

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

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Straight and Narrow

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TELL ME YOU'RE A CHRISTIAN?

By Malcolm McCrillis

There is a great deal of modern preaching which presents as a remedy for sin, love, social regeneration culture, and self-development, etc. According to the Scriptures, the only way to deal with the sin problem is to begin with death.

In the beginning God judged, condemned, and pronounced, the sentence of death upon the sinner. That death sentence has never been revoked, and therefore every sinner must die. When a person is born again, there is a new creation. This new person agrees with God in pronouncing the sentence of death upon his or her old nature, (the old person). God regards every true disciple as having died and been buried with Christ. Throughout the New Testament, the fact that Christ died is grounds for believing that every true believer dies. 1 Peter 2:24 states: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Romans 6:4 says, "We are buried with him by baptism unto death."

All Christians died when Christ died. Our baptism was to not only symbolize a new life, but a funeral as well; a solemn act of consigning us to that death, the death of Christ in which we are made one with Him. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:3)

It is because so many know so little of the actual experience of dying in Christ—His death—that they find it so difficult to live in Him, His life. Undoubtedly the great difficulty with the majority of professed believers is that they are trying to live Christ's life without having first died Christ's death. They seem to have the idea, or notion, that Christ died so that we need not die. And so, through faith in Christ, they hope to live without dying. Paul said:

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8)

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." (Galatians 5:24)

Prayer Requests

The Last few months we have dedicated this column to prayer requests. The response from our readers has been one of appreciation with a desire to be able to lift up those in need to our Father. We hope to continue to dedicate this column to special needs we are made aware of. If you have a special request, please contact us and we will include it if at all possible.

Last month we mentioned Sister Onycha Holt was to have neurosurgery. Although the procedure lasted longer than anticipated, we are thankful to report that she is now home doing well.

Sister Arlene Noyes, whom we had been praying for, died shortly after the June issue of *Old Paths* was printed. Our kind Father saw fit to allow this dear sister to rest and during her final days and even hours, she showed a beautiful Christian spirit.

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Is our perception of Christ and His person based on our fleshly concepts, or on the principles of Scripture? The “homosexual Christian” visualizes Christ as a homosexual. Those who involve themselves in incest see Christ in that type of relationship. Several years ago a motion picture company in England depicted Christ having sexual relations with His mother. Many women in the women’s liberation movement see Christ as a woman. Some, from whatever race they represent, believe Christ to be of their ethnic background and color. There are some who believe that He was decked out in jewelry and pagan symbols, so that is what they choose to reflect. Some “Christians” must believe that Christ dressed in a sensual way so they choose to reflect that lifestyle. The Scriptures say Christ had “no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” (Isaiah 53:2).

Will God’s true people be like Him? Isaiah 53:3 says, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; [Why? Could it be that our lives are reflecting someone other than the Son of God?] he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” **What is our estimation of Christ? I submit that it is no more or no less than our personal reflection of Him in our lives!** Can we than unreservedly use the name Christian and be honest with God, or do we have reservations, as did King Agrippa in his response to Paul, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” (Acts 26:28)

The cross is the symbol of death. When a person goes to the cross, it is the end of that person. Then we can say with Paul, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Galatians 2:20) It is very plain from Paul’s words that living Christ’s life continuously is dependent upon dying with Him daily. Paul said, “I die daily.” (1 Corinthians 15:31) It is the daily dying of self that makes room for the living of Christ. Burial is the seal and certificate of death. In the Hindu religion the friends and relatives of a convert to Christianity, in order to show how completely they have cast the individual off, actually celebrate his or her funeral, and treat that individual after the open display of his death as if he no longer existed.

If we study God’s Word, we shall find abundant incentive to face this death, because it must be a voluntary one. We must go to the cross as our Saviour did, of our own free will. Job said, “I have heard of

thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:5, 6) Ezekiel expressed the same sentiments when he said, “There shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.” (Ezekiel 20:43) These Scriptures teach that self is so bad that it is fit only to die. It is utterly corrupted, and so vile and unholy, that no part of the human nature can be reclaimed. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Romans 8:7)

When the individual realizes that the whole being is poisoned with the deadly disease of sin, so that there is no good in it, we begin to hate ourselves, to abhor our nature, which is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” (Jeremiah 17:9) But even if we should obtain pardon through Christ’s death, we still have this vile, unholy, degenerate nature, which unfits us for fellowship with God. However, abundant provision has been made for a new nature. 2 Peter 1:4 states, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” So, through the atoning death of Christ, provision has been made for man’s pardon and justification; and through the ministry of His Word, provision is made for the impartation of the divine nature.

Now, what is one reason why an individual hesitates to realize the full benefits of “Christ in you the hope of glory”? (Colossians 1:27) Many well-meaning people fear peer pressure from fellow church members. Often it is much easier to go with the flow of collective opinion than to step out from the crowd and be different. We do not normally want to be different. Yet, being different is what the Christian faith is all about. We are called to be a “peculiar people.” God said He wants to “purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:14) 1 Peter 2:9 says we “are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

The natural tendency is to conform to an ever-widening circle of pressures. There is pressure from our relatives and close friends, and then from the larger worldly environment all around us. Peer pressure will always be applied to those who want to stand for truth. There will be a group of Christians who

cannot in conscience unite with the great majority in condescending to the compromising attitudes of nominal Christians. They will love God's law and by the influence and power of Christ living in them, keep that law. Whatever the crisis may be, there will be a group of Christians who cannot in conscience unite with the great majority who put man's law before God's law.

Love for God will be supreme. The true followers of Christ will love their country and may be willing to die for it. They will be without reservation anti-communist. But, as much as they love their country and their fellow man, they must, like the apostolic Christians, put God first. They must "obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29) Presenting their reasons, they are compelled to say with their hands on God's Word, like Martin Luther, "Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen."

How many realize that their own salvation, as well as the destiny of other souls, depends upon the preparation they make now for the trial before them. Do you have that intensity of zeal, that devotion which will help you to stand when opposition will be brought against you? God instructs His true followers to "cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah 58:1)

The blood of the souls of God's people will be required at the hands of His ministers who did not sound the alarm. Ezekiel 33:6 warns, "But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." To give a strong defense of truth in that day will mean we will daily be spending time on our knees with the Scriptures, seeking to know God's will with all our heart and soul. It will also mean we have taken every opportunity in our daily intercourse with individuals to give witness of the power of God working in our life. When banks are closed, and the monetary system as we know it becomes changed, and there is great difficulty in supplying our families with the basic needs of life, many professed or nominal Christians, lacking the essential preparation, will receive the mark of the beast.

In our minds we have thought that the Sunday laws would be the signal to get ready, but when they are passed it is already too late. The real Christian will have made preparation, and the foolish will try to buy

oil when the door is already shut! (See Matthew 25:1-13) The present, now, is our time to prepare. To postpone, to delay will bring only eternal disaster—to be lost for eternity. What if we are living in an area where tornadoes are frequently seen and felt? One day the sky becomes very dark and the atmosphere becomes oppressive. A voice on the radio announces that in the southwest a violent storm is coming. Soon we learn that we are directly in the path of the tornado. We had better do something and fast! Obviously, what we do depends upon the preparation we have made previously for such an emergency. Do we have a storm cellar? Is it adequate? Is it properly stocked? If the children are not at home, can they be safely accounted for by phone before it becomes inoperable? It is a happy family that makes provision for such a crisis. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Proverbs 27:12)

Another storm is on its way. God wants His people prepared for the soon-coming crisis. We will be facing persecution. It is coming and we have no right to expect, as God's faithful people, immunity from its suffering, whether physical, mental, or financial. This storm will be the mingled wrath of man and Satan during the period between the making of the image of the beast and the deliverance of God's faithful people. The people of God will not be free from suffering. 1 Peter 4:16 puts it this way, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." 2 Timothy 3:12 tells us "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." When, in reality, the storm breaks we will need to have the faith of Jesus to make it through the time of trouble. In Luke 8:25 Jesus asked the question of His disciples, "Where is your faith?" He didn't ask, "where are your recommendations, your friends, your insurance?" but, "where is your faith?"

First of all let's consider what Jesus did not say. He didn't say, "where is your job, or where is your bank account, or where are your investments?" He was not discussing something theological, but something practical. He was not discussing something denominational, but something personal. I put the question to you as to myself, "where is our faith"? How many of us, for instance, have ever experienced similar sacrifices as those of the pioneers of the Advent movement? How many have ever experienced any real persecution for the sake of the truth? How many have been beaten, or arrested and thrown into prison

for Christ's sake? How many have been tortured for our loyalty to Him?


Maybe the reason that the faith of believers who live in lands where atheistic or religious tyranny is in control is more dynamic and real than ours, is that it has cost them something! Their faith has been tested in the fires of affliction. It has been, for many of them personally a life and death matter!

Second, let's consider the setting of the question, "where is your faith"? Jesus and His disciples were crossing the sea. The day was fair and the surface calm. Suddenly the tranquility was shattered by the impact of a storm as unexpected as it was violent. It lashed the waves into a raging fury. It ripped the sails from the main mast. There was confusion, panic, and consternation. The disciples could not row in such a sea, nor could they bail fast enough. The boat was filling with water. They were about to go down. When all the tricks a sailor knows had been tried in vain, and they felt themselves lost, they remembered the Saviour. Where was He, amidst the wind and tossing billows? There He was sleeping soundly in the stern of the boat. They woke Him, and cried, "Master, we perish!" Arising in all the majesty of His conscious power, He rebuked the wind and the raging sea and there was a great calm. The peace of God that was in Him overpowered all the elements outside of Him. Then He turned to the disciples asking them the question, "where is your faith"? Christ has promised in John 16:33 that we, "might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Third, let us consider the application of this question, "where is your faith"? Life is a sea. You and I are crossing it. Maybe today its surface is calm and the south wind blows softly. But someday misfortune will come and adversity will strike everyone, including you! It will seem like the Lord is not with you or has forsaken you, or has closed His ears to your prayers. When you least expect it, and you are not braced for it, it will strike with devastating force. It may not strike in one blow, but many blows, in a series of tragedies, as with the man Job. Where will your faith be then? Some of us will discover then, that our faith has really been not so much in Christ as in ourselves and our own works, our own self-reliant ability and resourcefulness. It will be too late as we discover that our faith has really been in the boat, in our material supports, our social and financial securities, in the steady job, the regular paycheck, the money carefully laid up for a rainy day,

in our friends, relatives, or our connections, in the laws that guarantee our liberty, civil and religious.

When we think freedom is free and forget someone paid for it, when the boat begins to sink and go down, then what? When we lose our job; when our nest-egg evaporates in a bad investment; when financially we are wiped out; when unjust accusations are brought against us; friends turn against us; perhaps even our children for whom we sacrificed so much desert us; when our whole world collapses around us; then where is our faith? It may be difficult for us to believe that something could happen to us, God's peculiar people. Not for a while surely! The fact is that it has happened to people better than us. The names Joseph, Job, Jeremiah, Paul, and Daniel come to mind. Then foremost there is Christ. The disciple is not greater than his Lord. Are we any better in the sight of God than those who are suffering in China, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Serbia, or Romania? We are living the experience of the Laodicean era? Laodicea has lost her spiritual discernment and is so much like the world in her institutions, her business transactions, her diet, her dress, and her deportment, that the world now accepts her as one of its own.

We either do not feel a need for a close relationship with Christ, or we flatter ourselves that we have found a relationship with Christ that caters to our sins. The question must be for us, How are we standing before God as the professed followers of Christ? Will our faith be like the young lad who was reciting the Lord's prayer with his mother one day, and when they came to "give us this day our daily bread," the little fellow stopped. When they finished, his mother questioned him about it. "Why, Mommy," he answered, "there was no use saying that. Just before breakfast I looked in the breadbox and there was enough for two more days." The day will come when our breadbox will be empty. Will your Christianity fail? What about your faith? Tell me you're a Christian when you can no longer buy or sell. Tell me you're a Christian when facing starvation. Tell me you're a Christian when all earthly support is cut off. Tell me you're a Christian when facing violence and death. Tell me friend, that you are a Christian. 

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Prepare to Meet the Lord.

By Mrs. Ellen G. White.

(The following counsel is part of an article that was taken from the Review & Herald of Nov. 27, 1900.)

A crisis has arisen in the government of God on earth. Enmity to God has struck its roots deep in human hearts. It has become widespread, both in the world and in the professed churches of Christ. A wakeful impiety is quickened into an instinctive vigilance, and rouses to demonstration of hatred against the testing truth for this time. Wherever the truth is proclaimed, it will be opposed in a decided manner.

Everything has been moving on just as the Lord revealed in prophecy that it would. Something great and decisive is soon to take place, else no flesh would be saved. The character of God will not be compromised. Under the wrath of God, universal desolation will soon reach all parts of the known world. There have been lightnings and earthquakes, fires and floods, calamities by sea and land; but who reads these warnings? What impression is made upon the world? What change in their attitude is seen? No more than was seen in the inhabitants of the Noachian world. The people are just as ardent today in their games, in their horse racing, in their love of amusement, as were the antediluvians, who “knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.” They had heaven-sent warnings, but they refused to listen. By their attitude they declared, We want not thy way, O God; we want our own way, our own will. Today the world is mad: an insanity is upon men and women, and is hurrying them on to eternal ruin. Every species of indulgence prevails, and men have become so infatuated with vice that they will not listen to warnings or appeals.

The Lord says to the people of the earth, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” All are now deciding their eternal destiny. Men need to be aroused to realize the solemnity of the time, the nearness of the day when human probation shall be ended. God gives no man a message that it will be five years or ten years or twenty years before this earth’s history shall close. He would not give any living being an excuse for delaying the preparation for his appearing. He would have no one say, as did the unfaithful servant, “My Lord delayeth his coming;” for this leads to reckless neglect of the opportunities and privileges given to

prepare us for that great day. Everyone who claims to be a servant of God is called to do his service as if each day might be the last.

The words of Christ have a direct application to this time: “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”

“All are now deciding their eternal destiny.”

Let everyone to whom the Lord has given light from his word be sure that he makes a right use of that light. Let him beware that he does not presume to feed the flock of God with food which is not appropriate for the time. “Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Talk of the speedy appearing of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Put not off that day. God has given no man a right to say, “My Lord delayeth his coming.” Let the inquiry be made, Shall I stand at the right hand or at the left hand of the Judge at that day? “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?”

“If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants [how?—By suspicious words, by evil-thinking and evil-speaking. It is thus that confidence is changed to doubt and unbelief], . . . the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” It is essential that all shall know what atmosphere surrounds their own souls, whether they are in co-partnership with the enemy of righteousness, and unconsciously doing his work, or whether

they are yoked up with Christ, doing his work, and seeking to establish souls more firmly in the truth.

Satan would be pleased to have anyone and everyone become his allies in the work of weakening the confidence of brother in brother, and sowing discord among those who profess to believe the truth. Satan can accomplish his purpose most successfully through professed friends of Christ who are not walking and working in Christ's lines. Those who in mind and heart are turning away from the Lord's special work for this time, those who do not co-operate with him in establishing souls in the faith by leading them to heed his words of warning, are doing the work of the enemy of Christ.

It is a most serious matter to go from house to house, and, under pretense of doing missionary work, scatter the seed of mistrust and suspicion. Such seed speedily germinates, and there is created a distrust of God's servants, who have his message to bear to the people. When God speaks through his servants, the seed sown has developed into a root of bitterness. The word falls upon ears that will not hear, and hearts that will not respond. No earthly or heavenly power can find access to the soul. Who is accountable for these souls? Who shall eradicate that poisonous root of bitterness that has prevented them from receiving the word of the Lord? A sister or brother in the church planted the evil seed, but who will restore the soul thus imperiled? The tongue that should have been used to the glory of God in speaking words of faith and hope and confidence in God's workmen, has turned a soul away from Jesus Christ. Those who themselves despised the words of Christ, and refused to hear his voice and to be converted, have leavened other minds with the leaven of evil-surmising and evil-speaking.

This is the day of the Lord's preparation. We have no time now to talk unbelief or to gossip, no time now to do the devil's work. Let everyone beware of unsettling the faith of others by sowing seeds of envy, jealousy, disunion; for God hears the words, and he judges, not by assertions which are yea and nay, but by the fruit of one's course of action. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The seed sown will determine the character of the harvest.


So long as the people of God are in this world, they will have to meet conflict and trouble and deception, because men choose the attributes of Satan instead of

the attributes of God. There is a conscience that is not good. There are those whose words are yea and nay in regard to the same thing. How are we to deal with those who make these false statements? We should not try to deal with them. The Lord God of Israel will deal with minds according to his knowledge; for he reads the heart. The less we have to do with untruthful elements, the better it will be for the church.

Bear in mind always that the human brotherhood are not sin-bearers. Jesus alone can bear the sins of the transgressor. We are to leave them with him. The conscience needs to be converted. The heart that is not true needs to be renewed, but we can not do this work. We must leave the sinner with God. He has borne long with the false tongue. He does not force men to forsake evil, and we must let men falsify if they will. The Lord is our only trust. We are to rest in him and be still. We may feel that the Lord's work is in jeopardy, through the deceptions of those who deal falsely, but we need not feel thus. We are not to think that the issue of the conflict is in our hands. Our duty is to walk by faith. In his own time God will deal with the deceiver. He will reward every man according to his work.

"Wherever the truth is proclaimed, it will be opposed in a decided manner."

Jesus says, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Here is the great burden to be carried by each one. Are my sins forgiven? Has Christ, the burden-bearer, taken away my guilt? Have I a clean heart, purified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ? Woe be to any soul who is not seeking a refuge in Christ. Woe be to all who shall in any way divert the mind from the work, and cause any soul to be less vigilant now.

The Lord wishes all to understand his providential dealings now, just now, in the time in which we live. There must be no long discussions, no presenting of new theories in regard to prophecies that God has already made plain. The great work from which the mind should not be diverted is the consideration of our personal standing in the sight of God. Are our feet on the Rock of Ages? Are we hiding ourselves in the only Refuge? The storm is coming, relentless in its fury. Are we prepared to meet it? Are we one with Christ as he is one with the Father? Are we heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ? Are we working in co-partnership with the Saviour? 

Youth's Corner - Ye Must Be Born Again

Part 2

As God's purchased possession, we are under contract to work as Christ worked in his divine service, not in accordance with our natural inclinations, but in harmony with the Spirit of God. But the lives of men, as the gospel finds them, are full of sin. By yielding to temptation, they have weakened their power to obey. Their hearts are "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." They are dead in trespasses and sins, and in their own strength they can do no good.

In order to serve God acceptably, we must be "born again." Our natural dispositions, which are in opposition to the Spirit of God, must be put away. We must be made new men and women in Christ Jesus. Our old, unrenewed lives must give place to a new life—a life full of love, of trust, of willing obedience. Think you that such a change is not necessary for entrance into the kingdom of God? Listen to the words of the Majesty of heaven: "Ye must be born again." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Unless the change takes place, we cannot serve God aright. Our work will be defective; earthly plans will be brought in; strange fire, dishonoring to God, will be offered. Our lives will be unholy and unhappy, full of unrest and trouble.

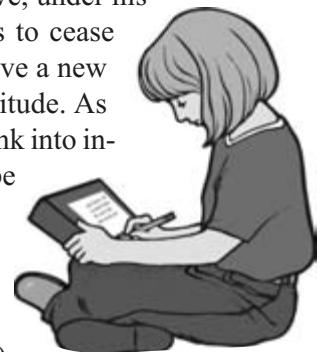
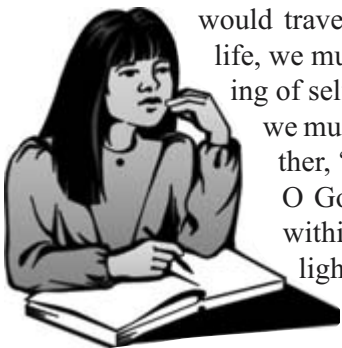
The change of heart represented by the new birth can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. It alone can cleanse us from all impurity. If it is allowed to mold and fashion our hearts, we shall be able to discern the character of the kingdom of God, and realize the necessity of the change which must be made before we can obtain entrance to this kingdom. Pride and self-love resist the Spirit of God; every natural inclination of the soul opposes the change from self-importance and pride to the meekness and lowliness of Christ. But if we

would travel in the pathway to eternal life, we must not listen to the whispering of self. In humility and contrition we must beseech our Heavenly Father, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." As we receive divine light, and co-operate with the heavenly intelligences, we are "born again," freed

from the defilement of sin by the power of Christ.

Christ came to our world because he saw that men had lost the image and nature of God. He saw that they had wandered far from the path of peace and purity, and that, if left to themselves, they would never find their way back. He came with a full and complete salvation, to change our stony hearts to hearts of flesh, to change our sinful natures into his similitude, that, by being partakers of the divine nature, we might be fitted for the heavenly courts. He is about to do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Look only to him; for he is your righteousness, your all-sufficient sacrifice. As by faith you accept his mercy, you will be cleansed and purified. As you believe in him,—the One who brings life to the soul,—you will rise to a new life, a life which finds its highest joy in service for the Master. Self will be cast out, and Christ will be enthroned in your heart.

To all who, anxious for the salvation of their souls, come to Christ for aid, he says, as he said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He is knocking at the door of your heart, asking for admittance. He longs to renew your heart, filling it with a love for all that is pure and true. He longs to crucify self for you, raising you to newness of life in him. Nicodemus was converted as a result of his interview with Christ. How is it with you? Shall Christ knock at your heart in vain? Will you refuse him entrance? or will you welcome him as an honored guest? Do not refuse to admit him; for his love is of more value to you than the whole world. Its length, its breadth, its depth, its height, cannot be estimated. It will purify your heart and renew your mind, giving you a new capacity for knowing and loving God. Do not let self hinder you from hearing the call, "Ye must be born again." Fear not to make a full surrender of yourself to Christ. Place yourself, without reserve, under his control. Learn what it means to cease from sin; what it means to have a new heart, to bear the divine similitude. As you behold Christ, self will sink into insignificance, and you will be changed into his image, "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (Ellen G. White—*Youth's Instructor*, September 9, 1897)





West Virginia Camp Meeting July 2-6, 2002



Smyrna Gospel Ministries would like to invite all who are interested in preparing for the return of the Lord to attend camp meeting this July 2-6 at the Smyrna Sabbath Chapel in West Virginia. We believe that this is going to be one of the best camp meetings the movement has ever had, so plan now to bring your Bibles and a cheerful heart.

We will be feasting upon God's Word, special music, testimonies, and great fellowship. David Clayton, Howard Williams, Bob Habenicht, Willis Smith, Lynnford Beachy, and Allen Stump are some of the speakers currently scheduled.

The first meeting will be Tuesday evening, July 2. Each day will begin with an early (6:15 a.m.) morning devotional. Then there will be a morning meeting, a midmorning meeting, afternoon seminars, and an evening meeting. There will be two afternoon seminars Wednesday through Friday, one on vegan cooking, and one on the truth about God.

This is a *camp* meeting. You need to bring a tent or make other arrangements. We *do not* have cabins or rooms available. Interest is running very high and

while we hope to have enough space for all, we will be much more tightly packed than last year. Smyrna will have a few tents and camping supplies for those who do not have and cannot afford to purchase them. The supply is limited, so if you need to use a tent, camp stove, etc., please request early. Two showers with hot and cold water will be available. Don't forget items such as tents, bedding, flashlights, food, toiletries, insect repellent, and modest casual and Sabbath clothes.

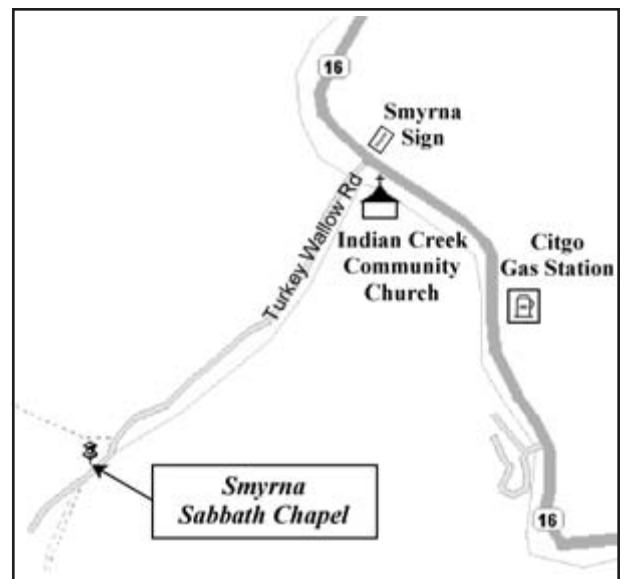
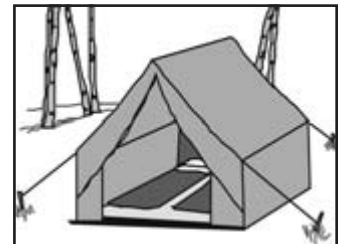
While there is room for RV's, we do not have hook-ups. RV's will need to be self-contained. For those who wish, there are motels in the area. The nearest motels that have vacancies are; Woody's Motel, (304) 732-6540; The Cow Shed, (304) 732-7000; Twin Falls State Park Resort, (304) 294-4000.

All campers will need to be responsible for their own food. Meals will not be served. For those who use ice chests, ice is available one mile away. We are planning on having a *vegan* haystack Sabbath afternoon fellowship meal for those interested.

Parents will need to be responsible for their children, including "youth," at *all* times.

For further information contact us by using the contact information on page twelve of this newsletter .

Editor



Directions: (See previous page for maps)

Traveling from the North, Northeast, or Northwest: From Beckley, traveling I-77 south take the third Beckley exit #42 (Sophia - Mabscott). Follow Sophia - Rt. 16, south branch of exit. After entering Rt. 16 south (four-lane undivided road at this point), go 3.6 miles and turn right on Rt. 54/97. Go 13.8 miles to Maben. Turn right on Rt. 97 and go 12 miles to Pineville. Upon entering Pineville you will stop at a “T” in the road. You will have a Baptist Church on the right and a BP service station on the left. Turn left and go 1/3 of a mile. Stop at four-way stop. Turn left and go .8 miles. Turn right on Rt. 16 south. Go 5.9 miles. Watch for Smyrna sign on the left side of the road. Turn right at the sign and go 7/10 miles. (These values have been measured and are very accurate.)

Traveling from the South, Southeast, or Southwest: From Wytheville, VA, traveling I-77 north take exit #1 upon entering West Virginia, immediately after exiting East River Mountain Tunnel. Follow Route 52 north to Welch 38.7 miles. At Welch follow signs for Route 16 North. Once leaving town, you will travel 9 miles. You will pass a Citgo gas station on the right. We are about ¼ of a mile past the Citgo station. Watch for the Smyrna sign on the right side of the road. Turn left at the sign and go 7/10 miles. (These mileages are approximates and not exact values.) *Beware traveling through the towns of Northfork, Keystone, and Kimball, they are well-known speed-traps!*

Tentative 2002 Camp Meeting Schedule

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sabbath
6:15—7:15	Camp Setup	Ben Vela	Dennis Robertson	Bob Habenicht	Lynnford Beachy
7:15—9:15		BREAK			
9:15-9:35		Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks
9:35—10:30		Allen Stump	Howard Williams	Stephen Lewis	Stephen Lewis
10:30—11:00		BREAK			
11:00—12:00		Bob Habenicht	David Clayton	David Clayton	David Clayton
12:00—1:30		BREAK			
1:30—2:30		Vegan Cooking Seminar	Vegan Cooking Seminar	Vegan Cooking Seminar	Testimonies
2:30—3:25		Truth About God Seminar	Truth About God Seminar	Truth About God Seminar	
3:35—4:30		Truth About God Seminar	Truth About God Seminar	Truth About God Seminar	
4:30—7:00		BREAK			
7:00—7:20		Welcome	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks

Youth’s Meetings: 2:30-3:20 Wednesday-Sabbath — Children’s Meetings: 2:30-3:20 Wednesday-Sabbath

THIS IS THE CHURCH

By A. T. Jones

(Last month we began the publication of this study. "This is the Church" is the third of a three part series written by Elder Jones entitled: "Ecumenism and Biblical Ecclesiology." The first two parts are, "From Babylon to New Jerusalem," and "The Greater Purpose." Editor)

Church Organization 1

The editor of a church paper presents what is intended to be a strong incentive to "Organization" of the people of the "Church of God."

This presentation is worth studying: especially by the people to whom it is particularly addressed. It begins as follows:

"Organization is one of the great and fundamental laws of the Universe of God. The all-wise Creator has demonstrated this, on every hand, and it stands out visibly in all His creation, as a living witness of strength, and the accomplishment of a definite purpose in the earth.

"The trees of the forest, and the beasts of the field, are each one a definite and wonderful organism: a separate being made of many organs, all of which work together in harmony and system, perpetuating the life, growth, and increase, of those of its kind.

"The human body is a wonderful organized organism, each member of which works together as one, all having the same and supreme purpose, of perpetuating its own existence," etc. . . .

And and but, Who is the Organizer of each and all of these wonderful organisms?

Who organizes each tree of the forest, each beast of the field, and each human body?

Is not this Organizer, in each and every case, just God and only God by His Spirit?

Who ever knew or thought of the branches of a tree, organizing a tree? or the members of a beast, organizing that beast? or the members of any human body organizing that body? There never was anything of the kind, and there never could be anything of the kind.

So it is not a question of *Organization*, but of *whose Organization*. The sole question always and in every case is, Whose shall be the Organization? Who is properly and originally the Organizer, and who shall continue the organizing, and whose shall be the Organization?

The human body is indeed a wonderful organism: "fearfully and wonderfully made; " and made *only* by God through Christ by His Spirit. Genesis 1:26-27; Job 33:4.

Not all the collective individual Christians and all the delegates and all the preachers and all the bishops and all the conferences and all the Councils that ever were in the world, all put together at once, could organize the human body. They would not know, and could not know, how to make the first movement, or even to think the first thought, toward it. It is all infinitely beyond all their reach or realm; and stands only within the realm and comprehension of God. And *anybody* ever to undertake it, would have to be equal with God, and God of God.

So, in this it is not any question of Organization. The sole question is, Who is the Organizer? and whose is the Organization?

Now the Divine Body — "the Body of Christ which is The Church" — is a much *more* wonderful organism than is the human body: as much more as the supremely *Spiritual* is more than the human and natural. And just as *none but God*, through Christ by His Spirit could possibly organize the Divine and Spiritual Body which is The Church. And just so much the *more* would anybody who would undertake to organize *this* Body have to be equal with God, and God of God.

And that is just where the Scripture places the one who first "thought" of it and undertook to do it: "he, *as God*, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that *he is God*." That is not safe ground, for Christians.

And still it is not any question of Organization. The sole and *only ground* for question, is, Who is and who shall be, the Organizer? and who is, and whose shall be, the Organization?

For the *members* of the body to undertake to organize the body, in order to have a fully organized body they must necessarily "organize" *a head* as well as any other part of the body. Therefore in their "organizing" the "Body of Christ, which is The Church" they must "organize" *a head* of and for that body.

But Christ is the Head of that *true body* which is The Church: and will any of these "organizers" say that they will "organize" *Christ* as the Head of the body that *they* are organizing?

Oh! no, of course not *that*. He is already organized, in God's Organization. Christ is the *Invisible* Head.

We “organize” with “a *visible* head” and “organize” only “a *visible* head.”

And *that* is all that the church of Rome ever claimed.

And all that the church of Rome is or ever was, *is in that theory*.

Yes, “the trees of the forest are, each one a definite and wonderful organism.” And by the Lord, His true children are called “trees” — “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that *He* might be glorified.” Isaiah 61:3.

And while it is true, as before stated, that no such thing was ever known as the branches of any tree undertaking to organize the tree: yet, sad to say, it is also true that once upon a time *the trees themselves* did actually do the unreasonable thing of organizing themselves into proposed “harmony and system” in which “to work together.” The account of it is as follows:

“The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.

“But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness where with by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

“And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou and reign over us.

“But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

“Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us.

“And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?”

Since they could not get any tree that was good for anything, to be the head of their “organization” — because *those* were all busy honoring God and blessing men — they

then appealed to the one that was good for nothing but to be burned — “the bramble,” the thorn-bush.

“Then said all the trees to the bramble, Come thou and reign over us.

“And the bramble said unto the trees, if in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust under my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.” Judges 9: 8-15.

Did anybody ever with either safety or comfort sit down in the shade of a thorn-bush? Yet that they do this very thing, or else be burnt, were the only terms of the bargain. That is, they were to put themselves in an arrangement where they were certain to be pricked; and if they refused *that*, then they were certain to be burnt.

And they were so taken with the idea of their own “organization” instead of God’s that they deliberately entered into that unreasonable arrangement. They did make that bramble king over them, when by every right and every sober consideration God *was* king over them. They rejected God and chose the bramble; and *in that* they rejected God’s Organization, and set up a structure of their own choice, “like all the nations,” and called it “organization.”

They asked Gideon with his son and his son’s son to rule over them. But Gideon promptly replied, “I will not rule over you. Neither shall my sons rule over you. *The Lord* shall rule over you. Judges 8:23.

But Gideon had a wild son, named Abimelech: and after the death of Gideon this one killed sixty-nine of the sons of Gideon — all of his sons but one — and was made king by the people of Shechem and of the house of Millo, And at the end of three years

dissatisfaction entered and contentions arose, with the result that Abimelech and his men slew all the people of Shechem and of the house of Millo, and beat down to a total ruin the city of Shechem, and next was himself slain.

But in spite of this frightful outcome, to both sides of the attempt at “organization,” there still lingered the wish to have a king. And in the days of Samuel, again the demand was openly made. “Make us a king to judge us, like all the nations.” 1 Samuel 8:5.

The Lord by Samuel protested solemnly against it all: and outlined before them what would be the evil and the oppressions of their king and their kingdom and their “organization.” But they would not listen, and still insisted, “Nay, but *we will* have a king over us.” Verse 19.

The Lord let them have their persistent way. Yet He declared, “*They have rejected Me*, that I should not reign over them.” Verse 7.

They rejected God, to be “like all the nations.” And speedily they became “Like all the nations” *that rejected* God: and finally sealed it all, *and their doom*, with the wild and desperate exclamation, “We have no king but Caesar!”

What is the Meaning of all this? Is there in it any warning, or any lesson, for God’s people in this time or in *any time*? Or is it true that *that part* of the word of God is empty, void, and dead?

Where is any difference *in principle* between *then* their call for a king, that they might be “like all the nations,” and *now* the like call for a king, that they might be like all the *denomi*-nations?

To be Continued.

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“Prayer Requests” from page 1.

Daphne Burson of Montana is still in need of prayer at this time. She has been fighting cancer for a while and is in special need of our prayers. Sister Daphne is a very remarkable person and we appreciate her upbeat view of life, and the work, very much.

Flood relief is starting to make some progress in southern West Virginia. Thank you for your prayers as well as the financial support that has been sent.

Please remember Brother David Clayton and me especially during the month of July as we will be helping with the camp meeting in West Virginia and then travel to Europe to share the good news of the Father’s love and the soon coming of His Son, Jesus Christ. Lord willing, we will share a report when we return at the end of the month. To allow you to have the quickest report, we will need to send the August issue out a little late, but we believe that this is better

than making the readers wait almost a whole extra month to receive a report.

If you have a special prayer request for publication, please send it to us so we can let others know to pray.

Allen Stump

Old Paths is a free monthly newsletter/study-paper published by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801-9606 U. S. A. The paper is dedicated to the propagation and restoration of the principles of truth that God gave to the early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. *Duplication is not only permitted, but strongly encouraged.* This issue, with other gospel literature we publish, can be found at our web sites. The urls are: <http://www.smyrna.org> and <http://www.presenttruth.info>. Phone: (304) 732-9204. Fax: (304) 732-7322.

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