

# 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

## God's Magnificent Offer

*(The following article is adapted from a sermon I preached at the 2005 West Virginia camp meeting . . . . . Editor)*

I have a few questions for you that I have asked several people in the past and because of its serious nature, they deserve your most careful consideration. "If a physical tragedy were to happen in your life today and you were to die, would you have the assurance, in your heart, that when the Lord comes you will be one of His jewels? Would you know this for a certainty? Would you be able to say, 'Yes, I know Jesus loves me. He has made a place for me in His kingdom *and I will be there.*'? Or would you say, 'Well, I want to be saved. I hope that I am. It is my desire to be in His kingdom.'?" Beloved, God does not wish us to be in the dark concerning our personal relationship with Him.

Please allow the Word of God to speak to your heart. It doesn't matter what I say or how I express myself. The only thing that is important is what God's Word says. 1 John 5:10-13 tells us: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that *ye may know that ye have eternal life*, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." The text does not say that you *might* have eternal life, or that you *hope* you have eternal life, but "that ye *have* eternal life."

Friends, amazingly, some Bible texts seem harder to believe than others and some others are easier to have faith in. Let me give you an example. In Revelation 21 we find one text out of many possible examples we could list. Notice what verse 8 says: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Most professed Christians have no doubt about the truth of this verse. We believe this and seemingly we can see how easily we could be a part of this picture. We can look at the verses of the Bible concerning those who do not make Christ their surety and we don't seem to have any problem believing them.

We can believe the statements about damnation, but we seem to have a hard time having faith concerning the truth about salvation and personal assurance. I believe that our personal assurance directly affects our witness. How can I share something with others that I, myself, am not sure of? I will hesitate and lack the confidence and conviction that is needed. You see, friends, it is hard

## Prayer Requests

I was so blessed in my recent trip to Africa in meeting and worshipping with the brethren in Ghana and other areas of Africa. Please remember to pray for them. They often serve the Lord with only rudimentary physical resources and with limited spiritual resources. They have a great need for such books as, *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ*, which are virtually unavailable to most of the believers.

While there are famine and food shortages in other parts of Africa, there is also a famine in Africa for "hearing the words of the LORD." (Amos 8:11) Please pray for physical and especially spiritual meat for these brethren and let us prayerfully use all the spiritual resources we have at hand, such as sharing the abundance of Spirit of Prophecy books that we here in America have easy access to, and by doing all we can to help them and all our brethren to be ready for our Savior's return.

*continued on page 8, column 2*

## Also in this issue:

- Upcoming Meetings in Your Area . . . p. 9
- Seek First the Kingdom of God . . . p. 10
- Report on Visit to Ghana . . . . . p.16
- Youth's Corner . . . . . p. 19
- Here a Little, and There a Little. . . p. 20

to go out and tell others about salvation when you are not sure of your own, or when you doubt it will really bring joy and happiness into one's heart.

### Full Assurance

Hebrews 10 speaks of the full assurance the Lord wants us to have. Verse 22 says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," not just a partial one. He doesn't want us to be fifty percent sure, but rather He wants us to have one hundred percent assurance, a full assurance. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)" (vs. 22, 23)

I am sorry to say there are times that I make promises that I fail to keep, through forgetfulness or through neglect. I tell someone that I will do something and I am not always faithful. But the Bible says that God has promised to do a special work for you and He is faithful to that which He has promised. He has not told you that you *might* have full assurance, but He says it is here for you. In fact, 1 John 5:9 states: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." How easy it is, friends, to believe what people tell us sometimes, but we don't believe God. God's witness is always greater.

Ellen White makes an interesting statement in *Our High Calling*, p. 203. "It is insanity to have no assurance that we are indeed sons and daughters of God." Can you imagine such a statement? It says it is insanity to not have that assurance. Now, what does it mean to be insane or to have insanity? Our minds are not functioning properly.

### By Beholding We Become Changed

Notice what the apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [or mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This text tells us many things, but one thing it tells me is that we will become like the God we love, worship, adore, and serve. The text in effect says, "By beholding, we become changed." We will become like whatever we are beholding, whatever we are feasting our eyes upon, listening to, allowing the senses to take into the body. Jesus said His meat was to do the will of His Father in heaven. What does He mean when He says "meat"? He means that which nourishes Him, that which would make Him grow and be strong. We need spiritual food, a spiritual relationship with God. We need to see and to know God, who He really is and what He really is like, and then in character we will become like Him, but if our conception of God is warped, we will become as distorted as our view of God is distorted. Please carefully consider these concepts for they are very important.

I have something I want to share with you, but before I do, I would like to tell you a story. A few months ago I was

putting my shoes on, a pair of soft-soled leather shoes, and sometimes the leather on these shoes would get pushed on, causing it to buckle down. On this particular day, even though the leather felt buckled down, I thought my toe would eventually push it back into shape, but soon my toe felt like it had been stung. I took my shoe off and turned it upside down, expecting a small pebble or something to fall out, but instead a large, partly-crushed spider fell out. Many people do not like spiders and they consider them repulsive. With that in mind, please consider the following comments by Jonathan Edwards, who lived in the eighteenth century. He supposedly was a preacher who was part of the Great Awakening Movement. Jonathan Edwards was a Sunday-keeping Trinitarian who believed in eternal hell. What you are going to read clearly illustrates that what we believe effects the way we view our God and how we view ourselves and others. Edwards is speaking to the sinner in the congregation:

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath toward you burns like fire. He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. He is of pure eyes and cannot bear to have you in His sight. You are ten thousand times more abominable in His eyes than the most hateful, venomous serpent is in ours. Oh sinner, consider the fearful danger you are in. It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit full of the fire of wrath that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed so much against you as against the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder, and you have no interest in any Mediator and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep you off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you have ever done, nothing that you can do to induce God to spare you one moment." (Sermon entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.")

Once I saw a sign that said, "The Father Condemns But Jesus Saves." I am glad that Jesus saves, but the Father and the Son are not at odds in the plan of redemption. God is not vengeful, waiting to throw us into a bottomless pit, dangling us, as a cruel person would an insect, over a flame. That, friends, is pagan/papal thinking.

I was speaking with an individual at one time about the issue of eternal hell, and I said, "Do you really believe that someone who has lived a mostly righteous life trying to please God is really worthy of burning forever and forever?" The curt response was, "Yes, they deserve it! They should get it!" It seemed like this individual wanted the sinner to burn in hell forever, that he would find joy in watching the flames and smoke arise! Do you know why? Because that is the way he perceives God to be. He has been worshipping a tyrannical God and that is the way he was becoming. I want to tell you, friends, it is greatly important for us to understand what God is really like and that He is not a vengeful God. He is a

God of justice, true. The Bible is full of His justice, but beloved, He is a merciful and gracious God. He has proven His love to us in His desire not just to overlook our guilt but to remove it. Notice the way E. J. Waggoner of 1888 fame explains this:

And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. This is God's name. It is the character in which He reveals Himself to man, the light in which He wishes men to regard Him. But what of the declaration that He "will by no means clear the guilty"? That is perfectly in keeping with His longsuffering, abundant goodness and His passing by the transgression of His people. It is true that God will by no means clear the guilty. He could not do that and still be a just God. But He does something which is far better. He removes the guilt, so that the one formerly guilty does not need to be cleared—he is justified and counted as though he never had sinned. (*Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 64)

Some of you know that Hans is my son and that a little more than six years ago he was very sick. He had developed cancer and we were told he would die in a couple of weeks. Our hearts were just broken. This was the son of my hope, the son of my life. My life was bound up in the child perhaps as Abraham's was in Isaac, and to be told that he wasn't going to live overwhelmed me. I prayed and I prayed, and I asked God, "Lord, I know You don't usually work this way, but if You would take my life and spare his, I am more than willing to do that." Maybe I had intellectually thought through what Hans meant to me before this, I am sure we all think those things at one time or another, but I am not sure I really understood what was involved until I was brought face-to-face with the probability of his imminent death. His preciousness helped me to understand God's love for humanity in giving His Son, and it helps me share this love with other people better. My favorite bumper sticker says, "God so loved the world that He didn't send a committee." Friends, think about it. What would we have done had we been the Father? We might have drawn up some unwise plan, or we might have just torched the earth entirely to be rid of those rebellious, evil people and then made everything all new again, but God loved us too much friends. He emptied all of heaven in the gift of His Son. There is nothing in this world, nothing, that could come remotely close to the love that I have for my son and daughter. I know that God loves me and He loves you, and He is not trying to hurt us. It is not His joy to dangle us as a little loathsome insect over the fire, just waiting to drop us in. That is not God at all, that is not the God of the Bible, it is the god of Babylon.

## God's Measureless Forgiveness

Micah asks a question in Chapter 7, verse 18: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." Mercy is something that none of us deserve, but because of God's great love, He offers it to us. The 103<sup>rd</sup> Psalm has taken on new light to me since I have been a parent and especially a parent of children that have been very sick at times. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." (v. 11) How high is heaven? The Bible speaks of different heavens. There is the first heaven that we call our atmosphere, it is several miles high. The second heaven includes the stars and is infinite. Verse 12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." A compass will tell us how to position ourselves so as to head north. You can follow that compass and it will take you to magnetic north, and it will do it faithfully, but it will only go so far and then it will start acting a little funny, because once you get to the North Pole it becomes erratic. But upon arriving at the North Pole, what direction will you start heading? South. The only way you can go when you get to the North Pole is south because, friends, you are at the top and that is as far as it goes. And, if you go all the way down to Antarctica and to the South Pole, what direction will you head next? That's right, north. There is only so far that you can go until you start back-tracking. Now, if you were to fly the shortest distance from the United States to Africa, you would fly from west to east. I could also fly westward and come back around, but I could continue to fly east or west as long as I wanted to and the direction would never end. Now, the Lord knew this planet was a sphere long before men ever understood that. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (v. 12) He is saying there is no end to His mercy. If you are a parent, think about how you love and pity your children. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him." (v. 13)

God's mercy is so great toward us. Let us go back to Micah and see how He demonstrates and exhibits this mercy. "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19) Friends, He gives compassion to us by showing us forgiveness! Do we need forgiveness? The Bible says that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) In the beginning, God created mankind to have dominion over this earth, but then sin tragically entered in and today we all suffer as a result of that sin in one degree or another. God knows far well how sinful we are and sometimes we might not like to read all the things He says in the Bible about us being sinners and the depravity that we have as human beings, but He knows that we need to comprehend our need so that we will look for the cure. He tells us very eloquently and very plainly in the third



chapter of Romans that, “we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) He says “there is none that doeth good, no, not one,” (v. 12) but the Bible says that God has made a plan whereby all of our sins can be forgiven. He has made a plan whereby that which was lost in the Garden of Eden can be and will be fully restored.

In 1 John 1:7 we read of God’s desire to accomplish this. “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.*” Well, maybe I don’t believe the Bible. Maybe I just can’t trust the Bible. Maybe God is not telling me the full truth. Is He? Well, we’d better be able to know He is, because if we can’t trust the Bible, if we can’t trust Him, then we don’t have anything to build upon. But we can trust Him and His Word when He says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (vs. 8, 9)

Jesus says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4) The Lord Jesus Christ says that every word of God is important, so don’t contradict Him and say that we can leave a word out here or there, because we can’t leave any words out. They are there for a reason, and there is a word that is used in verses 7 and 9 of 1 John chapter 1 that is extremely important and that word is “all.” God wants us to know that He will forgive and cleanse us of *all sin*.

### Justification Illustrated

Let’s notice an illustration that Jesus gave in a parable about this in Luke 18. “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” (vs. 9-12) The first time that I really read this as a very young Christian, I thought, “That’s a pretty good deal. I should be like this Pharisee.” I don’t want to be an extortioner or robber. None of us want to be unjust or an adulterer. Fasting twice a week is good! Health reform is important. I believe tithing is important. These aren’t bad things, are they? The Pharisee didn’t say anything that was bad, but what he was doing wrong was trusting that this is what was going to help him. He was trusting that these things were going to save him or make him righteous.

A publican was a tax collector and they were not any more popular in the time of Christ than tax collectors are today. “And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” (v. 13) And Jesus said the result was, “I tell you, this man [the publican] went down to his house justified rather than the other.” (v. 14)

Interestingly, the word translated “righteous” in the Greek is δικαιοσ – *dikaioσ*. The verb form of this word is translated “justified” in verse 14. In verse 9 we simply have the noun form of the word and in verse 14 we have the verb form. So when it says he was “justified,” it means he was made “righteous.” So, in verse 9 when it says that he spake this parable to those who trusted that they were righteous of themselves, He says he spake this parable for those who thought they could justify themselves. He tells us plainly that we cannot justify ourselves. He says, “I tell you, that his man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (v. 14) Friends, a proud spirit is something God cannot work with and He has to cure us of that. He has to humble us. He *can* cure us of being proud, but if we remain proud, we cannot develop the character of God because the God of the Bible is humble.

Now, let us briefly look at a few texts in the third chapter of Romans. The name Seventh-day Adventist implies, in part, that we believe in the seventh-day Sabbath. We believe that there is something special about that day, something so special that our obedience is useful and pleasing to God. We really take a lot of interest in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation, particularly verse 12, which mentions the patience of the saints and those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Now notice what Paul says in Romans 3:20. He has just given us a very clear demonstration that we are all sinners, that we have all done wrong and cannot of ourselves approach God, and then he says, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Now you say, “That is not all the texts. There are other texts to consider,” and we will read some of them now. It is true this is not all the Bible says about this issue, but anything that we read cannot contradict what this plainly says. It will complement and/or enlarge it, but it will not contradict what it says. The Bible says that the deeds of the law will justify no flesh—not mine, not yours, not anyone’s. So notice Paul goes on to say, “But now.” I like the word “now” in times like these, because friends, I need some encouragement *now*. I need help now, don’t you? Verse 21 states, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested [made known], being witnessed by the law and the prophets.” It is a righteousness that is so good that even the law and the prophets will attest that it is the genuine thing. “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *Being justified freely by his grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (vs. 22-24) The Bible tells us how we are made righteous. We receive righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ.

This may sound too good to be true. Surely, I must learn to keep the Sabbath better, and keep the Sabbath longer, and do all the other things in the law to be justified in God’s eyes.

Surely this must be so, “For the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23) God’s judgment is there; His warnings and entreaties are there. Friends, a day is coming when all sin will be eradicated from the universe *forever* and that is good news. I am tired of living here in the miry pit of sin, filth, wickedness, and decay. I can’t read my Bible today without my glasses and that is a little disturbing. I am tired of sin and its consequences. I am tired of the murders, rapings, and great wickedness of this world. I am tired of all of this and God is going to put an end to it. Beloved, if we will allow Jesus to cleanse us from all of our sin, we can live forever with Him, but if we refuse to allow Him to cleanse us, if we hold onto self, we will perish with it. The Bible describes this as a “strange act” for Him, for He does not delight in it at all. But He is going to have a clean universe, and even those who will finally be destroyed will acknowledge, before their destruction, that Jesus Christ is righteous and that He “is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:11) Friends, I want to be inside the city, not outside of it. “For the wages of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23) It is a gift.

### **The Gift of Righteousness**

We all like to receive gifts occasionally. How much did you pay for the last gift you received? It is not a gift if you have to pay anything for it. It is only a gift if it comes to you freely, without strings attached or without some kind of responsibility. God graciously offers the gift of righteousness to us. Romans 5:17 says: “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the *gift* of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” Verse 16 also speaks about it being a gift and the last part of this verse says it is a free gift. In the first part of verse 15 Paul speaks of the “free gift” and “the gift by grace.” Beloved, it is time that we start to test God with His Word. Ask Him if it is really true, because friends, if what we just read is not true, if these promises in God’s Word really don’t mean what they say, I may as well quit preaching, keep all my own money and eat, drink, and be merry, because there is nothing else. But, there is something else and it is right there in your Bible. It is the free gift of righteousness. How do you receive it? You receive it by accepting Jesus, by asking Him to come into your life. You receive it, friends, by confessing your sins and giving them to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a righteousness that is even witnessed and testified to by the law and the prophets. (Romans 3:21)

### **The Example of Paul**

Now, if there was ever a man that could have something to brag about, something to say about his own righteousness, something that he could profess that did something good for him or made him something special of himself, I think it would be the Apostle Paul. I read about Peter. Sometimes he was bold, sometimes he was presumptuous and sometimes a coward. I read about John, the disciple whom Jesus loved,

and sometimes I think if I could just be half as good as any of them, how wonderful it would be, but in my estimation none of them measured up to Paul. Paul went through so much and he suffered greatly for Jesus and he did it so willingly. When he went to Jerusalem, and he was counseled not to go (but I am not sure he fully understood the situation), he realized that the man who wore the belt that was his was going to be bound and put into prison, but he loved Christ so much that even if he was going to be put into prison or die, that was okay, and we know that all the apostles, save John, did die a martyr’s death. In Philippians 3 Paul speaks of his ancestry. Every one of the Hebrews could trace their ancestry back to Adam and Paul knew his ancestry. In verse 5 he says he was “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.” He may as well have said, “I was a conservative, historic, Seventh-day Adventist pastor.” He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” (vs. 6, 7) Friends, it doesn’t matter what our background is or where we have come from. It means nothing. “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” (v. 8) He says, “This means nothing. I’ve left all this behind, so that I can have Jesus Christ. Verse 9 beautifully states: “And be found in him [in Jesus], not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” You may be thinking by now, “Brother Allen, doesn’t God use obedience to develop character?” He does. Absolutely He does, but friends, it is not the basis of our justification. It is not the basis of our assurance with Christ. If we begin to think our obedience is going to bring justification to us, that it is somehow going to bring the assurance to us that we are now better in God’s sight, we have a huge misconception of the law of God because we would have to think the law of God is of such a low standard that our performance can come up to it and atone for what we have done wrong. But friends, this can’t be. God’s law is too high, it is too holy, and you and I could try to give it perfect obedience for a billion years and we could never atone for what we have already done wrong. I could never do that, and God knows that and Paul knew that, and he realized that the righteousness that we have comes only by Jesus Christ.

### **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

This is why in Jeremiah 23:6 that Jesus is referred to as “THE LORD *OUR* RIGHTEOUSNESS.” We need His righteousness, our own is not good enough. He offers to clothe us with His righteousness. In Isaiah 64:6 we read a verse familiar to us but sometimes some of the most familiar verses are the

least obeyed, the least dwelt upon, and the least considered, but notice what is said: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” The English translations state this a little more discreetly than the Hebrew. The Hebrew says all of our righteousnesses are as a menstrual garment, and I suppose that is something most of us would find repulsive, but he says that is what our righteousnesses are like. Friends, our righteousness means nothing. We must be clothed with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. He offers to do that for us so freely. He wants to do it for us, and friends, if we don’t believe that, if we have not had that personal encounter with Christ, how can we have any assurance of our own salvation and how can we go out and tell others the good news. If you want to know why we are such a sleepy, dormant, timid, and backward church, why we are a church that is so timid and backward, friends, it is because we don’t believe what we teach! We have failed to trust the Lord, but the Bible says, and we read it, that He is faithful. “He is faithful that promised.” (Hebrews 10:23) So, friends, I have the assurance that He is and has been faithful to me and I do not apologize for my testimony. I am glad to tell other people about God’s goodness to me and what He has done for me and I am glad that I can share the experience. If you can’t do this, you have a critical problem.

### God’s Amazing Offer

Do you remember Rehoboam, the son of Solomon? As the new king, Rehoboam decided he was going to ramrod his program through. He was going to show the people how tough he was. He was going to get his own way and, of course, it backfired against him greatly. God doesn’t work like Rehoboam. He makes an amazing offer in Isaiah 1:18: “Come now, and let us reason together.” God is a reasonable God. He is not going to try to force this on us, but He says, “We can reason about this and it is worthy of reason, and I am willing to reason with you.” Now, it astounds me that the great God of heaven is willing to come down and reason with a worm like me. It is amazing. Who am I? I am a sinner. God knows I’m a sinner and yet He still says, “Allen, I want to reason with you about this. Though you have done everything wrong, though you have rebelled against Me and have been so defiant that you even went so far at one time to question My existence and to try to put that idea in other people’s minds, I still love you and I want you in My kingdom.” He says, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet [and they are], they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” That is a *magnificent offer* today, friends; it is one that we can never, ever improve upon.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1) We are justified by faith, not by works and not by faith and works,

but by faith. Sometimes we want peace so badly, and one of the fruit of the Spirit is peace, but friends, it doesn’t come until we come to God. We think, “God, if You will just give me peace in my life, I will come to You, I will serve You, and I will be Your child.” But beloved, it doesn’t work that way. We have to become God’s child first, and then the Holy Spirit brings peace, and friends, there is an abundance of peace available because we have an abundance of grace. There is an abundance of goodness in the Lord for us and He offers it to us freely. We are justified by faith, believing in God’s goodness toward us.

Most parents teach their children not to track mud inside the home. But if my child picks a flower for me and unknowingly tracks mud all over the rug or the floor, how should I, as a parent, react? Maybe the obedience wasn’t perfect, but I know what they were trying to do. In their *heart* they wanted to please me, and that can only make me happy, and friends, God is happy when we want to please Him. He says in Deuteronomy 5:29: “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always.” That is what He wants in us and we can have that heart as we behold His love for us. The Bible says that we love Him because He first loved us, and He demonstrated that love in giving His Son for us.

### Faith In Jesus Christ Alone

“For ye are all the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26) Are we the children of God because of what we can do in our own works? No, we are not God’s children by our own works or our own righteousness but by faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone.

Please notice what Paul wrote to Titus: “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish.” (Titus 3:3) Have you ever played the fool? How many times? I have done some foolish things that I am not proud of today, but the Bible says: “For we ourselves also were sometimes [that is in the past] foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers [or different] lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.” (vs. 3, 4) You see, friends, even though we have lived in wickedness and sin, God showed His love to us and then something happened. It changed our lives, and it says that after this, “the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us.” (vs. 5, 6) I hope we are all praying for the latter rain, but whatever this text means, we still need more of it. “Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (vs. 6, 7) Now friends, it is not just simply an heir that we are, but there is more.



Notice the following stupendous revelation that Paul shares with us: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then *heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.*” (Romans 8:16, 17) To be a joint-heir means to be equal. We are equal heirs with Christ. God loves us so much that He will make us joint heirs with Christ! Do you know why He can do that? Because, friends, He loves each one of us like He loves Jesus Christ!

You could never use human reason or logic to convince me of what we have just stated except that Jesus Himself said it. I know it is true, but to understand how it can be true, I confess, I don’t know. Notice what Jesus says in John 17:23, for it is important. Please read this carefully, mediate upon it and let it be food for thought. “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and *hast loved them, as thou has loved me.*” I can understand if someone doesn’t like me, for I am not very likeable it is true and I have done a lot of things that are wrong, but this text tells me that my God loves me just like He loves Jesus Christ. I can’t explain this, I can’t understand this kind of love, but I can accept it. This love will produce love in my heart and in your heart too! The Bible says that God wants to bless you. Jesus doesn’t want you to sleep upon your bed tonight not knowing if He is your personal Saviour or not. Accepting Jesus is not the end of the process. It is the beginning of God’s work in and for you. Acts 3:26 says, “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” God wants to bless you. Friends, He accepts us where we are at, but He doesn’t want to leave us there. He loves you, but He doesn’t want to leave you in your sinful state. I know for a fact that too many of us are not spiritually where it has been our privilege to be. I have not been where it has been my privilege to be and I know it may be that way for you too. If you have a different testimony, then praise God for that. Friends, He wants to turn us away from our sins. He wants a heart that is willing to be made willing, a heart full of willing obedience, not a heart of stubbornness or rebellion or hatred or envy or malice.

Friends, when we understand the humble origin of what we are, when we understand what God has had to do to bring about our salvation, it should break our hearts. What He has done for me I can’t begin to explain, and friends, I don’t deserve any credit for being His servant. I say this humbly. I acknowledge and recognize that some believers recognize me as a minister and recognize me even as a leader in this movement, but I haven’t done anything worthy or deserving to be a leader in any way, shape, or form. I haven’t done anything, friends, to boast or brag about. Nothing! But God has done everything that is worthy of boasting about. God has done everything that is worth bragging about.

## Joint-Heirs with Christ

Notice what Paul says in Ephesians 2: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened [or made us alive] us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (vs. 4-6) We are going to be joint-heirs with Christ. We are going to sit together with Christ in heavenly places. It is a wonderful privilege, isn’t it? The Bible says He has done this. Why? So we can exalt ourselves? So we can look good? No, but so “That in the ages to come [for all eternity] he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (v. 7)

## God’s Trophies

When I was in Poland a few years ago, some brethren graciously took me to a castle. This was a very old and huge castle that had walls three and four feet thick in places and maybe even thicker at the base. Someone who worked at the castle took it upon herself to let us see a little bit of the castle that most people don’t normally see on tour. One of the parts of the castle we were able to see was the “Trophy Room.” This was a place where guests of the castle could view the wild game, furs, and stuffed carcasses that had been the prey of the princes or the nobles who had lived in the castle. There was a bear, a wolf, different pheasants, and many other kinds of animals. The lord or noble would bring his friends in and show them all the trophies to depict what a great hunter he was and how great his prowess was. Friends, in the ages to come, God will use us to showcase the great love and mercy He shed upon us through Jesus Christ. Isn’t that beautiful? It will not be to show how good we were or the great things that we did. The Scripture goes on to tell us why God has the right to take the credit. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (vs. 8, 9) I can’t boast about anything, except to boast in the Lord, because He is my righteousness, and friends, if you are going to have any righteousness, it has to be in Jesus alone. There is no other place. Christ’s righteousness is not a righteousness that leaves us where we are at. God sent Jesus to bless us and to *turn us away from our sins.*

## You Can Know You Have Eternal Life

We need to know, and can know, that we are accepted in the beloved not because of the works we do, but because of what Jesus has done for us. Someone asked me, “How sure are you of this message you are preaching?” I am so sure that I am willing to wager my eternal existence. I am willing to put on the line my wife’s, my children’s, and all of your eternal existences for what I am teaching, for the messages I am preaching week-by-week, that we are writing month-by-month in our newsletters, and in the tracts and booklets we publish. I am willing to put the eternal life of

every person that I can influence or have a say-so with on the line. That is how sure I am. Friends, you need to have that assurance and surety. There is no one who reads this that needs to wonder, if they were to die now, would Jesus accept them? Would they be safe with Him?

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” (1 John 5:10) First of all, do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Do you believe that He gave His Son for you? Do you believe God’s Word is true? “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (vs. 11, 12) Friends, I have presented these things to you that you can know that you have eternal life right now. John says, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that *ye may know that ye have eternal life*, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.” (vs. 13, 14) Friends, it is His will for you to have salvation! It is His will for you, right now, to have that assurance, so that you don’t have to be wondering and playing church. We must not *play* church. Whether you are young, old, or maybe even a minister, if you have been playing church, it is time to quit and quit right now. Remember what we read in Romans? “But *now* the righteousness of God.” It has come to us *now* and we don’t need to let anything stand between us and Jesus.

A sister recently testified that she was brought to an experience to do something that she knew was right, but she couldn’t bring herself to do it. Then she came to the place where the Lord spoke to her heart and said, “But, do you *love* Me?” This sister was then able to do the right thing and what she was too weak in the flesh to do, even though she knew it was right, she was able to do empowered by the Spirit because she loved the Lord. Friends, we have so much reason to love the Lord for He has done so much for us. You can give your hearts to Him right now, and if there is something that has been standing between you and Him, maybe an unhealthy habit of some kind or perhaps a selfish motive or desire, whatever it is, it doesn’t have to stand between you and the Lord. It can be cast aside. The Bible says that we can cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us. (1 Peter 5:7) We can give our cares to Jesus and we can know that He loves us.


### Faith not Feelings or Performance

“We can be assured that we shall receive the Holy Spirit if we individually try the experiment of testing God’s Word.” (*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 207) Friends, here is something you can test God’s Word on now. You can test Him on His faithfulness to you, and on the peace and the assurance you can have right now. You may not feel differently. I want to make it clear that you may not feel differently after you pray,

but salvation is not based upon feelings and it is not based on performance. Salvation is not based on your feelings, especially a feeling of whether God has accepted you or not and it is not based upon your performance. Do you know why? Because the better your performance gets, the more unlikely you will *feel* you have any assurance, because the truth is, the closer we come to Jesus, the more unworthy we are going to feel and the less righteous we will seem in our own eyes.

None of the apostles and prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ. So will it be with all who behold Christ. The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone and shall make the apostle’s confession our own: ‘I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.’ ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.’ Romans 7:18; Galatians 6:14. (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561)

So, if by God’s grace I experience Christian growth, and I then base my assurance on feelings, I am actually going to *feel* like I have less basis of assurance than I had before. The closer I get to Jesus, the more acutely aware I become of my sinfulness and unworthiness. Our assurance with God cannot be based upon our performance. It has to be based on what God’s Word says, and God’s Word says that He accepts us. (John 6:37) May nothing come between us and the Savior.

Friends, I have tasted and I know that the Lord is good. I appeal to you if you do not have that assurance do not rest until you have it. We are going to be continuing this theme for the next three issues and I pray that in the coming articles we will have the opportunity to clearly understand what the Lord wants to do for us and how much He loves us. If you don’t have the assurance that you know you belong to Jesus, I want you to give your heart to Him right now. “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.” (1 John 5:14) 

---

“Prayer Requests” continued from page 1.

Please also keep Brother Beachy’s meetings and travels in your prayers while he and his family are on the road teaching God’s Word and encouraging the brethren as mentioned on page 8. . . . . **Editor**



# Upcoming Meetings in Your Area

By Lynnford Beachy

One day “Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do... And he went... **confirming** [to strengthen more, to render more firm—*Thayer’s*] the churches.” (Acts 15:36-41) As a result of Paul’s trip, the Bible says, “And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.” (Acts 16:5)

If there was ever a time when the churches need encouragement and strengthening, it is today. Satan seems to be working overtime to destroy God’s people, “because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” (Revelation 12:12)

People write or call very often seeking for fellowship with like-minded believers. I recently received an e-mail, and the subject line read, “I need to fellowship with true believers.” Another e-mail read, “Please pray for me to find a fellowship where the brethren are worshipping God in spirit and in truth.” Another e-mail had the title, “I need Encouragement,” and continued by requesting fellowship with like-minded believers. Another man wrote, “Do you know of any other believers in my area?” A woman wrote, “I long to be with other believers...”

This is just a small sample of the the requests for fellowship we receive by phone, letter, and e-mail. There are many dear brothers and sisters around the world who are isolated from other believers and who are in need of fellowship and encouragement.

For several years my wife and I have been considering doing more extensive traveling to visit some of these brethren and encourage them in their walk with the Lord. We have three young children so there are challenges involved, but apparently some of the apostles brought their families with them on their missionary journeys. (1 Corinthians 9:5) We are praying about purchasing a converted bus to help accommodate our family on these travels. Our goal is to take a month-long trip, approximately every other month, to visit different regions in the United States, encouraging and strengthening the brethren, with West Virginia as our home-base.


The reason I am bringing all of this to your attention is to let you know of the possibility of holding meetings in your area in the near future. Currently we have plans to make a southeastern trip in February. A northeastern trip is planned in May. If

you live in any of the areas listed below and are interested in either attending or hosting meetings in your area, please contact me for scheduling. My cell phone service is with Cingular, so I have unlimited calling to other Cingular customers at any time at no additional cost, and I have unlimited calling to all others within the U.S. between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. and all day on Sabbath and Sunday. Please call Smyrna Gospel Ministries, (304) 732-9204, to obtain my new cell-phone number.

We plan to post our schedule and location on our website, [www.presenttruth.info](http://www.presenttruth.info), and in our newsletters so we can maximize the attendance of meetings and visit as many people as possible in a specific area. I will still be heavily involved in writing and the publishing work, much of which I can do on a laptop from anywhere.

Here is the planned itinerary for February and May:

- January 28** . . . . . **Roan Mountain, TN**, contact Malcolm McCrillis, 423-772-3161.
- Jan. 31-Feb. 1** . . . . . **Nashville, TN**, contact DeeDee Herrman, 615-859-2527.
- February 3, 4** . . . . . **Collegedale, TN**, contact David Adkins, 423-635-6605.
- February 10, 11** . . . **Jemison, Alabama**, contact Walter Kohler, 334-366-4317.
- February 13, 14** . . . **Phenix City, AL** (Near Columbus, GA)
- February 17, 18** . . . **Pensacola, FL**, contact Chaplain Jack VanOrd, 850-458-5549.
- February 22-26** . . . **Florida Camp Meeting**, contact Jim or Jerri Raymond, 407-291-9565.
- March 3, 4** . . . . . **Charleston, SC**, contact Jerry Zuk, 843-832-2206.
- May 5, 6** . . . . . **Southern New Jersey**, contact Kevin and Judy Schmidt, 609-390-1574.
- May 10-13** . . . . . **Southern Maine**, contact Mervin and Rose Marie Shoemaker, 207-892-2338.
- May 15-18** . . . . . **Upstate New York**, contact Marvin Ford, 315-845-8519.
- May 19, 20** . . . . . **Hamilton, Canada** (near Toronto), contact Paul Falconbridge, 905-561-4071.
- May 26, 27** . . . . . **Northwestern Pennsylvania**
- June 2, 3** . . . . . **Cleveland, Ohio**, contact Willis Smith, 216-271-9045.

**Between meetings we will be available to visit people in their homes and have additional meetings. Check upcoming issues of *Present Truth* (also available at [www.presenttruth.info](http://www.presenttruth.info)) and *Old Paths* to keep informed about these meetings and others in your area.** 



**Typical type of bus we are praying for.**

**Note: Brother David Sims will be holding meetings in central Arkansas, along with Brother Fred Skucy, on Sabbath, March 4, 2006. If you are interested in attending, please contact Fred, 501-745-5659, or John Mark Brown, 501-681-8370.**

# Seek First the Kingdom of God

By Mrs. E. G. White.

*(While reading this article recently I was impressed with its timely content and almost every line jumped out at me as something pertinent and worthy of printing, especially since it does not appear to have ever been reprinted in its entirety since it was first published in the Review and Herald on January 24, 31, and February 7, 1893. As I was reading I wanted to use my highlighter on almost every line. I have highlighted some choice thoughts in this reprint but have refrained from highlighting everything that was meaningful to me..... Editor)*

“Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” The Lord Jesus will scrutinize every talent, and expect interest in proportion to the amount of capital intrusted. By his own humiliation and agony, Christ has paid the purchase money for our salvation, and he has a right to our services. **The very name of servant implies the doing of work, the bearing of responsibility.** All our capabilities, all our opportunities, have been intrusted to us for wise improvement, that Christ may receive his own with usury. The heavenly Master ascended on high, and led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men,—divine treasures of truth to be presented to all the world. **What use are we individually making of these gifts, the talents in our hands?** Are we like the unwise and unfaithful servant, burying these talents in the world, where they will bring no returns to God? **It behooves all with careful fidelity to improve the talents intrusted to them; for talents will increase as they are used for the good of humanity and the glory of God.**

Every soul should seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. **We are not to use up all the strength of brain, bone, and muscle in worldly business interests; for if we do, we imperil our spiritual interests, and we shall lose an eternity of bliss.** The whole unfallen universe is interested in the great work which Jesus came to our world to accomplish, even the salvation of our souls. **And shall not man on earth co-operate with our Redeemer, who has ascended into heaven to make intercession for us?** Shall we show no special zeal, no devoted interest, in the work that was devised in heaven to be carried forward in the world for the good of men? Shall we who have been bought with the precious blood of Christ refuse to do the work left in our hands,—refuse to co-operate with the heavenly agencies in the work of saving the fallen? Shall we not go even to the ends of the earth to let the light of truth given to us of heaven shine forth to our fellow-men?

**We are to be diligent workers; an idle man is a miserable creature.** But what excuse can be offered for idleness in the great work which Christ gave his life to accomplish? **The**

**spiritual faculties cease to exist if they are not exercised, and it is Satan’s design that they shall perish.** All heaven is actively engaged in the work of preparing a people for the second coming of Christ to our world, and “we are laborers together with God.” The end of all things is at hand. Now is our opportunity to work. “The night cometh, in which no man can work.” We should proclaim Christ and him crucified, thus preparing the way for his second appearing. **Lift him up, the Man of Calvary.** Place yourselves where you may receive heavenly inspiration and be able to point the weary, the heavy-laden, the brokenhearted, the perplexed soul, to Jesus, the source of all spiritual strength. **Be faithful ministers, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.** With pen and voice proclaim that Jesus lives to make intercession for us. Unite with the great Master-worker, follow the self-denying Redeemer through his pilgrimage of love on earth. The same Jesus that walked with his disciples, that taught them upon earth, that toiled and suffered in his human nature, is with us in his divine power. **He is at our right hand to help in every emergency.** Let us lift up Jesus, and reveal the Bible foundation for our faith. We are all to proclaim the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. **Jesus came to magnify the law, and make it honorable. He died to exalt the law of God, testifying of its changeless character;** and as we proclaim God’s law, we may look unto Jesus and be comforted with the assurance, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Satan is now working with all his insinuating, deceiving power, to lead men away from the work of the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with mighty power. **When the enemy sees that the Lord is blessing his people, and preparing them to discern his delusions, he will work with his masterly power to bring in fanaticism on one hand and cold formalism on the other, that he may gather in a harvest of souls.** Now is the time to watch unceasingly. Watch for the first step of advance that Satan may make among us.

There are dangers to be guarded against on the right hand and on the left. Those who are inexperienced, who have newly come to the faith, will need to be strengthened, and to have a correct example set before them. **Some will not make a right use of the doctrine of justification by faith. They will present it in a one-sided manner, making everything of faith, and belittling works.** Others will seize the points that have a leaning toward error, and will ignore works altogether. Now, **genuine faith always works by love; it supplies a motive power. Faith is not an opiate, but a stimulant.** Looking to Calvary will not quiet your soul into nonperformance of duty, but will create faith that will work, purifying the soul from all selfishness. In laying hold of Christ by faith, we but just

begin our work. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits, that must be overcome through vigorous warfare. Every soul must fight the fight of faith. He who is a follower of Christ, cannot deal deceitfully; he cannot be hard-hearted and devoid of sympathy. He cannot be coarse in speech. He cannot be a surmiser of evil, an accuser of the brethren. He cannot be full of pomposity and self-esteem. He cannot be overbearing, using harsh words, and censuring and condemning those around him.

The labor of love springs from the work of faith. You are to “let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” We are to “be zealous of good works;” “be careful to maintain good works.” And the True Witness says, “I know thy works.” While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves insure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity; and good fruit, which is good works, will be the result of faith.

Those who have no time to give attention to their own souls, to examine themselves daily whether they be in the love of God, and to place themselves in the channel of light, will have time to give to the suggestions of Satan, and the working out of his plans. Satan will insinuate himself little by little, until he can have a controlling influence on the soul, and induce men gradually to adopt worldly policy. The specious devices of Satan will be brought to make of none effect the special work of God at this time.

There are men who are careless in regard to the spirit which they carry with them in their business. They hide their light under a bushel. They say, Religion is religion, business is business. But all our work in this world, even in a business line, is God’s work, and should be done with a heart full of his love, and of heavenly enlightenment. But if we need the heavenly enlightenment in business employments in the world, how much more do we need his grace and help in the business especially connected with his precious cause. There must be no coldness, no formality, no deadness in his work. The hardness of heart that is manifest in business lines among us as a people, is an offense to God.

Men connected with our institutions in responsible position are intrusted with sacred interests, and they cannot be safe men unless they make God their trust every moment, unless they are men of earnest prayer and fervent piety, in their home life, in the work appointed them, in all their business. There is danger that these men will cheat their souls by neglecting to receive the ever-present help of the Holy Spirit, because they have not a true sense of their own weakness. They fail to become channels of light, and if they will continue to be devoid of light, they will fail of the eternal blessedness hereafter. No one can stand safely in a neutral position.

The workers in our institutions need the divine endowment daily. But instead of drawing nearer to God when they accept positions of trust, many think they have so much to do, that they cannot attend religious meetings, and their voices are seldom heard in the congregation of the saints. They act as if they were now so far advanced that they needed not to engage in fervent prayer to God. They do not feel their constant need of education and training in the school of Christ, that they may learn his meekness and lowliness of heart, and they become lifted up in self. Traits of character are manifested by them which are unchristlike. They must be transformed, or they will do harm; for with these unchristlike characteristics they are not qualified for the place. They need to bring their powers under the control of the Spirit of God, that they may realize the necessity of seeking spiritual help, of “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Those who desire wisdom from God, who wish to follow Jesus at every step, will seek for the light, and it will shine in their hearts. “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.”

Satan is constantly at work to wound and poison the soul. In order to withstand his efforts, we must breathe the atmosphere of heaven. We must individually get hold and keep hold of Christ. The truth of God, dwelling in the heart, and guiding the life, will be our safeguard. With the truth in our possession, we may humbly and firmly advance from light to a greater light, and we shall be guided into every good and holy way. Unless the truth of God transforms the character, it is of no value to the receiver. Those who are in earnest about the future life, will not neglect the opportunities within their reach in this life. They will not only place themselves with the learners of the truth, but will feel that they are under obligation to God to learn all that is possible for them to know of spiritual and heavenly things; they will carry every matter in prayer to God.

Coming nigh to God inspires confidence, and stimulates the soul to action. The body would die if deprived of suitable nourishment, and so with the soul; in order to have spiritual strength, or even life, it must be nourished by the word, which is spirit and life. It must be constantly fed by the truth, which connects the soul with Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Every man in a responsible position needs the sunbeams of Christ’s righteousness constantly to illuminate his soul, or his course will do much harm. Every person who is in a position to command, needs to come as often as possible into association with the worshiping assemblies, that he may be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere, and have greater depth of experience in divine things.

To keep your soul in the love of God you must place yourselves in the channel of light, and breathe in a holy



atmosphere; for through neglect of any means of grace which God has ordained to impart spiritual strength and grace, you bring blindness upon your souls, and hardness into your hearts, and Satan will lead you to look at things in a perverted light. If you have no respect for the messages which God sends you by his chosen servants, what power has he in reserve that will reach your case and correct your errors, so that you shall not be led into false paths? The garden of your heart must be cultivated. The poisonous, Satanic plants must be uprooted, the soil must be prepared, thoroughly plowed by the word of God, and the precious seeds of truth must be sown and tended by a wise, skillful gardener.

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” The parable of the man from whom an evil spirit had been cast out, who did not fill the soul with the love of Christ, illustrates the necessity of not only emptying the heart, but of supplying the vacuum with a divine occupant. The demon desired to return to the heart from which he had been expelled. He came, and though it was swept and garnished, he found it still empty, and entered in with seven other spirits more evil than himself, so that the last state of the man was worse than the first. The man in this parable refused to do the work of Satan; but the trouble with him was that after the heart was swept and garnished, he failed to invite the presence of the heavenly guests. It is not enough to make the heart empty; we must have the vacuum filled with the love of God. The soul must be furnished with the graces of the Spirit of God. We may leave off many bad habits, and yet not be truly sanctified, because we do not have a connection with God. We must unite with Christ. There is a reservoir of power at our command, and we are not to remain in the dark, cold, sunless cave of unbelief; or we shall not catch the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

To be a Christian requires more than a profession of faith. There must be an earnest effort to conquer through the grace freely given of God. All things around us must be made to be helps to growth in grace and the knowledge of Christ. Satan, the great rebel, is ever seeking to entice us to sin against God. He will introduce false imaginings, and sway the understanding against the revealed will of God, the lower passions against purity and self-denial, the independent judgment against God’s decisions, the wisdom from beneath against the wisdom from above. But the Holy Spirit has come into the world to subdue all things unto himself, and shall God’s will be put in the background, and man’s will be held as supreme? Can man’s will be the controlling power in God’s great contest for the recovery of his own?—No, for those who are laborers together with God must have the mind of

Christ, and work with pen and voice in the Spirit of Christ to meet wrong tendencies, to correct errors, that have been coming in among us. The truth must no longer be kept in the outer court, but be brought into the inner sanctuary of the soul. The religion of Christ requires not only the putting away of pride, malice, covetousness, injustice, but the cultivation of the precious graces of humility, unselfishness, kindness, love, generosity, and nobility of soul. The Christian should be constantly aspiring, pressing on from grace to grace, from faith to a greater faith, from glory to a greater glory.

We shall have to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Because finite men do not comprehend the power and greatness of God, science, falsely so-called, and religion will be placed in opposition to each other, and “of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” There will be among us those who will so blind their eyes that they will fail to perceive the most wonderful and important truths for this time. Truths which are essential to the safety and salvation of men will be set aside, while ideas that are in comparison to the truth as the merest atoms, will be dwelt upon, and magnified by the power of Satan, so that they will appear of the utmost importance. The moral sight of those who forsake truth has become dim; and yet they do not feel their need of the heavenly anointing, that they may discern spiritual things. They think themselves too wise to err. But those who have not a daily experience in the things of God will not move wisely. They may have a legal religion, a form of godliness, there may be an appearance of light in the church; all the machinery—much of it human invention—may appear to be working well, and yet the church may be as destitute of the grace of God as were the hills of Gilboa of dew and rain.

Scores of men have preached the word when they themselves had not faith in it, and did not obey its teachings. They were unconverted, unsanctified, unholy. But if we would stand the test, piety must be brought into the life. What we want is inspiration from the cross of Calvary. Then God will open eyes to see that we are not to expect to do any work for the Master successfully, unless we connect with Christ. If we are indeed laborers together with God, we shall not have a dead, scientific religion, but our hearts will be infused with a living power, even the Spirit of Jesus. All those who are truly converted will be drawn out of, and away from, themselves. With the blessing of Christ upon them day by day, they will be channels for communicating light and blessings to others.

Those who are wavering between Christ and the world, need the converting power of God. When they see what sin is, and what is the righteousness of Christ, they will no longer dwell in the cave of unbelief. God calls upon them to come out of the cave, and stand with him. No longer question your need of a personal Saviour. The heart, as well as the understanding, must be enlarged. It is not enough to have an intellectual knowledge of the truth; there must be a heart

work done. The soul-temple must be cleansed from the buyers and sellers, and must be opened for the indwelling of the Spirit of God. **Christ drew a decided line of distinction between his disciples and the world.** Listen to these words from his prayer offered just before his agony in Gethsemane: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

We must comply with the terms of salvation, or we are lost. At the hour when we leave the service of Satan for the service of Christ, when true conversion takes place, and by faith we turn from transgression to obedience, the severest of the heart struggles take place. But many accept the theory of truth, and compromise with the world, the flesh, and the Devil. The soul that has truly experienced the transforming grace of Christ has chosen Christ for its portion; it yields to the gracious influence of his Holy Spirit, and thus the character is formed according to the divine pattern. We are to feel, to act, as one with Christ.

It is the work of the heavenly angels to unite with human agencies in shedding light amid the moral darkness that rests upon the earth. Christ says to his followers, "Ye are the light of the world." Shall we envelop our light in a thick covering of worldly policy? Shall we seek for scientific measurement of how much light shall emanate from us to the world? God help us to live under the direct rays of the Sun of Righteousness, that we may be channels of light to the world. There are many false beacons established, to lead unwary souls to make shipwreck of faith; but the true light of the world must shine, not smothered, not put under a bushel nor under a bed, but set on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house—the world. **The true light is to stand in distinction from all other lights. The system of truth must stand distinct from all other systems, whether of religion or of morals; for it sheds forth light emanating from Christ. Our great work is to reveal Christ to the world, and thus reveal the Father.**

There are men of the world who will volunteer to be our guides; they regard their course as wise, but they are of the class who, professing to be wise, need to become fools in order to become wise in God's wisdom. They lead away from the path where the voice of Jesus is heard, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." They are false teachers, blind leaders of the blind. They divert the attention from the very work to be done in this period of the world's history. **But those who follow the Leader step by step, will hear and recognize the voice of the True Shepherd.**

We are to learn from Christ how to work, how to be as he was, self-denying, self-sacrificing. If we have his Spirit, we shall realize the worth of souls, and work for their salvation. Our work is to be done wholly through the grace of Christ. We are to have a continual sense of our weakness and frailty and be led to Jesus in earnest prayer for his wisdom and efficiency. There will be times of despondency, as we realize our unlikeness to Christ; we see ourselves small, weak, and compassed with infirmities; but **we are to depend upon Jesus, and commit our ways unto the Lord; and while we trust to him in**

**humility, obedient to his word, heavenly wisdom will be imparted to us that we may do the Master's work.** Our life may seem a tangle; but if we commit ourselves wholly to the wise Master-worker, he will bring out the pattern of life and character according to his plan, for our good and his own glory.

Do not take your eyes off Jesus. Let the prayer go forth from unfeigned lips that we may not trust in our finite, human wisdom, but that our thoughts may be brought into subjection to Christ, our characters be molded after the mind of Christ. **Why should we not walk with God, as did Enoch?** Why should we not have the transforming grace of Christ daily? Has he not promised to us great and precious things? Who can find words to explain the rich promises of God? "Behold," said John, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

In the last conflict in the great controversy between good and evil, God has called us to give the final warning to the world. The Christian world are honoring a false Sabbath, and we are to show them its true character and foundation. We must make it plain to them that they are honoring a man-made institution in place of that which God himself has sanctified. Every rival to God must be made to appear as an idol. Solemn is our responsibility.

The people of the world will try to induce us to soften down our message, to suppress some of its more distinctive features. They say, "Why do you make the seventh-day Sabbath so prominent in your teaching? This difference is always thrust before us. We would harmonize with you if you would not say so much on this point. Let arguments in the Sentinel be free from mention of the seventh-day Sabbath, and we will give it our influence and support." This is their invitation to compromise, and there has been a disposition on the part of some of our workers to adopt this policy. But those who favor this action entertain deceptive sentiments, are bound by false modesty and caution, and manifest a disposition to withhold the confession of our faith. Seventh-day Adventists have discussed the feasibility of conceding to these demands; but **shall we permit the world to shape the messages that God has given us to bear to them? Shall we entertain the proposals of Satan, and thereby entangle our souls, and the souls of others, for the sake of policy? Shall we betray sacred trusts?** If the world are in error and delusion, breaking the law of God, is it not our duty to show them their sin and danger? We must proclaim the third angel's message.

What is the Sentinel for?—It is to be as the voice of the watchman on the walls of Zion, ready to sound the danger signal. We should cry aloud, and spare not, and show the people their transgressions. **We are not to cringe, and beg pardon of the world for telling them the truth. We should scorn concealment. Unfurl your true colors to the gaze of men and angels. Let it be understood that Seventh-day Adventists can**

make no compromise. In our opinions and faith there must not be the least appearance of wavering. The world has a right to expect something of us, and will look upon us as dishonest, as hiding our real sentiments and principles out of policy, if we present even the semblance of being uncommitted.

The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which Christ said he would send into the world, was to bear an unwavering testimony: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin [What is sin?—The transgression of the law], and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." On no account will a real believer of the truth present an appearance of neutrality in that which concerns the salvation of souls. We are not to voice the sentiment of the world. Jesus says, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." The Lord calls upon all to consider whom they will serve and whom they mean to worship,—whether they will be swayed to the right or to the left by the opinions and position of the world, or stand firm to truth. Shall we be time-servers? Now, before we advance another step, let us look carefully to see what are our feelings, our aims, and purposes.

Those who are more desirous of securing promotion and a good name in the world than of maintaining right principles, will betray sacred trusts. They will cripple their own influence, they will darken counsel by their words, and make false reasoning to look sound and right. All the success and patronage that can be secured by policy plans will serve only as a snare to those who work on this principle.

Some are flattering themselves that a more auspicious time is coming, when God will vindicate his honor by lifting up his holy law. Many who now look upon the cross as too heavy to bear, think they will then obey the truth, and triumph with it. But in maintaining the right, it is not safe, because of circumstances, to yield in any degree firm adherence to duty, or to teach others that they may yield with comparative safety. Such a course is like that of Judas, who sold his Lord to his enemies, fully believing that Christ would manifest his miraculous power, and give his enemies another evidence of his divinity. Judas never recovered the ground lost through his presumption. To place ourselves in a position where we have an appearance of yielding, is a new position for this people. It is a new experience, a departure from the principles to which we have adhered, which have made us what we are today, a people whom God has prospered, a people who have the Lord of hosts with them.

Brethren in the office of publication, you who have a connection with sacred things, God bids you to be careful where you place your feet. He holds you accountable for the light of

truth, that it shall shine forth in clear and distinct rays to the world. The world will never help you by its devices to let your light shine. They stand under their leader, the great deceiver, who works through his human agents to eclipse the light. God calls upon you to shine. With intense solicitude trim your lamps, take the oil of grace in your vessels, and keep your lamps trimmed and burning, that your light may shine bright and clear amid the moral darkness of this world. All who hold the truth should hold it in righteousness, and appreciate its value and sacredness. They should ask wisdom of God, that they may send its rays into all the highways and byways of life. If we are sanctified by the truth, our souls will be pervaded by a deep and abiding sense of its importance, and it will be our meat and drink to obey the truth, and pass along the precious light to others.

Many who claim to believe the truth have rested in the theory, and have not felt the necessity of maintaining vital connection with the pure, sacred springs from which they must derive their life and inspiration. When they should have been earnestly praying to heaven, humbling their hearts before God, they have been busy with human calculations, human imaginings, have been exalting self in place of exalting the Lord. Yet they seemed unaware of their danger of leaving the precious principles of truth. We need to pray continually that God will help us to abide in the truth, and not be swayed from its principles by those who are not sanctified to God, or allow the opinions of worldlings to mold our institutions.

But although we are to stand firm as a rock to principle, we should be courteous and Christ-like in our dealings with all men. In meekness and love we should tell the people why we cannot accept the papal Sabbath, because it is a mark of special dishonor to God, whom we love and worship. But while we sacredly observe the Sabbath of the Lord, it is not our work to compel others to observe it. God never forces the conscience. That is Satan's work. But God is the author of the Sabbath, and it must be presented to men in contrast with the false Sabbath, that they may choose between the truth of God and the error of the enemy.

An effort is now on foot to enforce the observance of Sunday, and while the Sunday question is coming to the front, an opportunity is given to present to the world the true Sabbath in contrast with the false. The Lord is far ahead of us, he has permitted this Sunday question to be pressed to the front, in order that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment may be presented before legislative assemblies. The leading men of the nation are to have their attention called to the testimony of God's word in favor of the true Sabbath. If the testimony does not convert them, it is a witness that will condemn them. The Sabbath question is the great testing question for this time.

No greater contempt could be shown to the Creator than the contempt manifested for the day which he has sanctified and blessed. And as Satan with his human agents pushes the



warfare against God, by leading men to trample on the Sabbath, the few who do honor God should be aroused to greater zeal and earnestness in its defense. **The Calebs must press to the front.** The greater the contempt heaped upon the law, the stronger must be our love for it, and the more earnest our efforts to exalt it. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

The prophet Isaiah says concerning those who advocate the truth of God, **"They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations."** What is that?—The Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Raise it up by pen, by voice, and ring out the truth in every way possible. "And thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy Father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

This is a work for those who see the Sabbath of the fourth commandment trodden down. They are to give it the exalted position it deserves. Isaiah says of Christ and his followers, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations."

This is the work now to be done on earth. Those who are living in transgression of the holy law of God will not find the truth palatable. When it is made plain that Sunday is a spurious Sabbath, founded in the power of the man of sin, they will say in language too plain to be misunderstood, "We want not a knowledge of thy ways, O Lord." Others will say as did Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" **But in the face of all opposition we must hold aloft the banner of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. It takes both of these to make up the burden of the message to be given to the world.**

We need divine wisdom and skill that we may improve every opportunity that the providence of God shall prepare for the presentation of truth. **While Satan will make masterly efforts to suppress truth, we must stand firm to our principles, reflecting light to the world.** We should be alarmed at the least manifestation of a disposition to hush the voices that proclaim the third angel's message. **That angel represents the people of God, who give the last warning to the world. Let not the fear of man, the desire for patronage, be allowed to obscure a ray of heaven's light.** Should the sentinels of truth now fail to sound the warning, they would be unworthy of their position as light-bearers to the world; but should the standard fall from their hands, the Lord would raise up others who would be faithful and loyal.

**It will require moral courage to do God's work unflinchingly.** Those who do this can give no place to self love, to selfish considerations, ambition, love of ease, or desire to shun the cross. We are commanded to "cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet." Shall we labor to make the name of God a praise in the earth? Shall we obey his voice, or shall we listen to the soothing voice of the evil one, and be rocked to a fatal slumber just on the eve of eternal realities? **The truth is everything to us, or it is nothing.** Let those who want to make a name in the world, go with the world; but let those who would serve God, obey God, and not man. In the great conflict between faith and unbelief, the whole Christian world will be involved. All will take sides. **Some may not apparently engage in the conflict on either side. They may not appear to take sides against the truth, but they will not come out boldly for Christ, through fear of losing property or suffering reproach. All such are numbered with the enemies of Christ;** for Christ says, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

**Conservative traditions received from educated men, and from the writings of great men of the past, are not safe guides for us in these last days;** for the great struggle before us is such as the world has never seen before. Those who have not acted a part in this work in the past, need to move with great caution in regard to accepting or refusing what may be presented to them as truth. They need to penetrate much deeper than their limited spiritual knowledge, or their present habits or opinions would lead them to do. **We are not one of us safe unless we live as seeing Him who is invisible, even with past experience in the work; and we certainly are not safe, if we have not had that experience. Daily, hourly, we must be actuated by the principles of Bible truth,—righteousness, mercy, and the love of God.** He who would have moral and intellectual power must draw from the divine source. At every point of decision inquire, "Is this the way of the Lord?" **With your Bibles open before you, consult sanctified reason and a good conscience.** Your heart must be moved, your soul touched, your reason and intellect awakened, by the Spirit of God; and then holy principles revealed in the word of God will give

light to the soul. The true source of wisdom and virtue and power is the cross of Calvary. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. He says, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Let no man seek to go about God's work in any one of its branches in his own strength; for if he does, the fruit will not be such as will abide unto eternal life. He appears to build on the foundation; but he puts upon it wood, hay, and stubble,—material that will be consumed. Our ideas must be elevated. Lift him up, the Man of Calvary; let the language of the soul be, "He must increase; I must decrease." It is very hard for self to occupy a subordinate place. It lifts up itself in many ways, runs without Christ, works without prayer and consecration. Man's wisdom is foolishness; but many do not yet know this. They form connections with persons no more

pious or consecrated than themselves. They counsel and plan with them, and if their devising is accepted, it will surely lead away from the right path. Their self-sufficiency is great, they do not feel the necessity of prayer at every step. They judge after the sight of the eyes, and the hearing of the ears, but have not the discernment that God gives, which would enable them to look beneath the surface. They favor those who should not be favored, and turn from those who should find help and comfort and justice at their hands. What government are we under? We shall have to make a decided choice either to be under Satan's rule, or under the rule of Him whom John saw while on the isle of Patmos, who "hath prepared his throne in the heavens," and whose "kingdom ruleth over all."



## Report on Visit to Ghana

The last week of the year 2005 found believers from Ghana holding a very controversial camp meeting in the city of Berekum. Brother Paul Osei Agyeman had invited Smyrna Gospel Ministries to send a representative and I was able to go to Africa for the first time. What a joy it was to be able to visit some of the brethren in this part of the world and also to visit with some brethren who attended from Nigeria and other areas.

I had heard many things about Africa but now I would get to experience some of it firsthand. One thing I had been instructed upon was the time schedule, or lack of it, that seems to be prevalent in Africa. People in the United States are very time and schedule orientated, at least as viewed by Africans. I got my first taste when attempting to leave Gatwick Airport in London. Our plane (Ghana International Airlines) left an hour late. Perhaps this was due to problems outside of their control, but after arriving in Ghana and spending a few days there I was very pleased to find out that the great tardiness that I had heard of, such as meetings starting five and six hours late, was not usually the case in Ghana. Sometimes we did seem to begin our meetings a little late, one or two hours, but usually most meetings and events had a semblance of being on time.

Brother Slawomir Platek from Poland has visited over fifty countries and he told me a while back that he believed the people of Ghana were the friendliest in the world. I surely found a great basis for his statement. No matter where I was or what I was doing, as a "bruni" (white person), I was always treated very well. I will have to admit though that the delegation from Nigeria gave the brethren from Ghana a lot of competition for being the friendliest people. They clearly proved the truth of Proverbs 18:24 which states, "A man that

hath friends must shew himself friendly." I was always offered the best food that Ghana had, including a special treat called fufu; however, I have to admit that my western tastes did not find fufu as nice as the locals seemed to enjoy it. But the plentiful rice, cabbage, and yams were always welcome! Brother Agyeman's family took the very best care of me and I felt like a part of the family right from the start!

Each day was full of meetings. Prayer sessions began at 4:00 a.m. and the last evening meeting sometimes did not



One of the tent areas on Sabbath morning

end until 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. Most of the meetings were well attended and there was much lively singing and testimony to complement the preaching.

It was especially encouraging to me to meet some of the brothers from Ghana who are laboring as evangelists in different parts of the country and also to hear some of our brethren from Nigeria who, though they had little

experience, preach fervently to the people. While many of the Nigerian brethren are fairly new in the message, they are learning quickly and are doing a powerful work in their home country. They are planning a camp meeting in April where they expect up to 9,000 believers to attend and they also would like to plan a ministerial institute after the camp meeting to help train new and young ministers. Please keep these dear brethren in your prayers as they work in difficult and poor conditions.



**At the radio station**

One evangelistic enterprise the believers have in Ghana is a radio station where they are able to play messages and make announcements concerning meetings. On my first full day in Berekum I was taken to the radio station and Brother Paul conducted an interview with me. I was able to tell the people about the nature of my visit and invited the listeners to come to the meetings, which were conveniently located at a rented public school facility alongside the main highway.

Brother Paul and I also had open forum discussions on the radio on the subject of the Trinity doctrine with two Trinitarian ministers on Sabbath, December 31, and Sunday, January 1. At first it was just going to be an hour discussion on Sabbath, but at the end of our discussion there was so much more that needed to be discussed that we asked if the ministers would return Sunday afternoon for two more hours. They agreed, and so we met the next day also, but instead of our time running two hours, the discussion went on for three hours!

Sabbath's radio discussion went very well, with the truth being excellently defended. One minister made a big point to emphasize Matthew 28:19 and the other emphasized 1 John 5:7. Brother Paul explained 1 John 5:7 well, without having to appeal to the fact that it is considered by many to be a gloss. I asked the minister, who was trying to use Matthew 28:19, to prove the Trinity doctrine, what the personal name of God is. He replied, "God." I told him that was a title. Did he know the *personal name* of God? Finally he said, "Jehovah or Yahweh." I then asked, "What is the *personal name* of the Son?" He replied, "Jesus." I then asked him the *personal name* of the Holy Spirit. He didn't know, so I invited him to go home and study the Bible and if he found it, to bring it to the meeting Sunday. On Sunday neither 1 John 5:7 nor Matthew 28:19 were mentioned.

I declared that the truth that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God was so hated by Satan that he had induced men to take this part of John 3:16 out of most modern

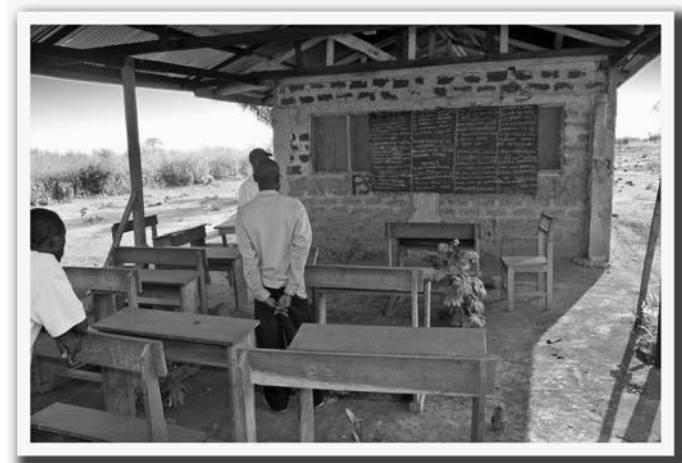
versions of the Bible. One of these ministers had such a Bible and, on the air, I stated that it would be hard for him to teach the truth about Jesus, seeing that he used a Bible that did not say "only begotten son," but rather, "only Son." He quickly began to turn to John 3:16 and saw, to his amazement, that what I said was true. The other Trinitarian minister at first said that he believed that Jesus was the "only begotten Son" of God. However, when we asked for further clarification on

whether he really believed if Jesus was the literal begotten Son of God or not, he backed off and stated that "Jesus was not the begotten Son of God."

During the second session several phone calls were received, and most of the responses and questions showed a decided favor toward the truth; however, one caller had neither question nor comment, but simply sang the Doxology.

While in Ghana I was able to visit the Remnant Evangelistic Centre School for orphans and children. It consists primarily of two buildings that are mostly open on the sides, with three sections each. Each class section had a few rough desks and a chalk board, but with these meager facilities, some books, and paper supplies, the brethren are endeavoring to train the youth. Remnant Evangelistic Centre is also building a large structure to help house the orphans.

As I mentioned, this was a controversial camp meeting. It had been called for and scheduled by the brethren several months earlier. There are about 3,000 brothers and sisters in several churches within Ghana who have accepted the truth about God and have either been disfellowshipped or found in disfavor with the conference. Two years ago Brother



**The Remnant Evangelistic Centre School**





**Children at Sabbath School**

Lynnford Beachy attended a camp meeting with almost 2,000 believers in attendance; however, the people still have many traditional mindsets that must be broken. Shortly before the recent camp meeting when planning was almost set, some of the elders who are among the disfellowshipped churches came to the conclusion that only the Ghana Union Conference had the authority to call a camp meeting and that if there was a camp meeting without conference approval, the brethren in attendance could be arrested by the police! Sadly, many of the brethren believed this idea and stayed away. Instead of having 3,000 believers, we only had 200-300 people in attendance during the week, with the number swelling to perhaps 400 on Sabbath.

These elders went to a lawyer to have a legal notice drawn up, stating that only the Conference could call a camp meeting and that they, as elders, were not involved with the camp meeting organized by Remnant Evangelistic Centre and Paul Osei Agyeman and that, further, they would not be held accountable for anything that might result from the meetings. The letter closed by saying, “We are by this letter drawing your attention to the consequences of your actions. We hope; the content of this letter is loud and clear.”

Although I was “preaching to the choir” somewhat because those in attendance had disregarded this notice, I emphasized the need for people to think for themselves. The black people had been slaves to white masters in the past for too long and they should not trade a white master for a black master. God has given to each of His people the ability and right to think for himself or herself. “Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do.” (*Education*, p. 17) I encouraged the brethren to contact those who were staying away from the meetings and invite them to attend. I told them that no law could be enforced by the Ghana Union Conference to put anyone in jail.

For my last message at the camp meeting I spoke about the nature of the New Testament Church and that the call to come out of Babylon includes coming out of *all* false and apostate religions. We reviewed some of the history of the reformation and saw that many of the evil practices of the bishops

and popes had been condemned; however, at the same time, the system by which these evil practices were bred continued to be justified. The Reformation did not begin in verity until the reformers could finally look at the papacy and say that it was not the true church in apostasy and in need of reform, but rather it was an apostate church that must be left if purity of character was to be maintained.

Persecution and the desire to control is always one of the hallmarks of an apostate church. Interestingly A. T. Jones wrote the following concerning the Jewish Church and the apostles:

That which until that time had been the true church, called and preserved by the Lord, then and there ceased to be the true church at all; and that which this church despised, and forbade, and persecuted, and cast out, became itself the true church.

And so it is forever. John 9:34-38. (*Individuality in Religion*, chapter 4, paragraphs 40, 41)

Due to misunderstandings concerning the nature of the church, the brethren had been almost four years in Ghana without having baptisms, for some had feared that this also would not be proper without Conference approval. But the desire to publicly affirm their faith had become too strong for many to be willing to wait any longer, and on Sabbath afternoon Brother Paul and I had the privilege of lowering 88 souls into the watery grave!

I am very thankful for the chance to travel to Ghana, The Gateway to Africa, for this experience was truly a wonderful blessing to me. I look forward to the day when we can fellowship with all of God’s children without long travels and expenses, but in the heavenly Canaan. . . . . *Editor*



**Brothers Stump and Agyeman with two of the eighty-eight who were baptized**

Next month we look forward to presenting a report from Vlad Ardeias on the the recent camp meeting held in Romania that occurred at the end of last year.

# Youth's Corner - "Always Cheerful"

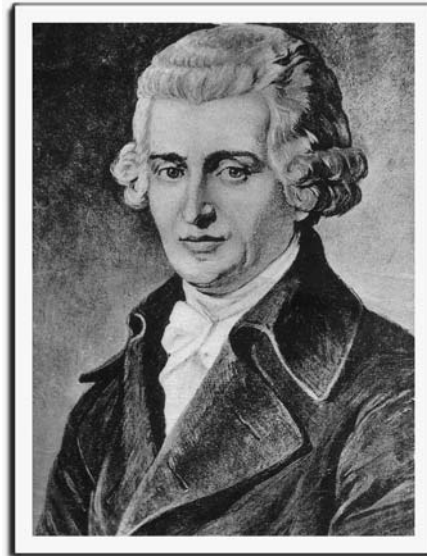
(The following children's Sabbath story was shared at the Smyrna Chapel by Sister Onycha Holt.)

I have a story for you today about three young people, but they all lived in different homes and you may recognize at least one of children. The first story is about a little girl who has a very hard time in the morning when it is time to get up. Do you know what she might say? "Oh-h-h, my legs hurt. I can't get up. My legs hur-r-r-t." Or she might say, "It's too-o-o- cold. The bed is so-o-o- warm. I can't get up." Do you know what she is doing? She is grumbling and complaining. Do you remember what the Israelites did in the wilderness a lot? They grumbled and complained, and this little girl grumbles and complains in the morning. She says things like, "The light! Turn the light off. It's too bright!" Have you ever done anything like that? I *hope* not, but this little girl will say she is too tired to get up, or that it is too cold to get up, or that the light is too bright for her. This is one little girl who sometimes likes to grumble and complain, just like the Israelites chose to grumble and complain.

The next story is about another little girl who lived far away from her home and she wasn't even able to live with her Mommy and Daddy. But did this little girl grumble and complain? Ohh, no, I don't think so, because one day when she found out that the Captain in whose home she lived and in whose home she was to be a helper had a very bad sickness, a sickness so bad that no doctor or other person knew what to do to help him, she said, "I know someone. If Captain Naaman will just go back to the country where I used to live, the prophet there can pray to *my* God and he will know what to do." Have you heard this story before? Now, I have a question for you. Do you think if that little girl grumbled in the morning and didn't want to get up and didn't want to help Captain and Lady Naaman, would they would have listened to her when she said, "I know someone that can help you?" Would they have listened to her if she complained a lot about what she was asked to do? I don't think so, but because she was a very good helper to Captain Naaman and a very good helper to his wife, they listened to her when she said, "I know someone that can help you." And do you know what happened next? Captain Naaman got in his chariot and drove hard to find the prophet, all because of what that little girl

said. (You can read this whole story in 2 Kings chapter 5.)


Now I have a story about a little boy this time, and this little boy lived a long time ago. His mother and his father were poor, but they liked music and in the evening the family would get together to play instruments and sing, and this little boy, who might have only been six years old, would sing also. He had a most beautiful voice and one day a music teacher said, "I would like to teach this little boy at my house." His Mommy said, "Oh, I am not sure I would like him to go away and live so far away from home," but his Father said, "I think it would be good for him. He would learn how to sing better and he would learn



**Franz Joseph Haydn**

more about music. Let's do it." And so, they let this little boy, whose name was Franz Joseph Haydn, go away and live at the music teacher's house, and he was not even 8 years old. Unfortunately, this little boy didn't always have food to eat because his Mommy wasn't there to help take care of him, and he didn't always get a bath or have clean clothes to wear because his Mommy wasn't there to take care of him and the music teacher really didn't care if he ate or if he was clean. All he wanted him to do was to sing because he had a beautiful voice, and even though he might have been cold and even though he might have been hungry, Franz Joseph Haydn did not complain, as far as we know, and he did not murmur. He just did his best to sing and learn about music. When he was 8

years old, a choir master said, "I really want Franz to sing in my choir," and so Franz moved and lived with the choir. He stayed there for a long time, and they took better care of him, but a problem happened when he turned sixteen. His voice wasn't sweet and beautiful any longer, and so the choir master said, "I'm sorry, but it is time for you to leave," and he turned him out onto the streets of the big city and Franz Joseph Haydn was all alone. He had to figure out where he was going to get food and clothes and where he was going to sleep at night. He had a very hard time. He was all alone in a big city with no food and no place to stay. Later a young prince noticed his musical talent and he asked him to live at his castle. "Will you please come to my castle?" he asked. "I want you to be in charge of all the music in my castle." What do you think Franz Joseph Haydn said? He said, "Yes," because now he would have a nice house to stay in and food to eat and he would be able to play the music that he loved. He was happy to go and the prince that invited him home to his castle was a good person. He made sure he had a good place to stay, and Franz was happy to be there. He *loved* the prince because the prince took such good care of him. Now this prince wanted him to write a new piece of music for him every day and that is how Franz Joseph Haydn worked for the prince. After thirty years the prince died, but by then Haydn was so well-known that other countries invited him to visit, England and France for example, and when he turned sixty-five years old, he wrote a very important piece of music called *The Creation*. Do you know what he said he did every day when he sat down to compose this? He asked God to help him write beautiful music and God *helped* him!

Even though you might be young, you can be a sweet girl or a sweet boy if you let Jesus live in your heart and if you don't grumble or complain. When it is time to get up, what should you do? You should be out of bed saying, "Yes, Mommy, I'll be right there! Coming Mommy!" It will make your mother's heart very happy if you do this without complaining, just like Franz Joseph Haydn did not complain when he had to sing even though he was hungry and when he had to get out of his bed even though it was cold. He didn't grumble. God blessed him and he wrote beautiful music, and God can bless you every day too when you start the day with Him and when you cheerfully obey. 

PERMIT # 35  
WELCH, WV  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PRESRT STD

Address Service Requested

SMYRNA GOSPEL MINISTRIES  
HC 64 BOX 128 B  
WELCH WV 24801-9606 U.S.A.

**“HERE A LITTLE, AND THERE A LITTLE”**

When studying the Bible it is very important to allow the Bible to interpret itself. There are many passages in the Bible that seem very plain on the surface, but their true meaning may be very different than what most people think. For instance, concerning those who receive the Mark of the Beast, we read:

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (Revelation 14:11)

To most evangelicals this text is as plain as day and teaches an eternally-burning hell; however, it can only be understood when compared with other verses following the counsel of God through Isaiah:

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. (Isaiah 28:10)

Ellen White has also given us the counsel to not use a text or two to try to prove any doctrine but rather follow the weight of evidence.

The unbelief that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to the evidence that God is pleased to give. He requires of His people faith that rests upon the weight of evidence, not upon perfect knowledge. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 258)

We need to apply this principle to all our Bible study, including the precious topic of righteousness by faith, for as we read earlier in “Seek First the Kingdom of God,” many will not properly divide the Word of God upon this great theme. May God continue to richly bless you as you daily walk with Him. . . . . *Editor*

---

*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](mailto:editor@smyrna.org)  
Assistant to the Editor . . . . . Onycha Holt—[onycha@smyrna.org](mailto:onycha@smyrna.org)