

# Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

June 2011

“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord” (2 Timothy 1:2). I pray that everyone is doing well. I apologize for the delay in getting this issue to you. I am determined to get caught up within the next few weeks, so you can expect to receive more issues in the mail soon.

Remember, even in this unstable economy, “Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*” (Matthew 6:31-33).

## The Personality of God – Part 1

by Lynnford Beachy

Since the creation of this world, God has sought to have fellowship with mankind. He daily communed with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Unfortunately, the richness of this communion was spoiled when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, yet God continued to seek them. God has not ceased desiring fellowship with the creatures who were made in His own image. He loves us very much and wants to have continual fellowship with us. He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins so that we could be reconciled to Him and restored to the closeness of the fellowship He had with mankind before they fell.

To restore fellowship with Himself, God has revealed His character and attributes in His word, the Bible, so that mankind can know and love Him. A

knowledge of God is the most important knowledge we can have. God said, “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:23, 24).

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by Charles Fitch

The one thing we have a right to glory in is that we understand and know God, and specifically His character of love. Surely we cannot understand and know everything about God, yet we should understand and know what He has revealed about Himself in the Bible. This knowledge is the most important information that can be acquired.

Can you rightly say that you understand and know God if you think He is a pantheon of gods like the Hindus believe? Certainly not! In India there are shrines on nearly every corner dedicated to Hindu gods. They worship monkeys, cows, elephants, peacocks, three-headed and six-armed statues, etc. They are confused about who God really is, and this confusion keeps them from having close fellowship with Him.

To understand and know God, you must first have a basic understanding of who God is. You must understand something about His identity and characteristics before you can take the next step of actually knowing Him on a personal level and building a relationship with Him.

Having a basic knowledge of God's identity and character is not enough if you do not take the next step and establish a relationship with God. Even the devils have a basic knowledge about God, but they refuse to submit to God's control. James wrote to His Jewish brethren, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). Having a basic knowledge of God is good, but you cannot end there. A knowledge of God, regardless of how correct it is, will not make you any better than the devils if you do not

invite Him to live in your heart and submit your lives to be molded and shaped by His pure character.

## **The Person of God**

Is God a person? Is He a thing or a committee? Who is God? These are important questions to answer and should be easily answered by anyone who understands and knows God. This is basic knowledge about God. Surprisingly, many Christians are stumped by these questions because they have been taught that God is a ghostly, mysterious vapor that pervades all nature.

Daniel was given a vision that helps us understand God. He wrote, "I beheld till the thrones were *cast down* [literally: 'set up'], and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire" (Daniel 7:9).

Someone called "the Ancient of days," who wears a white garment and has white hair, takes a seat on a throne. Shortly thereafter the "Son of man" (verse 13) comes before Him. The Ancient of days must be God, the Father. According to the Bible our heavenly Father is a real Person.

John was given a vision of this same event and states, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals" (Revelation 5:1). Shortly after John saw this, Jesus Christ approaches the throne and takes the book out of His Father's hand. Again, we find that God is a real Person who sits on a throne and has a book in His right hand.

God must be a real Person, for Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). In another place Jesus gave a warning, “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10).

We should expect that God is a real Person, for we were created in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). When we get to heaven, we will find that we resemble God. We will not find a three-headed monster with six arms or any other strange thing like that. God’s outward form is very much like our own. This is the biblical description of what God is like. He is truly a Person.

The writer of Hebrew states, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Here we learn that Jesus Christ is the express image of God’s Person. Therefore God must be a person, and Jesus Christ is a real Person as well.

Paul confirmed this when He wrote, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Philippians 2:5-6). The Greek word that was translated “form” means, “the form by which a

person or thing strikes the vision, external appearance” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). God has an external appearance, and His Son, Jesus Christ, has the same type of appearance.

## Knowing God

In His closing prayer to His Father, after the last supper, Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). Jesus revealed that life eternal depends upon knowing both the only true God and Jesus Christ His Son.

What does it mean to know the Father and the Son? Does Satan know God and His Son in the way Jesus was describing? Certainly not! If he did, then he would have eternal life too, but we know that Satan will come to an end. The Bible says that he will be burned up and turned into ashes (Ezekiel 28:13-19). Knowing God is more than knowing about God. We must know Him on a personal level. To know God is to love God (1 John 4:7, 8). And this begins with knowing His love for us (1 John 4:19).

In the most well-known verse of the Bible, Jesus said, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). When Jesus said God “so loved the world,” He was saying this is how much God loves you, He loves you so much that He did something for you—He demonstrated His love for you by giving up His most precious possession, His only begotten Son.

If God had loved the world so much that He gave a goat, you and I would

seriously question God's love for us because a goat would be an almost meaningless gift for God to give up, since it is something He created. If God had loved the world so much that He gave a human, what would we think then? That is a little better than a goat, but it is still a small gift because humans were also created. What if God had loved the world so much that He gave an angel? That is a better gift than a human, but it still falls far short of demonstrating how much God loves us. You see, our understanding of God's love depends upon the value of the gift He gave up for us. The more valuable the gift He gave, the more we can see His love for us.

God gave His only begotten Son. He has others who are called "sons," but He only has one begotten Son. We can be "sons of God" by *adoption* (Romans 8:14), angels are "sons of God" by *creation* (Job 1:6; 2:1), but Jesus Christ is the only *begotten* Son of God. What sets Jesus Christ apart from everyone else in the universe, and by which we know God's love for us, is the fact that He was begotten. This puts Him in the closest possible relationship with God.

God knows, from firsthand experience, the most valuable possession a person can have. He knows that nothing is more valuable to a person than a child whom they love. This is precisely where God tested Abraham's love and loyalty when He asked him to offer his beloved son, Isaac, for a sacrifice (Genesis 22:1-12). Abraham's willingness to obey God's command proved that he loved God with all his heart. It proved that he would be willing to give up every possession he had for God.

The same thing is true with God. When He gave up His only begotten Son, it proved that He is willing to give up every possession, suffer any amount of pain, and endure any hardship in order to save those whom He loves. This is what Paul meant when he said, "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).

John wrote, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5). John stresses the importance of believing that Jesus is the Son of God. Without this belief, we cannot overcome the world. Why is it so important to believe that Jesus is the Son of God? What if we believe that Jesus is the friend of God, isn't that good enough? What if we think Jesus is the cousin of God, or His uncle? Would it make a difference in our ability to overcome the world?

Suppose I said to you, "I love you so much, I am going to send my friend, Frank, to die for you." What would you think? You would probably wonder, *If you love me so much, why didn't you come and die for me yourself instead of sending a friend to do it?* But if I said, "I love you so much, I am going to send my son to die for you," you would know that my love is real.

My friends, God really means what He says. He says that He gave His only begotten Son. If Jesus Christ was not the begotten Son of God before God sent Him into the world, then what did the Father give up? Many sincere Christians believe that Jesus Christ is an exactly equal, same-aged companion of

the Father. If this were true, then all the Father gave up was a friend, a companion! If this were true, then the One who loves us the most is Christ, because He is the One who willingly died for us.

It is true that Jesus Christ loves us very much, and we praise and thank Him for that love. However, the Bible teaches that God, the Father, suffered tremendously when His Son was suffering under the weight of our sins. (Compare Psalm 18:4-11 with Matthew 27:45-51.) In Abraham and Isaac's story, it was obviously the father, Abraham, who suffered more than Isaac when he gave up his beloved son. Jesus said, "the Father himself loveth you" (John 16:27). John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us" (1 John 3:1). We cannot behold the love of the Father if we do not know what He gave up for us. John wrote, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). God has an only begotten Son whom He willingly gave up so that you could be forgiven of your sins and live for eternity. Praise God for such wonderful love!

Our love for God is directly related to how much we see His love for us. This is why John emphasized that we must believe Jesus is the Son of God to overcome the world. If you believe Jesus is God's friend, cousin, uncle, or anyone other than the Son of God, your perception of God's love is decreased. In proportion to how much your perception of God's love is reduced, your ability to love God in return is reduced.

Believing that Jesus is the begotten Son of God enables us to overcome the world by elevating our perception of God's love and enabling us to love Him with all our hearts in return. John explained: "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

The fact that Jesus is the Son of God is so important that Jesus said He would build His church upon this truth.

One day Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:13-18).

Notice that the subject of this conversation was the identity of Jesus. When Jesus said "upon this rock I will build my church," He wasn't referring to Peter as the rock, but to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. Upon this truth, Jesus said, "I will build my church." This is obviously a very important truth, the truth upon which God's church is built.

The fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is so important that, at the close of his gospel, John wrote, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are

written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30).

The Peter, who lived with Jesus and heard His messages firsthand, including the many things He said that are not recorded, exclaimed, “We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69). They also exclaimed, “We believe that thou camest forth from God” (John 16:30).

Right after Paul learned the gospel directly from Christ Himself, “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20).

Right after Phillip preached the gospel to the eunuch, “Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest [be baptized]. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37).

Martha, a close friend of Jesus, who heard many of His teachings, said to Him, “I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (John 11:27).

Nathaniel, of whom Christ said in him “is no guile,” said to Jesus, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel” (John 1:47, 49).

Christ said, “Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” (Luke 7:28). John the Baptist testified, “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).

Of all the witnesses, the greatest is God the Father Himself. Two times He spoke from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son” (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).

And we know that God “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2).

I am persuaded to take my stand with the faithful witnesses in the Bible who proclaimed that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. This is a vital truth we must believe before we can truly know the depths of God’s love (Ephesians 3:16-19).

## The Begotten Son of God

Jesus proclaimed, “I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:36). He said that He is “the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). The word *begotten* literally means born. Jesus said, “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” (John 5:26). According to His own testimony, Jesus really is the only begotten Son of God and literally received life from His Father.

Paul explained of Christ, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15). *Barnes New Testament Notes* says, “the word firstborn—pro-tot-ok’-os — properly means the firstborn child of a father or mother.” *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary* says, “Begotten (literally, ‘born’) before every creature.” *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* says, “Christ is called, firstborn of all creation, who came into being through God prior to the entire universe of created things.”

Jesus Christ is called the “the image of God,” “the image of the invisible God,” and “the express image of his person” (2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). An image is never the original, but always a likeness or duplication of the original. Christ is the

Son of God and, therefore, the express image of His Father. It would be incorrect to say that the Father is the image of His Son because the Father is the original. In like manner it would be incorrect to refer to Christ as the true, or original, God, since He is the image of the true God.

Micah wrote of Jesus, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth [origin] have been from of old, from everlasting [Margin: ‘the days of eternity’]” (Micah 5:2). The *Revised Standard Version* translates it, “Whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.” The origin of the Son of God was in the days of eternity. He was begotten before anything was created, even before time as we know it, in the days of eternity.

In the first verse of Proverbs eight, it says that wisdom is speaking. Who is wisdom? Verse 8 tells us that He has a mouth and speaks, and verse 17 says that He loves. Paul wrote, “But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24). “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). Christ is Wisdom, and is speaking in Proverbs chapter eight.

He says, “When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth” (Proverbs 8:24, 25). The 1965 *Bible in*

*Basic English* says, “When there was no deep I was given birth, when there were no fountains flowing with water. Before the mountains were put in their places, before the hills was my birth.”

The Hebrew word חוללתי, which was translated “I was brought forth,” is a verb. Hebrew verbs can be found in many different forms. In the Old Testament, this particular verb was used in six different forms. They are Qal, Polel, Pulal, Hophal, Hithpolel, and Hithpapel. Depending upon what form is used for this verb, the meaning of the word can be completely changed. For example, when this Hebrew verb חוללתי is used in the Qal form, it means “to dance, to twist, to writhe, to whirl, to whirl about” (*Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon*). It is obvious from the context that this definition would not apply in Proverbs 8:24, 25, and it could not apply because the Hebrew word חוללתי is used, in these verses, in the Pulal form. The definition for the Pulal form is the only definition that can apply here. This definition is as follows: “to be made to writhe, be made to bear, to be brought forth” (*Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon*). This verb in this form is only used three places in the Bible, and here are the other two places where it is used: “Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made [Hebrew: חוללתי in the Pulal form] before the hills?” (Job 15:7). “Behold, I was shapen [Hebrew: חוללתי in the Pulal form] in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). As we can plainly see, the term “brought forth” in Proverbs 8:24, 25 can mean nothing other than being begotten, or born.

Let us continue with the rest of the verses in Proverbs chapter eight and learn more about the characteristics of Wisdom.

“While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death” (Proverbs 8:26-36).

The terms Father and Son, by definition, indicate the existence of one before the other. This was the understanding of the Israelites. In the book of Proverbs we read: “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell?” (Proverbs 30:4).

The Bible refers to Christ as God’s Son at least 120 times. The Bible does this by using the phrase “Son of God” 47 times. Regarding the genuineness of Christ’s sonship, He is called “the only begotten” five times, “the firstborn” three times, “the firstbegotten” once, and God’s “holy child” twice. Four verses say He was “begotten” prior to His incarnation. Four verses say that He “proceeded forth from,” “came out from,” or “camest forth from” the Father. The evidence on this subject is overwhelming. Christ truly is the literal begotten Son of God, brought forth from the Father before all creation. If God expected us to believe anything different, He did a poor job of presenting it in the Bible. In fact, if God had wanted us to believe differently, He purposely confused us by making so many clear statements indicating that Christ is literally the begotten Son of God. Yet, “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Some people have mistakenly concluded that God used the terms “Father” and “Son” to get across to our feeble minds a divine relationship that they could not possibly explain in our language. To come to this conclusion you would have to assume that God just happened upon this strange type of beings who have a strange language and manner of reproduction. You would have to forget that God created our language and designed our manner of reproduction, after He already had a Son. God designed us with the ability to have a son, and then He exclaimed of Jesus, “This is my beloved Son...” (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). God means what He says



even regarding our human relationships that He designed.

According to the Bible, Jesus Christ was begotten, which literally means born, before anything was created—long before God sent Him into the world. (See Hebrews 1:1-9; Colossians 1:15; John 3:16, 17; 18:37; and 1 John 4:9.) How He was begotten is not for us to know, but God wants us to realize that He and His Son have a close, genuine, father-son relationship that is not just a role, or an act.

Some people think that God is beyond the possibility of having a Son, but Jesus said, “with God all things are possible” (Mark 10:27). The Bible refers to Christ as God’s Son at least 120 times. The Bible does this by using the phrase “Son of God” forty-seven times. Regarding the genuineness of Christ’s Sonship, He is called “the only begotten” five times, “the firstborn” three times, “the firstbegotten” once, and God’s “holy child” twice. Four verses say He was “begotten” prior to His incarnation. Four verses say that He “proceeded forth from,” “came out from” or “camest forth from” the Father. The evidence on this subject is overwhelming. Christ truly is the literal begotten Son of God, brought forth from the Father before all creation. If God expected us to believe anything different, He did a poor job of presenting it in the Bible. In fact, if God had wanted us to believe differently, He purposely confused us by making so many clear statements indicating that Christ is literally the begotten Son of God, without the slightest clarification to indicate that we should not take His words in their common meaning. Yet, “God is not the author of

confusion, but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Any writer or public speaker knows that when they use a word or a phrase that could be easily misunderstood, clarifications need to be made to prevent people from coming to the wrong conclusions. Yet, throughout the New Testament, where Christ is said to be the begotten Son of God, there is never any type of correction or clarification so that these words would not be taken in their natural sense. Jesus said that He is “the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). Concerning another subject, but the principle can be applied with equal force here, He said, “If it were not so, I would have told you” (John 14:2).

You might be thinking, “I have always believed Jesus is the Son of God.” Great! You might also be questioning, “Don’t all Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God?” The sad reality is that most who profess to be Christians actually do not believe Jesus to be the real Son of God if they subscribe to their denominations’ statements of belief.

Almost all Christians will affirm, “Jesus is the Son of God,” but there are very different meanings attached to these words. For example, the Jehovah’s Witnesses say that Jesus is the Son of God, but when asked to describe what that means, they will tell you that Jesus was the first angel that God created, and was no different than Lucifer or any of the other angels. Catholics will tell you that Jesus is the Son of God, but when asked to explain, will say that He is part of the same substance of God, connected to His being as thoroughly as a Siamese twin, and is the

same age as His Father. Have you ever seen a Son like this? Others will explain that Jesus is a co-eternal companion of God whom God declared to be His Son even though He is not really His Son. Others will say that Jesus became the Son of God when He was born in Bethlehem by the virgin Mary, and was not the Son of God in any other sense.

Each of these theories denies that Jesus is the Son of God in one way or another. The Bible says, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 John 2:22, 23). We must be careful not to deny the Son of God just so that we can uphold a church creed that is not taught in the Bible. A denial of the Son of God will result in our inability to overcome the world and will inhibit our relationship with God.

Many people have a false concept of God that denies the true sonship of Christ. No matter how hard a person tries to love a god like this, they will never be able to love him with all their heart, soul, strength and mind. This is true because God's love is misrepresented by all false theories about Him, and we can only love Him by first seeing His love for us, as John said, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

The Bible says, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). If we are beholding a god that only loves us enough to put on an act, to

pretend to be someone he is not, then we will love him only enough to put on an act, to pretend to be Christians, when we are not.

Remember that no lie is safe, no matter how innocently it is believed. Paul wrote that those who "believe a lie" will be "damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12). Also, keep in mind that the majority are seldom right in religious matters. Jesus said, "broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14). The councils of men, and the man-made creeds that are so often esteemed by Christians, are not the standards by which we can determine truth. There is only one standard, and one alone, that we can trust as an infallible guide to truth, and that is the Word of God. We must not trust man to lead us into truth, for God said, "the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed" (Isaiah 9:16).

I pray that you will only accept a plain, "Thus saith the Lord" as a reason for all of your beliefs about the Son of God and that you will truly accept Jesus for who He has declared Himself to be, "the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). I pray that this truth will open the doors for unrestricted fellowship with the great God of heaven who yielded His Son to die for your sins. Now, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1).



# You May Freely Eat?

by Jim Raymond

## Migraine 2: Nutritional and Natural Medicines

Over 45 million Americans suffer from chronic headaches. These patients make 80 million visits to their doctors and lose 157 million days of work each year. These statistics include the 28 million migraine and cluster headache sufferers (migraineurs) and their 112 million bedridden days each year.

Living with the threat of recurrent debilitating pain, migraineurs are eager to try just about anything that may prevent or decrease the severity of an attack. Likewise, the side effects and risks of conventional pharmacological drugs have many patients looking to natural medicines and methods.

**Treatment:** We know something about the errant physiology and a lot about the symptoms of headaches but precious little about specific causes. When looking at treatment strategies, one thing stands out—*nothing works for everyone nor even every time!* This fact means that trial and error will be the *only* thing that will be part of every migraineurs' treatment planning—at least for the foreseeable future.

As a result, many different drugs with diverse pharmacological actions are used to prevent or treat an acute headache. Drug therapy for headaches, including mild-to-moderate migraines, usually starts with aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol), or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (called by the acronym

NSAIDs). Treatment may progress to the “triptans” or ergot alkaloids. Many migraineurs are using combinations of existing drugs in a hopeful attempt to improve treatment of acute attacks and decrease the severity and recurrence rates. In fact, at least one drug maker has brought to market Treximet<sup>®</sup>, a combination drug which marries a *triptan* (sumatriptan 85 mg) and a NSAID (naproxen 500 mg).

The choice of last resort are the true opioids (opium derivative narcotics, *Vicodin*<sup>®</sup>, Tylenol-3, etc.). Opioids can also be used for pain relief, but they are usually considered a last resort because they mask the pain but do not really interrupt the headache cycle.

A few natural products used for headaches work similarly to conventional drugs. Willow bark, for example, contains salicin, which the body converts to salicylic acid. In fact, aspirin was originally derived from willow bark. Salicylic acid works similarly to aspirin, or NSAIDs, by reducing prostaglandins. Prostaglandins are various types of natural chemicals inside the cells of most tissues and organs. Prostaglandins serve as chemical messengers that activate pain signals to the brain, and produce inflammation and fever in response to insult or injury. Most pain medicines work by shutting down prostaglandins which is not totally a good thing, especially over the long term. Salicin, the active ingredient in willow bark, is an acid that is reputed

to irritate the stomach lining, but not at the level of NSAIDs, and significantly less than its salicylic acid metabolite. Converting salicylic acid to acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or aspirin) reduced the stomach problems and made aspirin widely acceptable for acute and chronic pain relief. Not only is aspirin more gentle on the stomach lining than salicin or salicylic acid; it is also more effective against pain, swelling and fever.

Unfortunately, there is no reliable clinical research on the use of willow bark specifically for headaches. Unless some highly synergistic herbal formula supporting willow bark exists, it remains, at least theoretically, not likely to work well for headaches. The unreasonably large dose needed to equal the pain relief of 1.5 grams of aspirin is about two quarts of willow bark tea having 7% salicin content. Aspirin performs better than willow bark—both in dose effectiveness, cost, and side effects. We can also wonder what an extra two quarts of acidified water would do to electrolyte (mineral) balance, urinary health, and sleep quality. (I would love to hear from anyone having evidence that shows willow bark to be effective. Likewise I am also interested in bad experiences with willow bark.)

**Caffeine** has long been used as an adjunct in analgesic preparations. OTC analgesics such as Excedrin Migraine contain caffeine per tablet. Caffeine enhances the analgesic activity of NSAIDs and opioids and can help decrease pain related to tension and migraine headaches. Research shows that both 65 mg and 135 mg equal the pain

relief afforded by 650 mg acetaminophen. This sets 65 mg as the maximum limit of the short term analgesic benefit of caffeine. For comparison, 65 mg of caffeine is slightly less than the amount found in half a cup of coffee.

**Cautionary notes:** The caveat is that long term or frequent (meaning only daily for some) caffeine use at about 225 mg / day (about 1½ cups of coffee) can be *addictive* and this seems to be the reason that it can cause more headaches than it can prevent. Caffeine *addiction* withdrawal is associated with rather nasty headaches which come on every time blood levels drop. Withdrawal headaches can cause (trigger) migraines in people who consume caffeine regularly.

Some combination herbal headache products often contain herbal extracts that supply caffeine, such as maté and guarana.

Be cautious when using other products that contain caffeine, especially if you are already getting caffeine from coffee, soda, or OTC medicines. Excessive caffeine can cause or aggravate heart conditions, depression, anxiety, or peptic ulcers.

We mention caffeine here because it is socially defined as a natural food product (even though it is negatively nutritive), and it is commonly accepted as helpful to headaches. Unlike willow bark, which has no scientific research proving its benefit, caffeine has volumes of research showing its hellaciously deceptive side effects. We will address more caffeine problems and withdrawal later.

Some people are very sensitive to caffeine, while most people will begin to suffer the ill effects of caffeine at about 225 mg per day (all sources combined)

**Magnesium** (as magnesium citrate or trimagnesium dicitrate) at 600 mg per day, works to reduce attack frequency and severity for many migraineurs. Low levels of magnesium are common in migraineurs. Intravenous magnesium sulfate (1-5 grams) has been used successfully to stop acute attacks. High doses of magnesium can cause loose stools and diarrhea. Some think that magnesium might increase the risk of hypermagnesemia (high magnesium in the blood) in patients with poor kidney function and possibly cause arrhythmias in patients with heart disease. (See *Present Truth*, May 2011 for more about migraines and magnesium)

**Peppermint oil** is sometimes used topically for tension headaches. Preliminary evidence suggests that 10%, applied to the forehead and temples, might reduce headache intensity after 15 minutes. Most peppermint oil contains at least 44%. It probably works more to soothe and relax the tension rather than to relieve headache pain.

**Cautionary notes:** If you want to try peppermint oil, be sure to keep it away from your nose. It can cause bronchial spasms. Likewise, avoid using peppermint oil on infants and small children. Their skin, eyes, and nasal tissues are too sensitive to peppermint oil and its level of menthol.

**Chasteberry** might help headaches related to premenstrual syndrome

(PMS). Chasteberry is thought to relieve PMS symptoms by its effect on neurotransmitters and hormones. Women suffering from PMS who have low progesterone and higher estrogen levels seem to benefit the most. If you want to try chasteberry for PMS headaches, be patient, as it might take 4-12 weeks to work. Studies have used 20-40 mg/day of a specific chasteberry extract (in the US, Femaprin<sup>®</sup> by Nature's Way).

**Cautionary note:** Chasteberry is usually well-tolerated, but it can cause GI upset, nausea, acne, and menstrual bleeding in some patients.

**5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP)** is now also being tried for headaches. 5-HTP is a precursor to serotonin. But evidence to date suggests that it is NOT effective for chronic tension-type headaches. There are also concerns about side effects. Several years ago it was linked to as many as 60,000 cases (and over 2 dozen deaths) of eosinophilia myalgia syndrome (EMS). EMS is an incurable and sometimes fatal flu-like neurological condition which is painfully debilitating. EMS is believed to have been caused by contaminated and/or poorly produced L-tryptophan supplements using a genetically modified fermentation organism. EMS causes an increase in eosinophils (a type of white blood cell) in nerve, muscle, and connective tissue.

A recent theory postulates that taking large doses of tryptophan could lead to production of metabolites, some of which may interfere with normal histamine degradation. Excessive

histamine activity has been linked with blood eosinophilia and myalgia. So far, there is not enough evidence to know if EMS is actually caused by 5-HTP, or other unknown factors. Until more is known, be cautious with tryptophan supplements.

**Capsicum extract, or capsaicin**, is being investigated for treating migraines and cluster headaches. Capsaicin is the heat source in spicy peppers, and the active ingredient in the commercial nose spray product *Sinol Headache Relief*<sup>®</sup>. The capsaicin is thought to work by depleting substance P and so desensitizing nervous tissue. Substance P is a local neurotransmitter that helps the brain identify pain sensation. Intranasal applications of capsaicin preparations do seem to help decrease symptoms and occurrence of cluster headaches, and it might also do the same for migraine headaches.

The big downside? This treatment is literally “a pain in the nose!” Most studies apply a topical local anesthetic before using the capsaicin, and even so, there is still significant pain. The pain, sneezing, and teary eyes are said to subside after several applications. Despite promising headache relief, few migraineurs are eager to try this product.

**Prophylactic (preventive) Therapy:** Most migraineurs having 3 or more migraines per month, and 2 or more days of debilitating pain are usually willing to try preventive drug therapy. Several classes of drugs are available for migraine preventive treatment, including beta-blockers, tricyclic

antidepressants, anticonvulsants, calcium channel blockers, and ACE inhibitors. These drugs do seem to reduce migraine headaches for many migraineurs. Unfortunately, too many migraineurs find it hard to tolerate the side effects of these drugs.

Several natural products are being used as prophylactic agents against migraine. Most of these have fewer, if any, and less troublesome side effects.

**Feverfew** is the natural migraine preventive most often used. Most evidence suggests that 50-100mg/day of feverfew can reduce both the frequency and the severity of migraine symptoms (including: pain, nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light and noise). Some research does not find benefit from feverfew. The contradictory findings are likely due to product differences. Herbs harvested or extracted in different ways or regions often have different effects.

We really do not know why feverfew works for so many. It seems that feverfew inhibits platelet aggregation, serotonin release, leukotrienes, and prostaglandin synthesis. Feverfew leaf is the active part and has around 40 constituents.

**Four cautionary notes:** Research shows feverfew NOT to be effective for stopping an acute attack.

Feverfew is in the same family as ragweed. If you are allergic to ragweed, you probably need to avoid using feverfew.

If you take (or have taken) feverfew for a long time and plan to stop, make sure to taper off your dose over a few weeks. Stopping abruptly could cause

“post-feverfew syndrome”. Symptoms include: nervousness, headache, insomnia, joint pain, and tiredness.

Lastly, if you are taking any of the warfarin based anticoagulants (“blood thinners”): Coumadin<sup>®</sup>, Jantoven<sup>®</sup>, Marevan<sup>®</sup>, Lawarin<sup>®</sup>, Waran<sup>®</sup>, or Warfant<sup>®</sup>, along with feverfew, your INR (International Normalized Ratio) should be monitored because feverfew may inhibit platelet aggregation (1<sup>st</sup> step towards a clot) and raise your risk of uncontrolled (internal and external) bleeding.

**Riboflavin:** About 60% of patients taking riboflavin cut migraine attacks in half.

Riboflavin plays a critical role in mitochondrial energy production. Mitochondria are the tiny cellular power houses that recharge the battery-like molecules (ATP). Riboflavin is required for this process. Some researchers think that migraine headaches are due partly to mitochondrial malfunction.

**Cautionary notes:** Effective dose used in the research were 400 mg/day of riboflavin, and it took 4 months to see results! As long as kidney function is normal, toxicity should not be a problem. Riboflavin is usually well-tolerated, but high doses can cause diarrhea and polyuria (frequent urination). If this happens, try dividing the dose into 2 or more parts during the day. Don’t be surprised if your urine turns bright fluorescent yellow. This yellowing can interfere with color-dependent urine test results.

**Coenzyme Q10**, like riboflavin, is involved in mitochondrial energy

production. It is now being studied as a potential preventive agent for migraine. 300 mg/day, taken as 100 mg three times per day, has been shown to decrease the frequency of migraines by about 30%. It also seems to reduce the number of days with headache-related nausea by about 45%. Be patient with coenzyme Q10 because it can take up to 3 months to show significant benefit.

**Melatonin** levels seem to be decreased in some headache patients. Research suggests that taking 10 mg of melatonin every evening can reduce the frequency of episodic cluster headache. Doses at 2 mg had no effect at all on headaches. Likewise, patients with chronic cluster headaches do not seem to benefit.

Preliminary research also suggests that melatonin might help episodic migraine. Episodic migraineurs who take 3 mg every evening seem to have less frequent attacks which are of shorter duration and less intense.

Melatonin seems to modify both the vascular system and the pain-transmitting system, and it may lower core body temperature. Cluster headache sufferers seem to run higher body temperatures. Some research also suggests that migraineurs have decreased melatonin production. Melatonin looks promising as part of a prophylactic regimen.

**Cautionary notes:** Doses at the above levels can cause drowsiness. Avoid activities where alertness is critical to safety.

**Butterbur** is backed by some impressive studies showing that it is an effective natural product for preventing

## **The Bottom Line**

migraines. Butterbur seems to have antispasmodic effects on smooth muscle and vascular walls, and it might also have anti-inflammatory effects.

Petadolex<sup>®</sup> is a specific butterbur rhizome extract standardized to 15% petasin and isopetasin. Taking 75 mg of this preparation twice daily demonstrated a 48% reduction in the frequency, intensity, and duration of migraines when used over a period of 16 weeks. Using a lower dose of 50 mg twice daily only showed a reduction of 36%.

Because the long-term safety of butterbur (beyond 16 weeks) is unknown, researchers suggest taking the extract for 4-6 months, then tapering the dose until the migraine incidence begins to increase.

**Cautionary notes:** When shopping for butterbur, look for pyrrolizidine alkaloids free extracts. Products that contain unsaturated pyrrolizidine alkaloids are carcinogenic and can cause liver and kidney damage. Look for assurance that the product is declared to be “free of Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids (PAs or UPAs)” on the label.

**Fish oil** had many researchers hopeful that it would help migraineurs because fish oil seems to suppress inflammatory blood chemicals (cytokines, prostaglandins, or leukotrienes) and seems to reduce non-migraine headaches. However, this is not the case; clinical studies have NOT shown fish oil to be effective for preventing migraine headaches.

Migraine and cluster headaches are challenging to treat. Treatment can be difficult because there is a high degree of variability in individual response to both drugs and natural agents. Persistence is needed to find the most effective treatment. When it is necessary, try a different approach. Be patient with the natural prophylactic treatments. It may take 2 or 3 months to decide if they are effective for you.

Migraine specialist, Dr Alexander Mauskop, of MyHeadache.com, recommends a prophylactic regimen of several natural agents, a moderate list of activities (example—aerobic exercise, stretching...), and avoidances—“stop caffeine” heads this long list. Here is a list of the natural agents he suggests (dosage is above): Feverfew, Butterbur, Riboflavin, Coenzyme Q10, Magnesium, and Ginger (for nausea).

Two OTC natural medications contain combinations of some of the natural agents listed above:

Migravent<sup>®</sup> - Dosage is 3x/day = total mg of Butterbur=150 (Declared), Riboflavin~400 (Estimated), Coenzyme Q10~150 (Est.), Magnesium~300 (Est.), The last 3 ingredients are estimated because their amounts are not individually declared on the label they are declared as 846 mg as a combined mix.

MigreLief<sup>®</sup> - Dosage is 2x/day = total mg of Feverfew=100, Riboflavin=400, Magnesium=360.

*Blessings! JR*

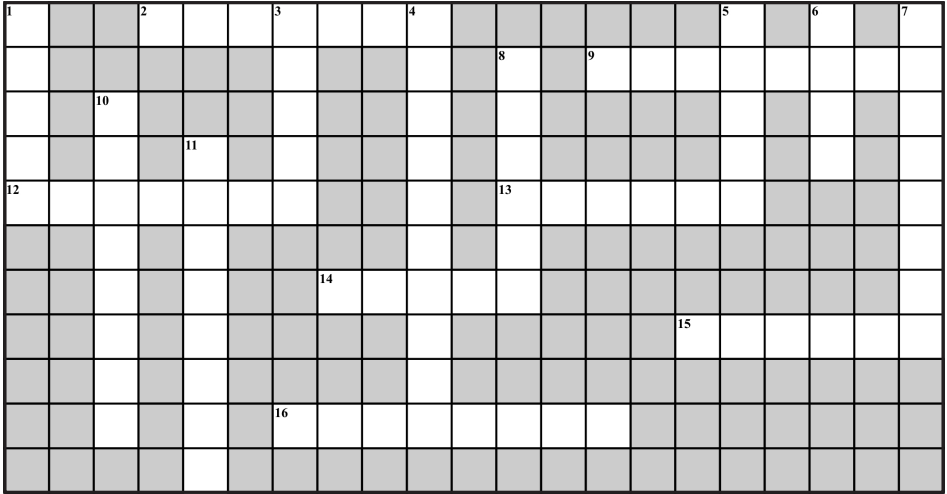
*June 2011*



*Present Truth*  
**Something for the Young at Heart**

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies based on the book, *Bible Handbook*, by Stephen Haskell. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line. (The KJV is required.)

*The Effects of Christ's Coming*



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

- Just prior to the second coming of Christ, John records the events that will take place, stating, "...there was a great \_\_\_\_\_, such as was not since men were upon the earth." Revelation 16:17-21—**4 Down**

➤ When Jesus returns the righteous dead will be raised to life, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up \_\_\_\_\_ with them in the clouds..." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17—**16 Across**

➤ "And the heaven \_\_\_\_\_ as a scroll when it is rolled together..." Revelation 6:14—**10 Down**


➤ When the Lord returns the wicked will "go into the clefts of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to \_\_\_\_\_ terribly the earth." Isaiah 2:17-21—**1 Down**
- The wicked will say "to the mountains and rocks, \_\_\_\_\_ on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Revelation 6:15, 16—**6 Down**

➤ "...every mountain and island were \_\_\_\_\_ out of their places." Revelation 6:14-17—**5 Down**

➤ "The land shall be utterly \_\_\_\_\_, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word." Isaiah 24:1, 3-6—**12 Across**

➤ "He will give them that are wicked to the \_\_\_\_\_, saith the LORD." Jeremiah 25:31—**3 Down**

➤ "For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be \_\_\_\_\_." Jeremiah 4:23-27—**9 Across**

- “I will utterly \_\_\_\_ all things from off the land, saith the LORD.” Zephaniah 1:2, 3—**2 Across**
- An angel “laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and \_\_\_\_ him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:1-3—**14 Across**
- “...the rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were \_\_\_\_.” Revelation 20:4-6—**11 Down**
- “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be \_\_\_\_ out of his prison,” Revelation 20:7, 8—**8 Down**
- At the end of the thousand years, “fire came down from God out of heaven, and \_\_\_\_ them [the wicked].” Revelation 20:9—**7 Down**
- “This is the \_\_\_\_ death.” Revelation 20:10-15—**13 Across**
- “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be \_\_\_\_ up.” 2 Peter 3:7-13—**15 Across** 

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## Sin Shall Not Have Dominion Over You (Part 8)

by Charles Fitch

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

I knew that the world would reproach me. I knew that God’s professed people would cast out my name as evil. I knew that the friends whom I loved most dearly would, many of them, perhaps, weep over me as lost. I knew that the confidence of the churches with which I stood connected, would be withdrawn from me, and perhaps all my past prospects of a maintenance of myself and my household be entirely cut off; but I knew that my Redeemer lived – and that all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth, and that I had only to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” (Matthew 6:33) nothing doubting that He who feeds the fowls of the air, and clothes

the lilies of the field, as Solomon was never arrayed in all his glory (Matthew 6:28, 29), would surely feed and clothe me and mine.

In this state of mind I did, at the altar of my God, make confession of what God had taught me of His truth, and of what I had been made to feel of His purifying, sanctifying grace in Jesus Christ; and thus I discharged a duty, to which I am sure I never could have been led by anything, but a once crucified and now glorified Saviour’s love, manifested to me by the Holy Ghost. I have no more doubt that I was constrained to this step by the love of Christ, than I have that Christ or my own soul has a being. I know I was not led to it by a love of the world, for I never could have done it, until the last vestige of the love of the world had been taken from me. I know that until I had made of the whole world an entire sacrifice to Christ, I

never could have thus held myself up to scorn.

On the morning of the day, which immediately followed the Sabbath when I first “witnessed this confession” before men, I had a season of communion with God, of which I will speak, because I think it may do good. I was alone in my chamber, and meditating upon some passages of Scripture which made mention of the faithfulness of God. Such as the following: “God is faithful by Whom ye are called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:9). “Faithful is He that hath called you, to sanctify you wholly, and to preserve your whole spirit and soul and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make way for your escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13). “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and He that sat upon Him was called Faithful and True.” (Revelation 19:11).

His name is also called the Word of God. “And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.” (Revelation 19:16). While reflecting thus upon the faithfulness of my God and Saviour, my whole soul seemed heaved with inexpressible emotions, and poured out in floods of gushing love at my Redeemer’s feet. I felt that I had forsaken all for Him, and could now only leave myself in His hands, and commit all my interests to His disposal. And now in view of the safety of trusting my all

with Him, my soul exulted with amazing gladness, and I could only walk my room weeping aloud for joy, and pouring out my tears of overflowing delight, as I uttered again and again the single expression – My faithful God – My faithful God.

Since that time I have had various conflicts with Satan, but I have never for a moment doubted the faithfulness of my Redeemer in saving all His people from their sins, who will believe on His name for that blessing; and I see most clearly, that the only reason why any Christian is not saved from sin, is “because of unbelief.” (Romans 11:20).

I have by no means been all that I hope, or expect to be; for I see that it is the privilege of the Christian that has been redeemed from all iniquity, still to “forget the things, which are behind, and reach forth unto those which are before” (Philippians 3:13), and “beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, to be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of God.” (2 Corinthians 3:18). I believe that to be cleansed from all unrighteousness is by no means the height of the Christian’s privilege on earth; that beyond that he may go on “to comprehend with all saints, what is the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge,” and be filled more and more “with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:18, 19). And that even then, we may still say to Him with the apostle, “Now to Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory

by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20, 21).

You will now see, brethren, in what I have related to you of the leadings and teachings of God’s Spirit with my own soul, why I cannot regard your admonition, and desist from preaching the doctrine of entire sanctification by faith in Christ. I could not do it, without regarding myself as a traitor to my blessed Lord and Master, Who has made to me – a miserable, unworthy, hell-deserving worm of the dust – manifestations of His presence and love, bright and glorious, far beyond anything which I once could have conceived. I believe “He is faithful to sanctify His people wholly, and to preserve their whole spirit and soul and body blameless to His coming.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). I feel that “necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not this gospel.” (1 Corinthians 9:16). Like Jonah fleeing to Tarshish, I once attempted to escape the discharge of the duty. Like Jeremiah, “I said I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name; but His Word was in mine heart, as burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay.” (Jeremiah 20:9). Once I denied the faithfulness of my Redeemer; but He forgave me, and has restored me to the enjoyment of His love, and has, as I firmly believe, in faithfulness to His own promise, “circumcised my heart to love Him with all my heart and with all my soul.” (Deuteronomy 30:6). I must speak it to the world. Let Him have the glory, and let me bear the reproach which I must bear for His sake. I must confess it to the world, for the purpose

of making known, as far as I am able, with His blessing, to all God’s people, their high privileges in Christ Jesus. “For I certify you brethren, that this gospel which is preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:11, 12). And now, “whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for I cannot but speak the things which I have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:19, 20).

### *Reason Two*

I cannot desist from preaching the doctrine of sanctification, and from testifying to my own experience of it, for the very same reasons that you cannot desist from preaching the doctrine of regeneration, and testifying to your own experience of that. Suppose you were to insist that “except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3), but when asked whether you or anyone else had enjoyed that blessing, should say, “By no means. It is an important and dangerous error for any man to think so; it never takes place till death.” How much influence would such preaching exert? How many would be born again through such instrumentality? You feel yourselves under necessity, therefore, on that subject, to maintain that regeneration is a matter of experience, and that you and many others do enjoy it. But while you tell your people that they ought to be free from sin, and are wholly inexcusable for not being so, and while you pray that they may be redeemed from all iniquity, they know perfectly well that you have no

expectation that it will take place while they live, and hence all your exhortations and prayers are wholly lost. Your people know, that you expect that they will live along in sin till death, and while you exhort them to be free from sin, you show them no way by which they may become so, and maintain that it would be an important and dangerous error for them to expect to be so until they die. Hence, all your efforts for the sanctification of God's professing people, are rendered perfectly nugatory. For myself, therefore, I feel bound to tell professing Christians, that there is a way, whereby they may "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1); that it may be done through the promises of God, which "are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus." (2 Corinthians 1:20). When, therefore, with the apostle, "I labor striving according to God's Spirit, which worketh in me mightily, by warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:29, 28), I feel that I am not urging them to chase a phantom, which however earnestly and laboriously sought, will elude their grasp till death; but that I am leading them to the enjoyment of a blessed and glorious reality, which is treasured up for them in Christ, and which they may every one of them secure and most richly enjoy. And when I am permitted, through the exceeding riches of God's love in Christ Jesus, to say that I have experience of the grace which I present to their acceptance, I have left them stripped of all excuses and palliations for their sins, and

may therefore hope that God's Spirit will attend His truth, and lead them in the way of knowledge and understanding. I can say to Christians, "This is the will of God even your sanctification." (1 Thessalonians 4:3). "God hath not called us to uncleanness but to holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7), while you by your own principles are obliged to tell them, that they are shut up, in some measure at least, to a life of sin. Brethren, I cannot stand on such ground, and therefore I must disregard your admonition.

There seems to be a wonderful and strange inconsistency, in urging Christians to holiness of heart and life, and at the same time telling them that they never can be without sin while they live, and that if they think that Christ, who was manifested to take away their sins, will ever do it tell he takes away their breath, they have embraced important and dangerous error. I feel constrained to say, in faithfulness to Christ, and His dear people, though some may think it unkind, that those who attempt to maintain such ground, seem to me to be, and in a very important sense "shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither entering themselves, nor suffering those who would enter to go in." (Matthew 23:13). When the watchmen of Israel cry out in the ears of the people, that no man ever did or will abide in Christ and sin not, on earth; that God who has sworn to do it, and raised up Christ our horn of salvation to perform the oath, never will "grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the day so of our

life” (Luke 1:74, 75), what will despair of attaining it, and submit in despondency to the will of their spiritual foes, and groan away their lives in grievous bondage, when they might be enjoying the liberty wherewith Christ would make them free; and that others, glad to have such an excuse for their sins, will comfort themselves in their worldliness, and their unhallowed indulgences by the feeling, that they are not expected while they live, to be free from sin. I will not attempt to conceal it, that this looks to me like a subtle and dangerous snare of the great enemy of Christ and His church. Herein it seems to me lies the “important and dangerous error,” and not in telling Christians that their Redeemer “is faithful to sanctify them wholly, and to preserve their whole spirit and soul and body blameless to His coming” (1 Thessalonians 5:23), when they will believe in Him for that blessing.

### **Reason Three**

I cannot regard your admonition, because those scriptures on which you rely as testimony that no Christian ever does so “abide in Christ as to sin not,” seem to me to have no bearing that way. Take, for example, the single passage quoted in the report of your committee, and adopted by you as ample proof of the correctness of your views.

“There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Let us apply this to the experience of Paul. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7). What arrogant, presumptuous language has Paul here used! He must have been

puffed up with spiritual pride! Did he not know that the Bible expressly declares “there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not?” How dare he say “I have fought a good fight?” But suppose Paul were allowed to step forth in his own defense, and taking the ground ascribed to him by those who regard the doctrine of entire sanctification by a faith in Christ as “An important and dangerous error,” should begin to say, “I acknowledge that there is much sin in my heart, and that my best actions are defiled with it, but still I think I have had some love to God, some desire to glorify Him by doing His will, some readiness to spend and be spent in His service, and labored for the advancement of His cause.” We may come forward still and say, Paul, you are certainly mistaken; you think of yourself more highly than you ought to think; for it is a positive undeniable declaration of God’s own word, that “there is not a just man upon earth that does good and sinneth not,” and therefore, Paul, your assumption that there is any good things in you is forever silenced.

Your text, therefore, brethren, stands just as entirely and fully opposed to your views of truth as to mine; and in my apprehension has nothing to do either with the one or the other. The truth is this, there is a large class of scripture texts which are designed to set forth the truth that by nature and by practice until regeneration, all mankind are “evil, only evil, and that continually.” (Genesis 6:5). But “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, and all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The character of



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