

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

Vol. 12, No.5

Straight and Narrow

May 2003

Are You Fit to Be Free?

By David Clayton

(The following article is an edited transcript of a sermon David preached in Jamaica. I encourage you to give the message it contains above normal consideration. Editor)



Many years ago when I was a boy, there was a song that was popular whose words went something like: "Looking back and longing for the freedom of my chains." As a boy, I could not understand what it meant as I thought of the phrase, "the freedom of my chains." How can you be in chains and yet be free? As I grew older, I began to understand the meaning of this phrase, particularly in context of our Christian experience. That phrase has become especially meaningful to me, "the freedom of my chains."

I want to ask you a question that I would like you to apply very particularly to yourself. Are you fit to be free? Perhaps that seems like a strange question. Let me begin by using an illustration or two to help you to understand what I am getting at.

When the church meets for worship, the children have some type of restraint upon them. The babies are being held; some of the younger children may have a parent's arm around them; some of the youth may be held in with a look of the eye or a promise of discipline to come if undesirable behavior occurs. All these children have some type of restraint upon them. They are not fully able to do as they please. We all know by experience that it is not good to give total freedom to a child who does not fully appreciate what it means to be free or how to use his or her freedom wisely.

I remember, as a boy going to high school, I had things very hard. I was one of ten children, and we were poor when I was growing up. One day, someone anonymously deposited some money on my school expense account to help me out. All my life I had wanted a pair of football (soccer) boots. When I saw

Prayer Request

This month we are making three requests known.

Isabelle D'Antuono is the newly born granddaughter of James and Kim Smith of the Smyrna family. At birth some of Isabelle's organs were not fully developed. She is expected to need antibiotics for six months. Please remember her in prayer as she starts life in a very challenging way. Also pray for her parents, Keith and Dane, that God will give them the strength they need to help Isabelle.

Plans are being made by David Clayton and myself for a trip later this summer to share the message in Europe. Please pray for the planning stages of this trip and especially that David can obtain the visas necessary.

We have been offered some free television time later this summer. The plan is to use some edited tapes from the "Good News About God" series. Pray that we may have the materials ready so as to advance through this golden door of opportunity.

Editor

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this money on my account I didn't know where it had come from, or who had put it there, but the first thing I did was go and buy a pair of football boots. (In those days you could buy them at the school.) I remember my English teacher, when she saw the boots, seemed surprised and appeared a little disappointed. (Thinking back, she may have been the one who deposited the money.) As a boy, at that time, I was not ready for that responsibility. I misused it! I did something unwise because I was not prepared for that kind of responsibility.

Generally speaking, no parent in his right mind would give a credit card to a child to spend as he or she pleases because a child is not ready for that. There may be exceptions, based on the age and maturity of the child but, generally speaking, we don't do that because children, by and large, are not prepared for that kind of responsibility. They do not know how to use it wisely; they do not know how to deal with certain privileges.

Not All Are Capable of Dealing With Freedom

The point I am trying to make is that "freedom" is a relative term; there are different degrees of freedom. Perhaps most of us put ourselves at the top of the ladder. We say, "I am free; I can make my own decisions." That is how I felt when I moved out of my parents' home and started to work on my own. My parents could not tell me what time to go out or come in, or how to spend my money. I felt a certain sense of freedom. But not everyone is capable of dealing with freedom.

There are many factors that need to be taken into consideration when we think of freedom, especially within the framework of limited human beings. I remember reading about the slaves being set free in America. After centuries of oppression, being trodden down, used, and abused by the white slave masters, when finally emancipation came, most of them, after a while, went straight back to their masters and

worked for them again under very similar conditions. This time they received a very small pittance, but they went back to the slave master because they did not know how to deal with their freedom. When they were slaves, somebody told them when to get up and what to do. Somebody provided their breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Their day was planned out and organized. Now that they were free to do as they pleased, what were they going to do? Where were they going to work? What would they eat? Many went straight back to their slave masters and asked to be taken back. This time, because slavery had been abolished, they received a few pennies, token wages, but they worked under the same conditions. They were not capable of dealing with their freedom in a manner that was helpful to them.

Freedom leaves you to make your own decisions. But, clearly, wisdom and experience are needed to properly use it.

Let me give an illustration from the global experience to show you that it is how people relate to freedom that is important. I have heard Jamaicans say that their condition is bad because they were in slavery, and/or because we don't have many natural resources. But look at Japan, Korea, and Germany. Germany, as you know, was decimated at the end of World War II. These countries do not have a lot of the natural resources that are so prized by other nations. The difference in some of these countries is that they are united in what they are doing, and they are committed to what they are doing. They understand better than we do, and are more committed than we are, to getting their plans to work. The reason there is a difference is because people react differently to the same situation. That is the point I am trying to get across, and I hope that you will not miss it, because I want to apply it to us as Christians.

Many who read this claim to have been set free from religious bondage and the rule of a hierarchy. We claim to have been set free from a system that is

oppressive and constrictive; from a system that kills free thinking and, almost in a physical way, keeps people in bondage. We have been set free so nobody can tell us anymore where we should worship, how we should worship, when we should worship, what we should study, what we should believe. We claim to have been set free to be our own masters. Perhaps we don't say it quite like that, but that is what we think.

I want to ask you again, Are you fit to be free? Are you responsible enough to be free?

The Example of Israel

The Israelites are an example of some people who were set free but were, in many ways, incapable of using that freedom. While they were in Egypt, the Israelites had no freedom to choose what they would do from day to day. Somebody else was their master. They almost did not have a mind of their own. Somebody told them what and when to eat, and when, where, and how to work. They were told exactly what to do. Every detail of their lives was planned out and ordered for them, even to the point of being told which of their children they should keep and which ones they should discard. They had lost control over their lives; somebody else made their decisions for them.

One day God sent Moses and Aaron to the children of Israel and set them free. But when they were set free, they discovered that with freedom, certain things changed. Along with the fact that they were now free, the reality also came to them that there were no more leeks, cucumbers, onions, and melons; nobody to tell them where they would sleep that night and no certain place to stay. They were no longer in a regulated program. (That is, unless they accepted God's program for them.) They were not compelled. They made their choices at each step of the way.

In Egypt they were monitored every minute. They were oppressed, but their food and shelter were provided. The system took care of their needs. When

they were set free, their earthly support was cut off and they had to adopt different standards, values, and principles of life. Now, notice why God put them through this kind of situation.

“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.” (Deuteronomy 8:3)

God wanted them to learn that man does not live by physical, visible, or material things; the things he can see, touch, or feel. What was it that God wanted them, and us, to know that sustains life? The Word of God! In order to teach them this lesson, He had to make them hungry and to want. God was trying to teach them that it was not physical benefit they needed, but a spiritual lesson. They needed a character instead of “things,” and God put them through hardship so that this character, which was their real need might be developed.

Sadly, they were not ready for that kind of life. The Israelites wished and longed many times for the leeks, onions, and melons of Egypt. God wanted to bring them under His yoke in strict obedience and in complete trust.

The Regular Church

What does it mean to be free as a Christian? We all claim to be free, to a certain extent, but let me draw some contrasts between my current situation and that of when I had been under a hierarchy. I notice several striking differences between when I used to be a member of the *regular church*, and worship there, and the situation that I am in now. In the *regular church*, almost every moment of the week has activities planned in it for the church members. Right above where I live there is an Adventist Church. On Friday night they have choir practice; on Monday night they have choir practice; on Sunday night they have a

“Looking back and longing for the freedom of my chains.”



meeting; on Wednesday night they have prayer meeting; on Sunday morning they have a sunrise service and, of course, on Sabbath they have the regular services. One striking thing I find is that on every Sabbath morning they start at 9:30. If you go to the Adventist Church you will find that they have programs that continue day after day, month after month and year after year. The members know exactly where they fit into these programs.

One thing about the *regular church*, and any organization that succeeds or gets along in this world, is that they plan carefully for every detail. It might be that in the regular church you are not free to think, but the church certainly keeps you occupied and busy. It outlines step by step how you are to operate day by day. You don't have to stop to think, “What shall I do next?” You don't have to motivate yourself; the program keeps you going and motivated even if you are not free to think for yourself or disagree.

Now, is there something wrong with being under a system like this? Is there something fundamentally, inherently wrong with a system like this? Is that what God wants for His people or is there something better?

The Yoke of Christ

My study of the Scripture has led me to the conclusion that there is something better. God wants us to be free. In 1 Corinthians 7:23 we read: “Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.” The Bible gives you the authority to be free from men. Who is to control the life of the Christian? Freedom is a lie and a deception unless it is based on the fact that I am under the yoke of Christ. Jesus said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” (Matthew 11:29)

A yoke is an instrument that binds two animals together to insure that they work together in unison with each other. A yoke is not primarily for restraint, that is secondary. The main point is to bind two animals together. Jesus says to take my yoke upon you. It is not your yoke, the yoke of a church, or the yoke of a government that we are to be bound with! We are to be bound with the yoke of Christ. What does that mean, literally? We are to be bound with Christ so that where He goes, we go; what He does, we do. Jesus says when we do this we shall find rest for our souls. Why? He says, “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:30)

Do we really believe the words of Jesus? Almost all the people I know of, from the Bible and my life, who have accepted Christ, have usually been led down what appears to have been a bitter and difficult road. Do you know of any Christians who have a bed of roses? In fact, the Bible says, “Yea, and *all* that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (2 Timothy 3:12)

I think of the person who loses his money, has sickness in his family, and then is afflicted with sickness himself. The modern-day Pharisee says, “There must be some deep, dark, secret sin in your life, that is why the Lord is dealing with you so.” But remember, the Bible says, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” (Hebrews 12:6)

We may, in our minds, know this is how the Lord deals with His children, but is this an easy yoke? It does not seem that way, but here is the key: Jesus says, “*take my yoke.*” We are to take Christ's yoke. The weaker animal that is yoked with a stronger animal has it easy because he has no decisions to make. He does not think to himself, “Boy, that is a nice pasture of green grass over there, I think I will go over

there and nibble some of it.” No, the stronger animal takes the weaker wherever he will.

If you chose to accept the yoke of Christ, your life will become easy. You remove the responsibility of making your own decisions. You will not have to make decisions on where and when to go, or what to do, for Christ will make them for you. Life can be easy. When I was in college, the day was scripted out: Breakfast at 7:00, 8:00 class, 12:00 lunch, 12:30 Bible study, 1:00 class, etc. I had no problems. It was one of the best periods of my life because life was so regulated. Christ says to take His yoke. Commenting on this, Sister White noted:

“If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of *your own spiritual choice* be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call, you come wearing the yoke of Christ,—the yoke of obedience and service,—all your murmurings will be stilled, all your difficulties will be removed, all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved.” (*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 150 - emphasis supplied)

Whose Yoke Are You Wearing?

The person who says, “I am free,” needs to understand that it does not mean that I am free to do my own will. To be free, as a Christian, means to be yoked with Christ. We need desperately to understand this!

Do you know what I see among us as a people? I see a lack of commitment to Christ. Do we need a program like the regular church? We live as if we need men to lay down rules for how we should behave. We need somebody to tell us what to do or we cannot move. Whose yoke are you wearing? Are you free, or are you still bound to the concepts of men? Are we free to follow the inclinations of our own mind? Are we really free? Are we yoked to Christ?

What should we note about the chronic late-coming to meetings? We

“When fire fails to come down from heaven, men resort to matches.”

say, “We are free, we can come at any time we like.” Yet, we are never late to work. In fact, we might be early in and late out! We never have a problem being late to work, yet we can’t come to worship God on time!

Whose yoke are we wearing? Is it the yoke of Christ that leads us to be so undisciplined and unruly? Whose yoke are you wearing? Yes, we are free, but free to do what?

I am reminded of the days of Martin Luther. He and others broke free from Catholicism and the people said that they were free! There came up a group of people led by a man named Thomas Munzer. They were known as the Munzerites. They entered into such fanaticism that they said they were so free, that they did not even need the Bible. They claimed that they were free and that the spirit led them by their thoughts. Anything the spirit was supposed to have told them, they did, and the result was gross disorder. Luther had to fight against it very hard. Have we been set free to become disorderly?

Are we like the Israelites who could not appreciate their freedom because they could not see their invisible Leader? As soon as the visible leader was gone, they started to worship a golden calf. When they got tired of the visible leader, they started to mummer and complain because they could not see the invisible Leader. Because they refused to submit their lives to the invisible Leader, their lives were miserable. We need, today, to be able to see, believe, and trust in the invisible God, or we are doomed to repeat the failure of Israel. Are you under the yoke of Christ? Are you fit to be free?

We have the problem, because we are free, of frequent absenteeism from worship. We say we are committed to something already. True, there are no membership rolls. We don’t mark to note if you are early or late, or even if you coming every week. It is clear that some of us are not committed to

anything. Our “freedom” has caused us to be uncommitted to anything. So we may stay home and sleep during worship!

We may read what we want, go where we want, and do what we want because we don’t focus on God during the Sabbath, simply because we claim to be free. We can do as we please. Is this where Christ is leading us or is it that we don’t know the yoke of Christ?

What could we note about the misuse of the Lord’s money? Because we are free, we claim we no longer have to give it to this certain place or another specific place; we are free. What do we do with it now? Borrow it, hold it, forget about it? Because nobody is coming around with an offering plate, I can forget about my own commitment. Nobody knows what I am doing with my tithe. Is that the kind of freedom the Lord is leading us to?

The question is, are you really fit to be free, or do you need a yoke of man? I tell you, if we are to start an organization and lay down some rules, more people would attend and more would get done. As bad as a hierarchy is, anarchy is worse. Yet at what a cost! We give up our true freedom for being yoked with man. I refuse to submit to that! I learned a phrase a long time ago that I have not forgotten: “When fire fails to come down from heaven, men resort to matches.” I don’t want to start lighting matches. If we can’t operate as God wants us to, shall we go back to human methods? The beginning of every oppressive system the world has ever seen began with the idea, “I have a better idea than God, I must be in control here for things to work.” So rules are made to control the people and bring them into line and a program is started that gets the people working. However, it is not God’s program. His program is that we are each to wear the yoke of Christ.

When you wear the yoke of Christ, man does not have to tell you how to

behave and live. The most disciplined person in the world is a Christian. What does the undiscipline in religious and spiritual matters of our lives tell us? We are free, but free to do what? What have we been delivered unto? Anarchy, confusion, self-will. God is not behind that.

You know how the Jews dealt with Sabbath-breaking. They made rules and regulations to bring people into line. You could not carry any more than a handkerchief on the Sabbath. We could make a rule: You have to come to Sabbath worship on time. If you are late, there will be a penalty. We could use methods, plans, and programs as incentives to get people to do things. It does not work. What did it do for the Jews? It made them more self-righteous. It made them critical. They watched each other on the Sabbath to see who was doing what. Is that what we need to do to get things to work properly? What we need is to wear the yoke of Christ.

We notice the declining standards of dress, more in some places than others. We could make rules that the dress hemline should be so long and the sleeves should come to a certain point like some churches. We could make strict rules and make everyone appear uniform, but I resist it. Not because holiness is wrong, but the issue is real holiness, not by force of men, but by wearing the yoke of Christ. Christ must speak to each of us, instructing us to walk in the principle of modesty. You say, "We will have as many different levels of standards as we have people." We will only have one level if we are all wearing the one yoke of Christ.

If you don't know Christ, why should I intervene and step in the way? Let each one of us seek with all our heart to come under the yoke of Christ.

Motivation and Freedom

Another matter that bears consideration is that we put our work and school study programs before worship; not always on Sabbath, either. What about prayer meeting, camp meeting

time, or other special times for God to meet with His people? We are told, "Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven." (*Steps to Christ*, p. 98)

Suppose you got \$2,000 for every soul you won to the message. Would you get a new full-time job? If you won two souls a month you would do well. Will you do for money what you will not do for Christ? The stark reality is that many know in their hearts that if, given such an incentive, well, we know how we would react, what we would do. You know how much harder you would do for money, what you will not do for love. This ought to challenge us brothers and sisters.

We put our work or other little things before the prayer meeting. We let our feelings control us. "Oh, I'm tired, I don't feel like going tonight." But if you were compelled to do it you would do it. If you were in the regular church and they kept insisting for you to come to the meetings, you would. We still wear the yoke of men. We still are not free, free in Christ. To be free in Christ does not mean that I am free to do as I please, but rather free to do what Christ pleases, all the time. That is what Christian freedom means; that is what we have been delivered unto.

Let's consider personal devotions. Do you get up and spend two hours a day with the Lord, or even one hour? Do you spend enough time in prayer each day to actually get to know God? Strange that in a twenty-four-hour day, we cannot find two hours of time to fellowship with the One we claim to love above all others, and serve. We give our employers eight hours a day and more. Sometimes we can't even take our lunch break, or midday break, when working for our employers, but

we cannot give God two hours, and we say we are free.

What are we seeking? Freedom from all responsibility, for something that passes for commitment which is escapism.

We are not free, and it shows up in our constant bickering. I am reminded of a group of people who decided that they could live on the same tract of land and work together to the glory of God. They escaped far from the cities and things of the cities. Sadly, they could not escape from themselves. They were free from the system, but could not get free from themselves because they would not wear the yoke of Christ.

Christ's Yoke Brings Freedom

The person who is free will behave like Christ; he will not have anything to prove. Many people grow up insecure. Perhaps it is due to poverty or some other circumstances. However, when we are born again and become a Christian, discovering who we are in Christ, the insecurities will go away as we wear the yoke of Christ and have Him next to us. When Jesus is in us we do not have to prove ourselves to anybody anymore. What we have been in the past is not important. Our lineage is not important. What others think about us is not important. We know who we are in Christ. Wearing the yoke of Christ frees us from not having to prove ourselves to anybody else.

I don't have to come early to please the elder. I don't have to give a big offering to please the treasurer. I just have to please Christ as I wear His yoke!

Wearing the yoke of Christ frees me from dependence of men. It does not matter if anyone else in the church is involved in the missionary program or not; my dependence is upon Christ. He is the One I am worshiping. I worship with my brothers and sisters, but I worship Christ and wear His yoke, He is my authority.

The person wearing the yoke of Christ will be different from everybody else around him, unless everyone else is wearing the yoke of Christ. The person who wears the yoke of Christ will be more disciplined than anybody who wears the yoke of men. When you wear the yoke of Christ, your whole being, body, soul, and spirit, is committed to what you are doing. How does Christ behave? Do our lives show that He has been living in us? I want to challenge you. I am challenged, because all the offensive things that I have mentioned, I am guilty of each one. So please, with me, let us consider: Is this the freedom of Christ? Jesus was always on time for His Father's plans. He always wore the yoke of His Father. We, as Christians are not fit to be free unless we wear the yoke of Christ. If you cannot wear the yoke of Christ, go back to where you can wear the yoke of man. You and the world will be better off because at least your life will have a semblance of order to it.

Self Government

When you claim to be free, and follow yourself, are you fit to govern yourself? Jesus said, "For without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) You are not fit to govern yourself. The history of the nations of this world is the

history of men trying to govern themselves and govern others.

Alexander the Great conquered the world, but could not conquer himself. He died in a drunken condition. He drank, drank, and drank. He finally fell down with a high fever and died in a few days. He conquered the world, but could not conquer himself.

If man "does not observe the laws that govern his own being, if he chooses selfish gratification above soundness of mind and body, does he not thereby declare himself unfit to be entrusted with the responsibility of human lives?" (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 134) Those who cannot govern themselves are totally unfit to govern others.

Jesus told the disciples, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28) These disciples will receive great responsibility because they have first learned self-government by wearing the yoke of Christ. Christ says that He can give them great authority because they have learned how to depend upon Him.

Most who read this have either taken a step away from a system we believe is

apostate or are at least in some conflict with a system we believe is in apostasy. But we only make a mockery of what we have done when others look at us and only see a band of undisciplined, uncooperative people who do nothing but sit down and complain. Where are the discipline, steadfastness, and order in our lives? Where is the Christlikeness that should mark our lives and separate us from others as much as the day is from the night?

Do we have salvation if our experience only consists of words and arguments? If we have taken up the yoke of Christ it will show up in lives that are purer, holier, more disciplined, orderly, and without human constraint than anything that the world can present. This is the challenge I give to you because I know it is the truth of the Word of God. I challenge you to see if, by God's grace, we can have a closer relationship with the Lord, learn to live as He wants us to live as we yoke up with Christ in true freedom. ✍

(David writes from his home in Jamaica. You may contact him by writing to: P. O. Box 23 Knockpatrick, Manchester Jamaica. His phone number is: 876-904-7392 (an international call from the United States). David can also be reached by e-mail at: david@restorationministry.com).

Candidates for Pastor

(I received this by e-mail a few months ago. While we might smile at the seeming shortsightedness of the appraisals, how often have we greatly misjudged others and their actions? Let us remember the words of Jesus, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matthew 7:1, 2) Editor)

Jesus: Notorious leader of an underground liberation movement. Seems

harmless as a dove but??? Has had popular times, but once his church grew to 5,000 he managed to offend them all, and then this church dwindled down to twelve people. Seldom stays in one place very long. Practiced medicine without a licence. Known agitator. Associates armed with dangerous weapons. Wanted for sedition, criminal anarchy, vagrancy, and conspiring to overthrow the established government. Seen distributing food without a license, assaulting money changers, engaged in disorderly

conduct in the temple, holding illegal gatherings without council permits, allowing children to sit on his lap, aiding and abetting known prostitutes, and sending revolutionaries out into the world.

Judas: His references are solid. A steady plodder. Conservative. Good connections and especially within the organization. Loved by the crowds and highly recommended. Knows how to handle money and has good qualifications. . We're inviting him to preach. Possibilities here! ✍

Letters

(These letters represent a cross section of our mail. Some editing has been done for clarity. Editor)

Taped Media:

We responded to your card in the ... [advertisement] pack and dropped the video [Alpha and Omega] into the player on Sabbath and felt a bomb drop in our laps as we listened to your tape! (We home church) We are Historic SDA's (coming from Baptist background) and have had to re-look at many teachings we have been taught through the years. We are always open and eager (but cautious) for new light. Wow, we didn't even know there was an issue about the Trinity! Never heard anything but the belief of the Trinity! We feel our world has stopped until we understand this more. Please send us one of every publication or booklet you have. I would also like your videos explaining this issue. Is it possible you could send it soon enough so it has a chance to get here before this Sabbath?

Washington

I recently had the privilege of viewing a video produced by your organization titled *The Alpha and the Omega*. Needless to say, I was intrigued by the content and would like to peruse a more diligent study on this teaching of the "trinity" and the truth of the issue as proclaimed in Scripture.

District of Columbia

Literature:

Thank you sooooo much for all that you have shared and continue to share, with us through your truth-filled literature, videos, etc. May the good Lord bless and keep you always in your quest towards the kingdom. Please pray for my family. We pray for you and yours.

Michigan

Thank you very much for your prayers. We greatly appreciate all the prayers of the saints. Thanks for your wonderful ministry.

Massachusetts

Thank you for sending *What Did The Pioneers Believe?* I am learning a lot from your ministry.

Utah

We have briefly communicated before, but this time I would like to ask you if you are aware of a critique that an Australian minister has published on your book/booklet, *The Foundation of Our Faith*. He distributed that, and other things of like nature, at a meeting we attended some months ago, but I did not receive any

until he sent us a copy recently. All I can say is that he succeeded very well in making me determined to read YOUR book if I can get a copy please! I figure that anything written that causes a Seventh-day Adventist minister to come out in print in such a vitriolic manner as he has, must be the TRUTH and I need to read it!!! There is no doubt in my mind that no true Christian would use the crude language and personal accusations that he does. ... It is NOT AT ALL the way that the Spirit of Prophecy teaches us is the way to deal with "Those whom we suppose to be in error" !! I am thoroughly disgusted !! And he, and others of his persuasion, wonder why WE have chosen to disconnect from the nominal church. We want you to know that we appreciate your *Old Paths* and David Clayton's, *Open Face*. Please be encouraged to continue your work in the "Fear of the Lord," and in the spirit of meekness.

Australia

(We have a copy of the mentioned publication. It is sad when ministers resort to personal, uncouth, attacks because they do not have a "thus saith the Lord" to stand on.

Editor)

Camp Meeting:

We are so looking forward to the Florida Retreat to be able to visit with our past acquaintances and make new ones.

Florida

Thanks for your ministries. We pray for you often. A special thanks for Brother Stump's telephone call. We are praying that we will be able to attend camp meeting in June.

Minnesota

It was so good to see all of you the other Sabbath. I'm looking forward to camp meeting. I don't think we will have too many more to enjoy here on this old earth, but then the one we have in Heaven will be a lot less work and more exciting.

Ohio

(Amen!

Editor)

Newsletters:::

I have been receiving your little paper *Old Paths* now for over a year. Please discontinue sending it to me.

California

(This and all such requests will be honored. Editor)

God bless you and your family for showing such dedication to sharing the truth. We appreciate *Old Paths* and

pray that you will be able to continue this important work. **Michigan**

I treasure each issue of *Old Paths*, and take them with me on our Kenworth. I quoted large portions of the April issue in a letter to a couple of friends who were upset that I had “quit the church,” and I hope it gets the point across that we don’t owe any allegiance to a CHURCH, but only to GOD. Keep up the great work on the newsletters. I love them! Thanks. **Colorado**

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:2)

Thank you both for the work you are doing in the Lord’s service. Lynnford, I truly enjoyed the e-mails in *Old Paths*, sent from India. I am looking forward to hearing all about yours and Brother Howard’s missionary work in a not too distant issue from S.G.M. Thank you for blessing your readers with the March and April *Present Truth* articles, “Wars and Rumors of Wars: Is it the End?” and “The Mark of the Beast.” No matter how often I study end time events, I feel the necessity to search the subject time and again.

Brother Allen, thank you for each and every issue of *Old Paths*. “The God of Hope,” and “Defying Earth and Heaven,” captured my attention from beginning to end. Thank you. You each have a special way of presenting Bible Truth. **Montana**

I am sending you warm Christian greetings from western Canada. I’m very thankful to you for sending me your monthly publications *Old Paths* and *Present Truth*. I found lots of very valuable information there, that certainly helped me to grow spiritually. **Canada**

Miscellaneous:

I hope you all are greatly blessed. We want to see this message go to every nation, tongue and people; knowing then the end shall come. May God the Father bless you all with His power and might as we seek to accomplish His work. **Kentucky**

Just a note of appreciation. I haven’t heard these truths since attending Walla Walla Valley Academy (class of 1970) where one of the Bible teachers was teaching this until they formed an inquisition and fired him and took away his ministerial license. Unfortunately he didn’t have information on what the early leaders believed and, since Ellen G. White said that in later years people

would come bringing new ideas regarding the nature of the Holy Spirit: anyway, you get the picture.

The use of the personal pronoun he, in context with the Holy spirit, seems to be conclusive proof for some that “he” is an individual being. If this is all that it takes, then there is a problem with Matt. 26:52 and Gen. 1:11,12.

A couple of other texts that I don’t see you using that I feel are useful, are Matt. 11:27 and 1Pet. 1:9-11. How many witnesses? John 8:15-18, then compare to the law that Jesus was referring to. If there were three witnesses wouldn’t Jesus have used all three to verify His place?

Washington



Announcements *from the Editor*

Foundation of Our Faith Needed

One of our main publications, *The Foundation of Our Faith*, is currently out of print. We had hoped that it could have been reprinted by now, but due to the heavy workload and opportunities opening up that could not be neglected, we have fallen behind on our schedule to have it reprinted.

If any of our readers in the United States have any extra copies you would be willing to share with those on our backorder list, we would greatly appreciate knowing. We will gladly replace any extra books when the reprinting is accomplished. Please contact us for further details.

Mail

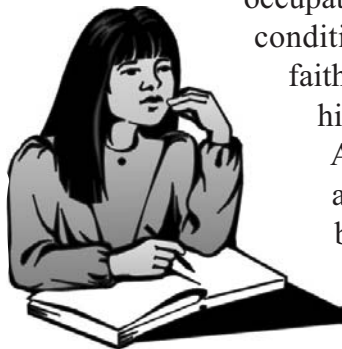
Each day the postal service delivers a good quantity of mail to the ministry. We really are very conscientious with the mail and try to answer all the mail requests in as timely a fashion as possible. However, sometimes a letter or two may “slip through the cracks.” This week my attention was brought to a recently discovered letter that had been mailed over two years ago! I really felt bad that this could happen under any circumstances. This made me wonder if there were any other letters sent to the ministry that are yet to surface. While all our mail does not require a response, if you have sent something that would normally require a response and have not received a response, please contact and alert us. If we have your letter, we will do all in our power to respond in a timely manner. If we cannot locate your letter, we will seek to find out why, and do all in our power to correct the matter. Thank you for your patience in this situation.

Continued on page 12

Youth's Corner - Christlike Religion

The tremendous issues of eternity demand of us something more than an imaginary religion. A stately form of worship and high devotional ceremonies do not constitute a light to the world; and yet truth that is looked upon and admired in the same way as a beautiful picture or lovely flower, and not brought into the inner sanctuary of the soul, is thought by many to be all that is required in a worshiper. Many hear the truth, and imaginary probabilities and possibilities loom up before their minds, and they think that, had they the chance, they would do some wonderful thing; but in all this that they seem to think the sum total of religion, they have no idea as to what is pure and undefiled religion.

It is not enough to believe what is preached; the truth must be brought into the temple of the soul. Holiness is not rapture; it is the result of surrendering all to God; it is living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our Heavenly Father; it is trusting in God in trial, believing in his promise in the darkness as well as in the light. Religion is to walk by faith as well as by sight, trusting in God with all confidence, and resting in his love. We shall be saved eternally when we enter in through the gates into the city. Then we may rejoice that we are saved, eternally saved. But until then we need to heed the injunction of the apostle, and to "fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it." Having a knowledge of Canaan, singing the songs of Canaan, rejoicing in the prospect of entering into Canaan, did not bring the children of Israel into the vineyards and olive-groves of the promised land.



They could make it theirs in truth only by occupation, by complying with the conditions, by exercising living faith in God, by appropriating his promises to themselves. As we draw nigh to Christ, and as he draws nigh to the believing soul, we can say, with all confidence: "I know whom I have believed, and am

persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

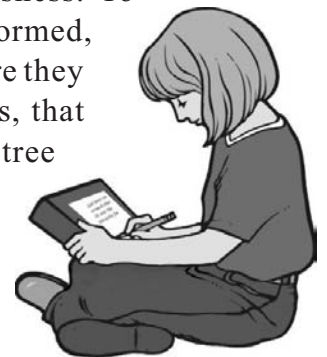
The present and eternal security of men is their surety, Jesus Christ the righteous. No man will be able to pluck the believing soul out of his hands. The righteousness of Christ is a free gift, bestowed without money and without price. Man had nothing he could give for it; for he had no virtue of character that was not the gift of Jesus Christ. He could not claim even the ownership of himself. "Ye are not your own; ye are



bought with a price," even with the precious blood of Christ. The righteousness of Christ must be accepted as a free gift by us who are all undeserving. No thread of legality is of any value in the salvation of the soul; for we are saved by grace, through the subduing love of Christ, and the heart is made a willing sacrifice. By keeping the love of God in the heart, the love of the world is kept out, and we become built up in the most

holy faith. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith; and when we yield to his hand, we shall steadily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. We shall make progress until we reach the full stature of men and women in Christ.

Faith works by love, and purifies the soul, expelling the love of sin that leads to rebellion against, and transgression of, the law of God. This true love in the heart always leads its possessor into harmony with the commandments of God; for through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the character is transformed, and the mind and will of the human agent are brought into perfect conformity to the divine will, and this is conformity to the divine standard of righteousness. To those who are thus transformed, Christ will say, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Mrs. E. G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, February 17, 1898)



WV Camp Meeting June 17-21

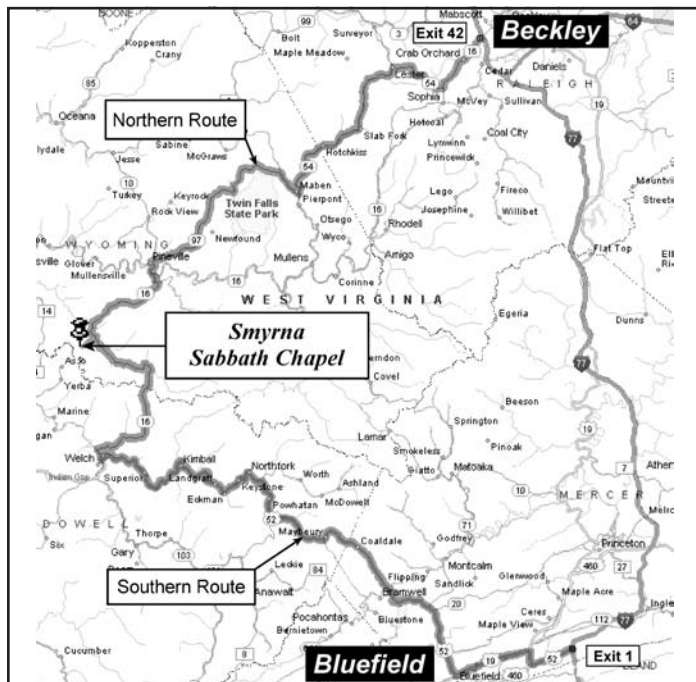
Smyrna Gospel Ministries would like to invite all who are interested in preparing for the return of the Lord to attend camp meeting this June 17-21, at the Smyrna Sabbath Chapel in West Virginia. We believe this is going to be one of the best camp meetings the movement has ever had, so plan now to bring your Bibles and a cheerful heart.

We will be feasting upon God's Word, special music, testimonies, and great fellowship. Brother Howard Williams of Restoration Ministries, Jamaica, will be our featured evening speaker. Some of the other speakers include David Sims, Dennis Robertson, David Clayton, and Lynnford Beachy.

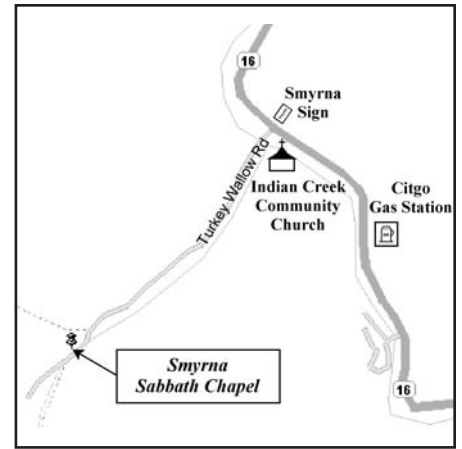
The theme of this camp meeting will be "Fellowship." The Apostle John writes: "... truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. ... But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:3, 7) As we walk in the light, and fellowship with the Father and the Son, we have fellowship with each other.

While we acknowledge that meetings are the main focus of camp meeting, we realize that it is, at times, difficult to find the time for personal time with God and time with one another, when a camp meeting schedule is very full. To help provide time for personal time with the Father and the Son, as well as time for fellowship with each other, we have scheduled meetings in the following manner:

The first meeting will be Tuesday evening, June 17. Each day will begin with an early morning, before breakfast,



devotional. After breakfast there will be a morning service with a health presentation and message from God's Word, and a midmorning service with a message from God's Word. Except for Sabbath, only youth meetings (ages 4–young adult) will be scheduled in the afternoon. Each day will end with an evening service, which will consist of a health presentation and a message from God's Word. We hope to have special music for all services. If you wish to contribute, please contact the camp meeting's music coordinator, Malcolm McCrillis, (423) 772-3161.



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. We hope to have four showers with hot and cold water available. Don't forget items such as tents, bedding, flashlights, food, toiletries, insect repellent, and modest casual and Sabbath clothes.

This last spring our road was heavily damaged by flood waters. At the present time, passage for anything beyond a passenger vehicle is difficult. The state highway department is currently working on our road and we hope it will be in the best condition ever by camp time. However, if you plan on bringing an RV, please contact us to see if the road has been repaired. We will post an update each month till camp meeting. 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 are: The Pocahontas Motel (304) 436-2250; 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 to have 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.

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. Cook Memorial Baptist Church will be 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 2003 Camp Meeting Schedule

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sabbath
6:00-6:15		Song Service	Song Service	Song Service	Song Service
6:15-7:15		David Clayton	David Clayton	Dennis Robertson	Dennis Robertson
7:15-9:15		Break			
9:15-9:30		Song Service	Song Service	Song Service	Song Service
9:30-10:00		Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks
10:00-11:00		David Sims	David Sims	David Sims	David Sims
11:15-11:30		Break			
11:30-12:30		Lynnford Beachy	Janette Heath	Lynnford Beachy	Lynnford Beachy
12:30-6:15		Break			
					Testimonies 3:30-5:30
6:15-6:30	Song Service	Song Service	Song Service	Song Service	Song Service
6:30-7:00	Welcome	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks	Dr. Stephen Burks
7:00-8:15	Allen Stump	Howard Williams	Howard Williams	Howard Williams	Howard Williams
Youth Meetings will be held each afternoon. Times will be announced at the camp meeting.					

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“Announcements continued from page 8

India Trip Report

Last month we gave a short report on the India missionary trip of Lynnford Beachy and Howard Williams. We are thankful to report that they returned safely on schedule.

Due to publishing deadline constraints, we are not able to publish a full report this month. Brother Howard Williams is writing a report that, Lord willing, we will share next month. We also hope to have several of the pictures at that time to share with you. Brother Beachy is preparing quite a detailed account for the *Present Truth* magazine as well.

“I Did It”

Shortly after the April issue of *Old Paths* was sent out, I started to receive calls wanting to know who wrote the front page article, “Defying Earth and Heaven,” as there was no author listed. Good, bad, or ugly, I wrote the article and leaving off the name was an accident.

Allen Stump

“When the rich Quaker was asked the secret of his success in life, he answered, ‘Civility, friend, civility.’ Some people are uncivil, sour, sullen, morose, crabbed, crusty, haughty, really clownish and imprudent. Run for your life! ‘Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit! There is more hope of a fool than of him!’” (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, September 25, 1860)

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.

Editor. Allen Stump – editor@smyrna.org
Associate Editor Lynnford Beachy – berean@smyrna.org