

GODLY SUFFER PERSECUTION

2Ti 3:12

YEA, AND ALL THAT WILL LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS SHALL SUFFER PERSECUTION.

The Greek word for godly is *eusebos*. It occurs in just one other place. That is in Tit 2:12 where we are to deny ungodliness and live godly in this present world. We must then assume that godly and ungodly are opposites.

But what does this word godly mean? We might look up some words of the same family and see how they are used in the Scriptures. *Eusebeta* is used in Ac 3:12 where it is rendered holiness. In 2Ti 3:5 it is translated godliness.

Another relative is *eusebeo* which occurs in Ac 17:23 and is there given as worship. That may help a little. A godly person then is one who is inclined to worship.

Again we find a similar word *eusebes* which is translated devout in Ac 10:2,7. Now we have some more information. A godly person worships and is devout. He has some degree of holiness.

All these are the opposite of religion which is *threskeia* in the Greek. A religious person then is not a godly person.

As we look about us, do we see religious people persecuted? Do we see the morally upright persecuted? But it is the godly person that is to be persecuted. Where are the godly today? Do we see a suffering church today?

It may be that people have misunderstood this word godly. Maybe they think that being godly is being good morally. But many who have never professed to be believers can come up to that standard. The trouble is just this. In too many quarters a Christian is looked upon as something negative. He doesn't do this and he doesn't do that; therefore he is a Christian. But the Bible does not leave that impression.

There is something else in this verse that may be overlooked. It does not say that just the godly shall suffer persecution, but that *those who will live godly in Christ Jesus* shall suffer persecution. Now that is something different.

Those who will or are determined to live godly in Christ Jesus form a very distinct class. This is more than making a profession. This is more than joining some church. This is more than mere morality. They are not of the world. They are in Christ Jesus. And what a world of difference that makes!

Can a person live godly anywhere else than in Christ Jesus? Look over the definitions again and then come to a conclusion.

Somebody has said that godliness is God-likeness. And that is the real reason for the persecution. The world will even applaud goodness and morality. But the world has no love or place for God. So the one who would live a God-like life is going to have a hard time of it.

Now if you profess to be a Christian, to belong to the family of God, and even if you profess to rightly divide the Scriptures and know the mystery; if you do not suffer persecution, it might be well to take invoice of yourself and see just what is lacking. Have you really willed and resolved to live godly in Christ Jesus? Have you compromised a little here, cut the corners a little there and marred the God-likeness?

EARLY DAYS - LAST DAYS

Roughly, the history of Israel has been a series of 4 periods of about 490 years each. This began with the call of Abraham and the last period is not yet complete. But when we count the jubilee years, these come out to periods of 500 years each. In totaling these from the time of Abraham, one must be careful to leave out the Lo-Ammi years. Then when we count in the millennium, we have 2 more periods which in all amounts to about 3,000 years.

Now the period that we are interested in right now was one that was prophesied in Da 9. This was 490 years determined on the people and the holy city. A rough estimate will make the terminus of that period about A.D. 85. But this period never got to run its course. It was interrupted some time before its end and a new purpose introduced that had been hid in God from ages and generations.

The question before us is when this secret or mystery began and how much of the 490 year period is yet to be fulfilled.

In Ac 2:17 Peter quotes from Joel to explain what was happening at that particular Pentecost. Joel predicts things that will happen in the last days. So evidently Peter believed that he was living and preaching in the last days.

Much later Peter wrote some epistles and again he mentions that time as being THESE LAST TIMES (1Pe 1:20). John also agrees with him and emphasizes that the time at which he was writing was the LAST TIME. See 1Jo 2:18. And Jude, the brother of our Lord says the same thing in the 18th verse of his epistle.

From these testimonies it is quite evident that the 12 apostles and others believed that they were living in the last days. But we have not mentioned Paul and what he believed. There are some who insist that Paul did not go along with the 12, but that he began something during Acts that did not belong to the last days, but was the beginning of a new dispensation. But what does Paul say? In Heb 1:2 you will find Paul saying that God has spoken *in these last days* by His Son. If a new dispensation began at Acts 2, 10, or even 13, Paul was not aware of it.

So the Acts of the apostles were performed in the last days. But what confuses folks today is the fact that theologians insist on calling these the first days; that a church began at Pentecost and so there was a beginning of something there instead of something nearing an end.

Now as we said above, Israel's record has been shown forth in history and prophecy as a series of well-defined periods. There was no deviation from this program till Israel was set aside for a time and the Salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles (Ac 28:28). And when Israel was set aside, the laws and rituals were also set aside. There is no place in the mystery dispensation for these (Col 2:12-23). The law was never given to Gentiles and neither were they to observe rituals and other religious practices.

So let us not try to join together what God has separated. And we can now see that even the new dispensation has its last days (2Ti 3:1), and they may be upon us at this very time.

THE DILEMMA OF UNBELIEF

In a recent UR publication we noted the following; *Christ is the Son of God. Christ is not God, but His Son. Christ is not deity.* The word *deity* was misspelled.

Pastor Russell wrestled with the same problem. He came to the same conclusion, which is held by the JW's yet today.

Probably our title is not exactly correct in the light of the meaning of dilemma, but this belief does put them on 2 horns from which they cannot extricate themselves.

I. The first horn they find themselves on is evolution. They do not believe that like begets like. And so according to their theory a tomcat could father a litter of puppies. It is either that, or they deny the deity of God, which is an absurdity. But if God is deity, then the Son must also be deity. But here is where they all stumble and fall down. Not knowing that deity is infinite and all-pervading in the universe, they try to manufacture 2 deities. But God is one from the simple fact that only one infinite can exist at the same time. So then if the Son is not deity, then the Father cannot be deity. The heathen would go for that for they had many gods, but did not claim infinity for any of them.

Now if infinity fills the universe and there can only be one, then the Father and the Son are in reality one. Infinity then can express Himself in various manners or persons. And we find in reading the Scriptures that the Son has every attribute that the Father has, and one more. In addition to all the attributes of deity, He also has immortality.

We must remember that the Son was begotten. He was not created. And by the laws as we know them, deity cannot create deity. But deity can beget deity, and did.

God took on a finite form so that finite man might be able to grasp something of His nature. Man can understand a Father and Son relationship. And such a relationship paves the way to teach about love, grace, compassion, mercy, and all the other attributes of the Infinite.

II. Now if Christ be a creature, as many claim, then He did wrong by accepting worship. No creature is to be worshipped. And further than that, these folks claim that from a wrong translation of John 1:1 the Word was A GOD!

But the very first commandment is that we should have no other gods. Here is idolatry in reality. These folks are worshipping another god. Some think that Gabriel, a mighty created angel, came to earth and dwelt here in the likeness of flesh and was this Jesus of Nazareth. If that be so, then how can we be sure that he will not fall and take the same course as did Lucifer? And that also puts Christ on the same level with Satan, just another created being. The Pharisees put forth some of the same blasphemies. They on one occasion claimed that the Lord did His signs by the power of the devil. At another they accused Him of having a devil. And they finally killed Him because he took the Jehovah title, I AM (Joh 8:58). God (El) says over and over in Isa 45 that He is Jehovah; that there is no other God; that there is none else.

CLEAN UP THE RUBBISH!

If you are going to build, you will first of all have to clean away the rubbish before you can get in the foundation. You cannot build anything solid and lasting on a foundation of trash. And this is true of the Christian life. It cannot be built on a foundation of vain philosophy and traditions of men. And what is some of the rubbish that must be cleared away?

1. *Immortality* must be defined and its place in God's purpose clarified. The ancient religionists and philosophers imagined that man had life in himself, that he had an immortal soul. But these men did not know God nor His Word. The Bible does not say anywhere that a soul is immortal. The idea of inherent life or immortality is entirely absent from the Scriptures. Nowhere do they say that man has a soul, but plainly states in Ge 2:7 that Adam *became a living soul*. And Adam was created mortal, for he was plainly told that in the day he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge he would surely die. Anybody who can die is mortal. And one who cannot die is immortal.

On the other hand the Word of God makes it very plain that only the King of kings and Lord of lords has immortality (1Ti 6:15,16). This is the One who was dead and is alive forevermore.

2. We must find out when the time of reward is. It is the custom in religious society today to speak of one who has died as having gone to his reward. This is based on the false assumption that as soon as one is absent from the body, he is present with the Lord. It is assumed that one has a conscious soul which can live and exercise bodily senses apart from the body. But again this is taken from heathen superstition, and is not to be found in the Bible. The Lord said that when He comes, His reward is with Him, to give to every man according to his work (Re 22:12). What are we to believe, man or the Word of God?

Just note all the judgments in the Bible and you will begin to notice that they are either for men that are still living when the Lord comes, as in M't 25, or for the dead when they are raised. Note the judging of the quick and the dead at His appearing (2Ti 4:1). The Word is consistent in describing the death of the believers as being a sleep (cf. 1Co 15:18,20).

3. We must be careful in *comforting the bereaved* and see to it that we are Scriptural in all that we say. Today the average pastor will attempt to comfort those who have lost a loved one by saying that those who have died have gone to be with the Lord. When John wrote his gospel, at that late date he declared that none had ascended up to heaven except the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter declared in Acts 2:34 that it was not David that had ascended up to the heavens, but the Lord. So any such statements as are being made today about folks dying and going to be with the Lord are utterly false.

On the contrary, in 1Th 4 we read of the coming of the Lord, the raising of the dead, the change of the living, and the subsequent being with the Lord. They are to comfort one another with these words.

INTERROGATIONS

150. *Which church is the pillar and ground of the truth?*

It would be impossible for some object such as a church to be the pillar and ground of the truth. It would have to be something of a doctrinal order, and that is furnished us in the next verse. So put a period after the word God in verse 15, and then read the rest along with verse 16. You will get something like this; THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH AND WITHOUT CONTROVERSEY GREAT IS, THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS: GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT, SEEN OF ANGELS, PREACHED UNTO THE GENTILES, BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD, RECEIVED UP INTO GLORY. ITi 3:15,16.

151. *I note that in my Christian Worker's New Testament the statement is made that all unsaved people are sinners. Is that right?*

It is not only partly untrue, but is only a half truth. It is untrue in that children when very small are not sinners, neither are the unborn. It is only a half truth in that all the saved are sinners also. But they are sinners saved by grace. The first 3 chapters of Romans speaks of the fact that in many respects there is no difference between the Jewish and Gentile believers in that church. Note verses 21-26 of chapter 3. Note that *all them that believe* in verse 22 are the *all have sinned* in verse 23. It is a very great error to call the unsaved sinners and the saved righteous. There is one way in which the saved are called righteous, but that righteousness is not their own and is nothing to boast about.

152. *Does God save any persons against their own will in the matter?*

No, never. From Adam till now the principle has always been that salvation is by grace thru faith (Eph 2:8,9). It is whosoever (Joh 3:16). On the other hand God may call people to service against their will. Jonah is an example. The 12 believed on their own free will, but the Lord reminded that He chose them (for their service), that they did not choose Him. Much misunderstanding has arisen from not rightly dividing between salvation and calling.

153. *The idea of universal salvation is very attractive at times. Why is it wrong?*

It is based upon the false assumption that all men will be resurrected. That is the basis of the argument of Pastor Russell that men would have a second chance. But nowhere does the Word of God offer the hope that unbelievers will be raised. On the other hand it plainly states in several instances that there are some who will not be raised, they will never live, their memory will perish, and the like. Four times in John 6 it speaks of those who believe being given eternal life and raised at the last day. Other references have been given in these pages in the past. And this false assumption is based on Satan's lie that men would be as gods, that they have immortal souls, and therefore cannot perish from existence. But the alternatives in Joh 3:16 are life (in resurrection) or perish. Perish is defined in 1Co 15:18. If they do not rise, they have perished.

THE PATIENCE OF JOB

FRED RALPH

At some time or another the question has come to all of us, *If God is a God of love, why does He allow such misery and suffering in the world.* Perhaps some readers are still puzzled and would like to know if there is an answer.

Unfortunately, this is something which cannot be answered briefly, but we will try to focus a spotlight on some Scriptures which lie near to the root of the problem.

Firstly, it requires acceptance of the fact of the creation of man by God as recorded in Ge 1 & 2. Secondly, it is necessary to read the book of Job.

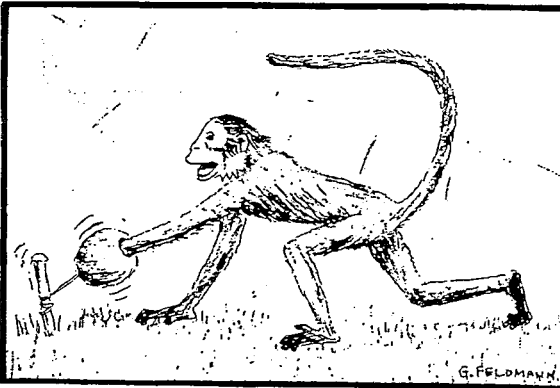
If God is love (1Jo 4:8) then we know from our own limited experience that love must express itself to others: also that perfect love must receive love in return. As it cannot be manufactured or commanded, but is an expression of free will, God had to make man with a will of his own, and then stand aside to let him express his own will. Having demonstrated His love, the Lord God desires our love and affection in return to make His work satisfying and to bring it to a successful conclusion.

This is not difficult to understand, but the next part of the question is more difficult. *Having given man a free will, why didn't God leave it at that: why did He allow Satan to tempt the man to do wrong and so introduce so much suffering?* The book of Job helps us here. It is the first book of the Bible that was written, and it is possible that Moses read it when in exile from Egypt. It is called by some *The Enigma of the Ages* because it deals with this very problem of pain and suffering. It was rightly placed, therefore, at the beginning of the written record of God's plan and purpose of the ages.

The Lord allowed Satan to test Job just as He had allowed him to tempt Adam. Like many of us, Job could not understand at the time why he had to endure so much suffering when he had always honored God and turned away from evil (Job 1:1,8). He did not know that Satan had cast doubt on the strength of his loyalty and faith. Satan underestimated the bond that can exist between God and a man like Job, so God allowed him to be tested in order to prove he was a perfect and upright man. Altho puzzled, Job remained true and did not curse God.

His friends tried to give him advice which did not help him much. They cast doubts on his manner of life. Just as people now say *the sun shines on the righteous* so they tried to convince Job that he must have done some wickedness or displeased God in some way. In spite of their attempts to suggest he was hiding some sin, he still maintained his uprightness. He remained faithful until the end and as a result received a *double blessing*.

Perfection comes thru suffering (Heb 2:10), and also by endurance, patience, and faithfulness (Col 3:12-14; Eph 4:12,13). Note the prayer for a Daysman in Job 9:32,33. It was answered. He was able to say, I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH (19:25). We hope that these few remarks will help others to resolve difficulties.



THE SNARE OF THE DEVIL

The monkey is trapped. This is an old trick. And it works with monkeys. Do you think that people would fall for such a trick?

Here is how it is done. Just cut a hole in a coconut shell large enough for the monkey to get his hand into it. Fasten the snare to a stake and you are all ready except for the bait. Just a little red ball or some worthless bauble is sufficient. The monkey will put his hand in to get the trinket, and when it is grasped, then he cannot get his hand out. He will not give up the prize, so there he is. The trapper can approach and pick him up.

Now you may think that the monkey is very foolish. But how about folks who get caught in the snare of the devil (2Ti 2:26)? How does the devil attack a Christian? We can find from the book of Job that the devil could not touch Job's life. But he was allowed to take everything from Job and afflict his body with disease. He could attack Job thru the flesh.

In the same chapter Timothy is told to flee youthful lusts. But in the immediate context, it would appear that those who really are ensnared are those who oppose themselves to the truth of the gospel.

In looking back over the history of Israel and individuals in the OT we realize that those who fell were those who had opposed or departed from the truth. Satan can go among such and make them captive at his will. And with what intent? That he may rob them of their crown!

Today the only way Satan can attack the believer is thru the flesh. And he does it on every one. Multitudes of believers are as helpless as the monkey in the picture. They are holding on to something very worthless, just a bauble. It makes them captive. It may be some appetite or habit. It may be some social or political position. It may be a membership in some religious organization that denies the truth. It is anything that will hold you back from freedom and growth in the Word of God. You will have to name it in your own case.

Now when we have looked at humans and have seen how they act, is the monkey so foolish after all? Maybe he is just human-like!

There is freedom at Calvary. Do not stay far away or try following from afar. The truth will make you free. So drink deeply of the truth of the Word and let go of the bait.

THE EDITOR'S DESK

We are getting very near the end of another volume of Truth For Today. It is almost 16 years since we began. It seems but a short time. We determined then not to charge any subscription price and our experience has shown that this was the correct procedure. There has been no lack of funds to keep it going.

We (Mae and I) welcome all the new readers. You might like to know that the writing, printing and mailing are done out here on the farm about 7 miles from Warsaw. We have over 80 acres to look after. To find us, go one mile south of Warsaw and 6 miles west. Visitors are welcome, but be sure to let us know you are coming. We might be working at the back of the place or at our part-time job in Warsaw.

A class (very small one) meets at our home on Tuesday nites at 7:30 and part of the time we have an extra class Sunday afternoon at 2:30.

As a teacher, I have never felt it to be exactly fair to hide from folks where I get my ideas and what I read. So we keep a stock of Companion Bibles, concordances, and other books for sale so as to help others find materials to aid in their Bible study. And it is not going to bother me in the least if you get to know the Word better than I do. I just hope that you can do it and so help others to share the great good news of the dispensation of the mystery.

Another bit of good news is that you can buy or borrow tape recordings of Bible studies and listen to them over and over in your own home. For list and plan, write to Berean Tape Recording Ministry (BTRM), Box 3249, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Have you heard of The Babbler? It is a nice little magazine printed in England. It is free. Just write to Miss A. B. Harrop, 5 Scutari Rd., East Dulwich, London, S.E.22, England.

We thank our friends for the steady stream of new names and addresses they are sending in for our mailing list. We are now mailing out more than 3700 copies a month. Also we appreciate all the letters we receive. Just keep it up. We reply to all, but slowly sometimes.

TRUTH FOR TODAY, Inc.
R 2, Warsaw, Indiana.
46580

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Warsaw, Ind.
Permit No. 20