachy will be speaking at the following locations:

Little Rock, Arkansas: On Friday evening, July 9, and all day Sabbath, July 10, 2004, we will be holding meetings at the conference room of the Ramada Limited & Suites, located at 8 Shackelford Drive in Little Rock, Arkansas, phone: (501) 221-7666. The Friday evening meetings will be held from 4:00-8:30 p.m., and the Sabbath meetings will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by a fellowship dinner and afternoon meetings from 2:30-8:30 p.m. For more information contact John Mark Brown at: (501) 681-8370.

Pleasantville, Tennessee: On Tuesday evening, July 13, and all day Wednesday, July 14, 2004, we will be holding meetings at the Honeysuckle Farm, 3695 Hwy 438, Pleasantville, Tennessee. The Tuesday evening meetings will be held from 4:00-8:30 p.m., and the Wednesday meetings will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by a fellowship dinner and afternoon meetings from 2:30-8:30 p.m. For more information contact Melba Smith or Norma DeCamp at: (931) 593-3698.

Windham, Maine Camp Meeting: Some brethren in Maine are hosting a camp meeting from September 1-4, 2004. For more information contact Mervin or Rose Marie Shoemaker at: (207) 892-2338. The camp meeting will focus on the Love of God and healthful living. There will be several speakers from across the country. Further details will be given next month.

Cañon City, Colorado Camp Meeting: Philadelphia Press in Colorado will be hosting a camp meeting from September 8-11, 2004. For more information contact Richard Stratton at: (719) 547-1932. There will be several speakers from across the country. Further details will be given next month.

Southern Minnesota: On Wednesday evening, September 15, and all day Thursday, September 16, 2004, we will be holding meetings in Pipestone, Minnesota. The Wednesday evening meetings will be held from 4:00-8:30 p.m., and the Thursday meetings will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by a fellowship dinner and afternoon meetings from 2:30-8:30 p.m. For more information contact Laurie Lewis at: (507) 825-2310. In connection with these meetings, there will also be meetings in Minneapolis on Friday, September 17, and Sabbath, September 18. These meetings will have the same two-day schedule as mentioned above. For more information contact Chris Walega at: (612) 374-4683.

Further details on the September meetings will be given in upcoming issues of *Present Truth*. Editor

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

by George McDaniel

Light and darkness in healing methods (Part 2)

This article will briefly cover some basic aspects of three medical theories that are prevalent today: homeopathy, chiropractic and allopathy.

Homeopathy was originated by Samuel Christian Hahnemann. His original paper, published in 1796, states that the basic tenet of homeopathy is “like cures like.” If a person is vomiting, for example, homeopathy would recommend a substance that causes vomiting. Hahnemann came to this conclusion by observing that Peruvian bark, a crude form of quinine, when given to a normal person, produces a fever similar to that caused by malaria. When Peruvian bark was given to a person with malarial fever, the person would improve. He concluded that this method would work in all diseases. Unfortunately, in that day, neither the cause of malaria nor the action of quinine was understood.

This kind of erroneous reasoning, based on inadequate information and mystical mindset, led Dr. Hahnemann to believe that disease was not caused by physical agents, but by spirits (miasms). In his own words: “The natural disease is never to be considered as a noxious material situated somewhere within the interior or exterior of man, but as one produced by an inimical spirit-like agency which, as a kind of infection, disturbs in its instinctive existence the spirit-like principle of life within the organism, torturing it as an evil spirit, and compelling it to produce certain ailments and disorders in the regular course of its life.” (From *Organon of Medicine* p. 215, quoted in *Mystic Medicine* by Warren Peters, MD)

This type of mystical thinking was common at that time. A good example is Franz Anton Mesmer, a German who studied medicine in Vienna. His graduating thesis in 1766 was “The Influence of the Planets in the Cure of Diseases.” It promulgated the theory that the sun and moon act on living beings by means of the subtle fluid known as animal magnetism, similar in effect to the properties of the lodestone (a natural magnet). Mesmer claimed he could magnetize trees so that every leaf would contribute healing to all who approached. Mesmer’s theories greatly influenced many in his day. The idea of animal magnetism was developed and refined by the mid 19th century into what we call hypnotism. Hahnemann’s mystical views of the body’s mechanics and health were in support of Mesmer’s ideas of animal magnetism.

Homeopathy’s most astonishing feature is that the effectiveness of a potion is inversely proportional to the quantity of the active ingredient. This is explained by Dr.

Hahnemann with another mystical principle called “succussion.” In this procedure, an agent is mixed in such a way that causes energy to be transferred to the solution. As the solution becomes more and more dilute, the potency is increased. The further removed the material becomes, the greater the power of the pattern.

The following quotation contains the views of some homeopaths that show where they believe the healing power of homeopathic remedies comes from:

“The concept of the ‘life force’ is predominant in both holistic health and homeopathy. Margutti relates homeopathy to Burr’s L-fields (for life). Dr. Gray refers to generalized life force that does the healing and states it has many names—chi, prana, spirit, etc. He gives the force almost a god-like power, providing, of course, it is stimulated by homeopathy.... Also of concern is the emphasis in homeopathy upon matching treatment to personalities, not disease, and here we come into a more clearly discernible possibility for occultism. Michaud states: ‘In homeopathy, we try to do that, which is why we have to put more stress on individual differences, and that leads to an interest in such things as astrology and acupuncture.’” (From John Weldon and Clifford Wilson, *Occult Shock and Psychic Force* pp. 234-235. Quoted in *Mystic Medicine* by Warren Peters, MD)

The best that can be said for homeopathy is that its remedies are nontoxic or with low toxic potential. The body will usually heal itself if given the chance. As we have seen, homeopathy is rooted in the occult. I could not recommend it for Christians.

Chiropractic - Another practitioner that was deeply influenced by Anton Mesmer and animal magnetism was D. D. Palmer, the founder of chiropractic therapy. He was a magnetic healer in his own right, and was associated with Phineas Quimby who developed the “New Thought Movement” of the mid 19th century. It was this mystical association that led Palmer to develop the thought that “life force” is communicated through the nerves of the spinal cord, which exits from the vertebral column. A misalignment of the spine would, therefore, block the flow of vital force according to this theory. It is true that nerves with electric potential do indeed exit from the spine, but not a “life force” or “spirit.”

B. J. Palmer, the son of D. D., did the most to develop his father’s observations into a system of health care. He was able to articulate the function of the “innate,” a mystical spirit guide. In his words, “While trying to find my way out of these dilemmas, I took a new look at the basic

chiropractic concept of 'innate.' This philosophy insisted that the primal source of energy or vital force (innate) is directed through the nervous system,... innate was that power which kept the complicated autonomic nervous system functioning. Innate was Infinite Life expressing itself through an individual for a specific period in time and space."

The innate of the patient can communicate with the innate of the practitioner, and greater healing is said to occur. Some chiropractors speak of letting their minds flow with the innate, which helps them know where to manipulate.

We should be careful not to label all chiropractic therapy as occult. To many chiropractors, the practice begins and ends with manipulation and body mechanics. There seems to be two schools of thought in chiropractic today. However, since there is the potential of occultic training and therapy, it would be wise to know the philosophy of your practitioner.

Allopathy is the name given to western medicine today. It means treating symptoms with a medicine that has the opposite effect.

Up through the first half of the 19th century, physicians routinely used such things as arsenic, mercury, strychnine, and opium for medicines, and treatments such as bleeding and purging. The benefits of sanitation were largely unknown. A doctor named Ignaz Semmelweis was ridiculed and hounded out of the profession for recommending that doctors wash their hands with an antiseptic solution before attending to childbirth. Other doctors were offended by the idea that a gentleman could carry death on his hands. At this time, doctors routinely wiped their hands on their coats, wearing the blood as a badge of honor; a witness to their labors.

A change came in the late 19th century when certain German physicians turned away from mystical medicine and developed the rational school of medical thinking. The basis of western medicine became science. Medical studies included anatomy, physiology, pathology and chemistry. Strict standards were established. Not just anyone could become a physician. If someone wanted to become a doctor of medicine, he had to go to an accredited school and pass licensing exams. Upholding stricter standards for medical practices is a good thing. However, western medicine became very mechanistic and almost totally free from anything involving spirit. The attitude was, Let the clergy deal with spiritual issues, we will treat physical matters.

This is a radical departure from most cultures where the medicine man was also the spiritual leader. The shaman was the one who interceded for the people with the spirits. There is still a split between religion and medicine.

Orthodox medicine in America, headed by the AMA and joined by the FDA, in their effort to gain control of medical practice and eliminate competition, attained great political influence. They were even able to use the courts and police powers to enforce their dogma and eliminate "quackery." Many alternative practitioners, such as Royal Rife, were forced out of business; some, such as Max Gerson, moved to Mexico, or the Caribbean. More recently some, such as Stanislaw Burzynski, MD, who developed an anti-cancer therapy, and Jonathan Wright, MD, who treats disease with diet therapy, have successfully defended themselves in court, due to loyal patient support and sympathetic juries, and are still in business. They have undergone much harassment, however, and have had their offices raided by armed marshals and their records seized.

The AMA has the same hold on medical practice here that the Vatican had on religion during the middle ages. But even as a reaction set in against the Vatican's excesses, a reaction is setting in against the excesses of the AMA. Partly because of this and partly because of the failure of orthodox medicine to deal with spiritual issues, many people are turning to alternative medicine for help. We are hearing more and more such terms as alternative medicine, holistic medicine and integrative medicine.

Holistic means dealing with the whole person, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Integrative means integrating the best of American medicine with Hindu Ayurveda, traditional Chinese medicine, native American medicine, and others. We see men like Harvard graduate, Andrew Weil, MD, integrating spiritualistic Hindu concepts and Chinese concepts with American medicine; and men like Deepak Chopra, MD, who was born and raised in India and studied and taught at American medical schools, who has written half a dozen books explaining Hindu concepts in scientific terms to make them more acceptable to western minds. Some of these books have become best sellers. We see American schools of nursing teaching required courses in healing touch and medical schools investigating things like prayer and its effect on healing. We see American hospitals offering complementary and alternative therapies such as acupuncture, biofeedback, imagery, and visualization. I believe we are seeing the beginning of a movement which is going to change the philosophy of western allopathic medicine.

Next month's article will be about holistic health. ✍️
(George McDaniel is my father-in-law, and has been a registered nurse for many years, which, along with much research, has taught him many useful health principles.

Editor)

Something for Marriage Hopefuls

by Lynnford Beachy

“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.” (Proverbs 18:22)

When God made man He said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet [a helper suitable] for him.” (Genesis 2:18) God knows how deeply a man longs to have companionship, so He created a woman to help share in the burdens and responsibilities of life, someone to talk with, dream with, and share intimate experiences with.

A loving, harmonious marriage is beautiful to behold but, sadly, these are few and far between. A spouse can be one of the greatest blessings in a person’s life, or he/she can be one the biggest curses. When a young couple decides to get married they often have little understanding of how a good marriage ought to be, nor do they know much about the qualities to look for in a spouse that will help ensure a long, loving marriage. Almost without exception, a young couple will have many surprises shortly after marriage. They think they know the person to whom they have dedicated the rest of their lives, but in reality they have barely just begun getting to know each other. On my wedding day my father-in-law gave a little speech at our reception, in which he said something like this: “Lynnford, you are not marrying the woman you think you are marrying. Only after you are married and live together for awhile will you begin to know the woman you are marrying.” I have to say that he was right. Even though my wife and I had spent a lot of time together and gone through several pre-marriage books together, we both had many surprises after marriage.

Some couples, after the glitter of new love wears off and the hard realities of trying to make two very different lives blend together as one set in, decide that they are incompatible and quickly seek to get a divorce. This always leaves many scars, and is especially damaging when children are involved. The divorce rate in the United States is one of the highest in the world, and the rate has increased around the world in recent years. The divorce rate for second and third marriages is even higher. Even among Christians the divorce rate is far too high. God never intended it to be this way. He said, “The LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away [divorce].” (Malachi 2:16) God hates divorce because He knows how devastating and damaging it is to everyone involved. My parents got divorced when I was ten, so I know somewhat of the heartache that divorce brings.

Since I became a Christian, I have traveled extensively and visited many homes. I have seen many marriages, both good and bad. Some of the bad marriages I saw made me a little apprehensive about getting

married, but it also gave me the desire to study and to be cautious regarding choosing a wife. I developed fairly strict guidelines and criteria that I knew were necessary in a woman before I would consent to spend the rest of my life with her. This, of course, narrowed my choices but, after seven years, the Lord blessed me with a wonderful wife, for whom I am very thankful. I certainly found “a good thing.”

I would like to share a few things that I have learned that should be helpful to any young couple or any singles who are contemplating marriage.

Children learn what they live

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

A young lady will learn how to treat a man by the way her mother treats her father. If her mother treats her father with love and respect, constantly showing affection and care, then she will tend to treat her father in the same way. This father-daughter relationship will form the groundwork for how she treats her husband. If a young lady has a close bond with her father, then she will have the tendency to form a close bond with her husband. When I was looking for a wife, I watched this closely. My wife has a very close relationship with her father, and treats him with love and respect. When I saw this, I had a good idea of what to expect from her as a wife, and I was right. While I was searching for a wife, I noticed other young ladies who were very attractive and had a lot of good qualities, but who treated their parents harshly and disrespectfully. That was a red flag to me, because I knew that they would treat their husbands in a very similar way, so I avoided them.

If a young lady’s mother speaks harshly or disrespectfully to her husband, then the daughter will often treat her father in the same way. The relationship that she builds with her father will then carry over into her married life. If she has the tendency to speak harshly and disrespectfully to her father, or if she has a distant, broken relationship with him, then any young man can expect that she will treat him in a very similar way. Of course she would not do this during the courting time, but you can be quite sure that she will take up this attitude after she is married, for that is what she learned as a child. The same is true with a young man. He learns how to treat a woman by the way his father treats his mother. If his father disrespects his mother, and is abusive towards her, then he will likely disrespect his mother also, and carry this attitude into his married life, and become an abusive husband like his father.

One thing that is very important to look for in a spouse is whether or not he/she has a good parent-child relationship. If it is good, then the marriage relationship will be good. If it is bad, then the marriage relationship will be bad. It is true that there are exceptions to this rule, but not very often. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." (Proverbs 13:20)

For those who are already married and did not know this information, take courage, because with God all things are possible. When God and His Son make their abode in a person's heart, wonderful things can happen. Rough attitudes can be subdued, hard exteriors can be polished, rude and obnoxious people can become calm and kind by the transforming power of God's Spirit working upon the heart. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22, 23)

A genuine Christian is imperative

(I will write this from a man's perspective, but it is equally true from a woman's perspective.)

For any young Christian man it is imperative to find a genuine Christian wife. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14) A Christian has certain goals and aspirations that are extremely important, and absolutely contrary to the goals of unbelievers. Christians will want to raise their children to love God and serve Him. They will want to devote much time to establishing their own relationship with God and in training their children about the things of God. An unbeliever sees no value in this, and will become jealous of the time spent in pursuit of this matter. She will also exert an unholy, degrading influence upon her husband and their children. There will be a constant battle between the believer and the unbeliever on almost all aspects of life. It is easy for a young Christian man to become infatuated with an unbelieving woman, by spending time with her and being overtaken with her wittiness, her charms, and the care she shows towards him. In this early stage of building a relationship, the Christian sometimes becomes blinded by what he thinks is love. He gives his affection to an unbeliever, oblivious of how completely incompatible he is with an unbeliever. Because the Christian knows better than to expect his parents and loved ones to approve of him selecting an unbeliever for a spouse, the young Christian will take up the duty of "converting" the unbelieving woman. This endeavor often ends in disappointment and, even if the unbeliever professes to give her life to Christ, it is often just a mockery and, shortly after marriage, she will return to her old ways. The young Christian will then be stuck in a

relationship that he really wishes he had never gotten involved in.

Another scenario happens all too often as well. Some young Christian men form a close relationship with an unbelieving companion, and the pull is so strong that they abandon their Christianity to pursue an unholy alliance with an unbeliever. When this takes place, the ex-Christian will live a life of regret and shame, and will very likely regret that he had ever pursued an unbelieving wife. It is much better to avoid trying to form a marriage with an unbeliever.

Like beliefs is a must

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3)

Much of what was said in the previous section can be applied here with equal force. Some young Christian men find a charming companion of another faith. They would like to pursue the relationship, so they take it upon themselves to convert the young lady because they know that like-faith is important. They invite their friend to attend their church, and wish for her to believe the doctrines which they hold. The problem with this scenario is that there are ulterior motives involved. The young lady could openly profess to believe the same as her companion, but in reality she does not believe the same way and just wishes to appease the family and church who sees the necessity of married couples believing the same way. All too often this ends up in a marriage relationship where two very different belief systems are competing for the supremacy. The Sabbath can become a very serious and noticeable difference among Christian couples, and one which is very difficult to resolve. One parent wants to teach their children one belief system, while the other is seeking to teach a conflicting belief system. This constant battle is very difficult to deal with, and often ends in divorce. It is much better to find a spouse who already believes the truths that you have come to cherish, and who shares the same desires for raising godly Christian children. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalms 133:1)

Do not seek a spouse whom you hope to change to suit your ideals

Some young men find certain good qualities in a potential wife, but notice certain unacceptable traits that need changing. Then they take it upon themselves to make these changes in their companion so that they will be compatible. There are a few reactions that the potential wife may have.

1) She may rebel and openly reject any attempt by her companion to change her.

2) The desire for a husband may be strong enough for her to make genuine changes.

3) She may have a strong desire for a husband and decide to pretend that she has changed just long enough to get married.

Usually the former or the latter is true, so beware of these things. It is much better to seek a wife who is already the type of person you would be happy to live with for the rest of your life, rather than seeking to change something about her. Chances are that you will never succeed in making these changes and, if they are very important changes, then you will be miserable if you decide to enter into marriage with that person.

Marriage can be a very beautiful thing, given the right circumstances. If both partners are committed Christians who share the same beliefs and, who have both learned the right way to treat each other, then the marriage will likely be a wonderful thing.

Marriage was designed to be a life-long commitment. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) When my wife and I got married we decided to stick together no matter what. Divorce and failure were not an option to us. When difficult times came, we both were committed to "make this thing work." We have really had very few difficult times, and our marriage has been wonderful for both of us. True, we

both have our faults, but we know that with God all things are possible. When you commit yourself to a marriage relationship, keep in mind that it is a life-long decision, so you better get it right the first time. There are many difficulties that face a young married couple even when all things have been considered. Do not add to those difficulties by choosing a spouse that you know will give you heartache in the long run. They say, "Love is blind," and sometimes it is blinding. Do not let what you think to be love blind you from planning ahead for your future, to ensure a lasting and loving marriage relationship.

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Proverbs 22:3)

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

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

Editor: Lynnford Beachy, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, West Virginia 24801, phone: (304) 732-9204, fax: (304) 732-7322, e-mail: newsletter@presenttruth.info.

Smyrna Gospel Ministries

Present Truth Department

HC 64 Box 128-B

Welch, West Virginia 24801

U.S.A.

