

# Old Paths

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

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

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Straight and Narrow

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## BELIEVABLE PROMISES

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

**R**obert was a little boy who was very inquisitive and when he grew up he searched the world far and wide for odd and unusual things. Robert went around the world looking for things that were unbelievable, such as three-headed calves, five-legged giraffes, and little shrunken heads. He operated on the belief that truth is stranger than fiction. Robert finally started a museum for these things and you may have heard of his museum—"Ripley's Believe It or Not." In God's Word there are exceeding great and precious promises that at first may seem unbelievable, but everything God has given us in the Bible is true and for us to believe.



**Robert Ripley**

The world's philosophy is "seeing is believing," but the Bible teaches that "believing is seeing." There is a difference. We are not just simply switching words around and saying the same thing! People often have to see something before they believe it, but our eyes can fool us much of the time. Geometric figures can be drawn that from one perspective look like one thing but from another perspective look like something entirely different because of the illusion they create. (See Kanizsa's Triangle, page 6.) Seeing really isn't believing at all. A magician can make you think you are seeing something happen that isn't happening at all. But friends, you are truly seeing when you believe (have faith) and that is the "sight" God wants us to have and will provide for us.

### **Bible Faith**

We need to understand the solid basis faith has and what real, true faith is. When we understand these concepts, then we will look at God's great

### **Prayer Requests**

We have many things to remember in prayer this month. Our young people face many challenges in our world today. Let's pray for them, that they will daily seek a close walk with our Savior, and for us as parents, that we will perfectly represent the love of our heavenly Father to them moment by moment and day by day. Parents, and young people as well, are greatly encouraged to read the Youth Corner for this month, as it contains much valuable information for us as parents as we try to help our youth, as well as timely information for the Lord's dear lambs.

Please continue to pray for Lynnford Beachy and his family, as they remain on the road through March 4, ministering to God's people, and also pray that whatever the spring holds in travel plans for Brother Allen, for Brother Lynnford,

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promises as truly believable. Not only will the promises make sense and be something that we become excited about, but they also become something that we can apply and internalize in our life. If all we ever do is intellectually assent to them, we will fail.

“Now faith is *the substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1) Whatever this thing called faith is, friends, there is real substance to it. Sometimes we talk about intangibles. We might go to town and buy a cell phone, some stationery, or a cup, and we call such things tangible because we can hold them. We could also purchase insurance. Can we hold insurance in our hands? Insurance is an intangible item, and we often think of faith as intangible as insurance is, but that is not what the Bible says. “Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for...by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.” (vs. 1-3) We understand that the worlds were framed and brought into existence by faith through the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” You cannot trust what you see. You can only trust what you hear from the Word of God. Genesis 3:6 says, “And when the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Beloved, there are many things that are pleasant to our eyes and nice to look upon, but *we cannot put our trust in what we can see*. Faith is built upon what we hear, and not just hearing any word, but hearing the Word of God. You do not get faith from listening to preachers. You get faith from the Word of God. You do not get faith from going through experiences. Sometimes people say going through a great experience increases their faith, but, friends, it doesn't. Experiences don't increase faith. They may reveal what faith we have, they may develop character, but faith is built on the Word of God and the Word of God alone. That is why we need the Word of God.

Let us notice an example of faith in Matthew 8. “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.” (vs. 5-7) This reminds me of something that happened six years ago when my son Hans had cancer. I was in the hospital chapel, praying and pleading for his life. If Jesus had come into that chapel physically, personally and said, “I will go heal him,” I might have taken His hand and dashed for the elevator, but that is not what this centurion did. “The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this,

and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marveled.” (vs. 8-10) This is the only place in the Bible that Jesus marveled at someone's faith. The centurion was not a Jew, and yet Jesus marveled at his response. “And said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, [truly I say unto you, for a surety I am telling you] I have not found so *great faith*, no, not in Israel.” (v. 10) Jesus said this centurion had “faith,” but Jesus didn't just call it “faith,” He called it “great faith.” The centurion wanted Jesus to heal his servant. Jesus offered to go to the centurion's house to heal him, but the centurion said to speak only the word and his servant would be healed. Jesus said because the centurion was depending upon His Word alone, he had faith and he had great faith. Friends, we can depend upon the Word of God alone and that is where our faith comes from. We can have that blessed assurance.

We usually define a hypocrite as someone who says one thing but believes or does another thing. In Matthew 23 when Jesus said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (v. 15) the Greek word for hypocrite simply means “actor.” We often sing, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine,” but often many do not have that blessed assurance. We sing “When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there,” but some have a hard time believing it. But we can know that we will be there. How can we know it? By the truth of God's Word!

## *The Infinite Price*

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19) Sometimes we use this text when we talk about the importance of good health. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and we should treat them as such. We should be clean inside and out and we should try to live healthfully. God wants to live in a clean, tidy temple. “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” (v. 20) Friends, we belong to God. First of all, He created us, and then He sent His Son to redeem us. There should never be a doubt in our minds that God doesn't love us and want us. He loves us, and we know He loves us because He paid an infinite price for our redemption.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.” (1 Peter 1:18) It is true that gold, and to a greater degree silver, will tarnish, but they are not metals that tend to “rust.” They don't oxidize in the same way that iron and other metals do. Gold and silver last a long time, but even they are corruptible, according to Peter. We have not been redeemed by these corruptible things “from your vain conversation [lifestyle] received by tradition from your fathers; But with the *precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (vs. 18, 19) The Bible says that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son” for us. (John 3:16) “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not

with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32) Paul’s emphasis is not that there is more the Lord is willing to give us, because in Christ He has given us everything! All heaven was emptied in the gift of the Son. Rather, Paul is saying that God didn’t hold back His Son, and anything else that He can do for you He has already provided.

I hope that I love God’s children enough that I could die for them if need be. Even if it means the loss of my eternal existence, I would want to be able to do that, but God has shown us a deeper love. He put the eternal life of His Son, something more precious than His own life, at risk for us. In the Council of Peace, the Father and the Son were in perfect agreement; however, as a man, Jesus was not omniscient. He hung on the cross and darkness enveloped Him, He could not “see through the portals of the tomb,” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 753) and He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46) At that point He did not see Himself coming through victoriously, but He was willing to die eternally if we could have eternal life. I believe at the very end His faith clasped the hand of God, as He later said, “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46) Remember that in the incarnation Jesus only knew what the Father had revealed to Him.

According to Bible prophecy, a time of trouble such as men have never known is coming upon this world. Some of this trouble will come as an overwhelming surprise and we all be tested. But a test is not really a test if we know all the answers ahead of time and how to prepare fully for it. A true test takes us somewhat unawares. For Jesus to be truly tested like we will be tested, there had to be a part of His experience that He did not know was going to happen. In the book of John, we find that Jesus consistently said that His Father was always with Him because He did His Father’s will. Even the night before He was crucified Jesus said, “My Father is with Me. You will all desert me, but My Father is always with Me.” (See John 16:32.) Jesus was expecting the Father to be with Him all the way through the cross. Nevertheless, Jesus tested true for us. He trusted His Father even though every thing around Him, everything that His senses and that His feelings could hope for as assurance were all gone. The only thing He could base His hope on was the Word of God. He knew what Psalm 22 said and He recounted it in His mind. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm is a window into the mind of Jesus when He was on the cross. Before He died, Jesus realized (in that enveloped darkness) that He was victorious.

I want to make something very plain. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time *Christ died for the ungodly.*” (Romans 5:6) Who did Jesus die for? For the ungodly and for you and me. “Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth (demonstrated) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (vs. 7, 8) Friends, if we could have physically pulled God off of His throne, killed Him and then tried to sit on His throne and reign in his stead, that is when God

would have sent His Son to die for us. God knew I was bad, but He still sent Jesus to die for me. That is so wonderful! I am not going to tell you about my past, because it is too ugly and you don’t need to know about it, but it was while I was in rebellion that Jesus died for me, and friends, if He died for me, He died for you too and you can have that assurance that He cares about you individually and that He is interested in you personally. “The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 100)

Sometimes we buy things that aren’t what we really expect to get. When I was 19 years old, my brother, who was 21, had an old Volkswagen that he had pretty well run through the mill, but since he was going to buy another car, he told me I could have his old Volkswagen Beetle. I thought he was a wonderful brother, but the body of the car was falling apart and it needed over two gallons of Bondo, an automobile body filler, to fix it up. It needed a lot help. I painted it, put a little stripe on it, and it looked really nice. I was very proud to think that I would have my own car to drive, but then my Dad looked at me and said, “You are not driving that car. You don’t get to keep the car.” He probably thought it was too old and since it was held together with Bondo instead of metal, that it wouldn’t be safe. He wasn’t going to let me have it and even though I was disappointed, he did say I could have some of the money it sold for. So, we parked it in the yard with a “For Sale” sign on it. My dad was hoping to get \$400 for the car because it looked nice. I came home one evening and he gave me \$400 for the car. I asked if he sold the car for \$400, and he said, “No, I sold it for \$795. I am going to give you \$400 and let your brother have the rest.” And I said, “What?” and he said, “Well, there is this man I know who cheats people on cars a lot. He buys cars that aren’t good and then sells them for more than they are worth. He came by and thought the car really looked good. He asked me if I would take \$795 for it and I said I would if he would give me cash.”

Now my dad wasn’t a Christian and I wasn’t a Christian at the time and I took the \$400, but I guarantee the man got something he wasn’t expecting in that car. Do you think that when Jesus came to this earth to redeem man He understood what He was getting? Maybe He thought He would get something better, something more than He bargained for? Do you think that in the end, He paid too much? “But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.” (John 2:24, 25) When Jesus took on the bargain of taking us into heaven, into His kingdom, and coming to die and then to minister as our High Priest for us, He knew exactly what we were like. He didn’t buy a \$400 Volkswagen for \$795. He paid with His precious blood. Jesus counted you worthy of that blood, and the Father loved you so much, He counted you worthy of that blood also. “He shall

see of the travail (suffering) of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” (Isaiah 53:11) Friends, I know there is going to be a place in the heart of God that for all of eternity will miss those who are lost, because He says, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” (Jeremiah 31:3) There is going to be a place in His heart that will miss those who are not there with Him, but, friends, He will be satisfied with the jewels He has. “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2) Today Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us and He is just waiting to take us to heaven. He says “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” (John 14:2) Those mansions are ready today. Jesus knew what He was getting with the human race.

I have seen both of my children in physical pain at times. Heidi had encephalitis when she was a little girl and in the emergency room she screamed deliriously with pain and my heart went out to her. Then I saw my son wear a titanium halo with bolts that literally screwed in through his skin to the skull. The halo had big struts attached to a rugged vest. He had to wear it for almost five long months. It hurts us as parents to see such things and we don’t go through this unless we think that something good will happen, and the Father would not allow His Son to go through what He did unless He knew that something very good would be the result.

## **Exceedingly Great and Precious Promises**

John 6:37 is a great and wonderful promise we must believe. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” It is not proper English grammar for a sentence to contain two negatives; however, in the Greek language, a double negative is proper and is used to provide emphasis. The Greek, for the expression “I will in no wise cast out,” is *(ou me)* and it is a double negative. Jesus is trying to emphasize that in no way and under no circumstances will He cast out any who come to Him.

In John 6:47 we find another promise. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” The word “believe” in the New Testament is the verb form of the Greek word we translate faith. Faith is the noun form and believe is the verb form of the same word. So, when Jesus says “He that believes on Me,” He is saying that those who have faith in Him can have everlasting life. Is that really true? How do we know it is true? *We know* because the word of God says it. “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17) Friends, your ability to believe, your ability to think for yourself is so important, because salvation is based upon belief, it is based upon having faith, and when you cannot think for yourself, when you cannot believe for yourself, or when you are under a system

that does not allow you to believe for yourself, you have surrendered your salvation. Don’t ever, ever do that.

“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.” (1 John 5:10-13) Friends, it is not enough that we believe these verses and that we intellectually put them into our brains. We must process them. This is part of learning to trust God. In the next part of this series we will address, in more depth, the answers we need for our doubts, but why do we doubt our salvation? Why do we doubt our assurance, and why do we doubt Christ? We will find answers from the Word of God, but for now I want to say that we have to learn to trust Christ. How do we learn to trust people? We learn to trust them by getting to know them and learn that they are trustworthy, don’t we? We know that we can trust them because we know their character and we know how they are going to react at any given time. We can know the Bible promises by heart, friends, but until we know God, it will be very difficult to appropriate them no matter how well we intellectually know the verses or have them memorized. I once met a lady who told me she had read the New Testament through over eighty times and I really didn’t have any reason to doubt her, but it was also evident that she didn’t understand much of the New Testament and had not made its teachings a part of her life. But we must know God’s Word experientially.

We must learn to take God at His Word and test Him. “We can be assured that we shall receive the Holy Spirit if we individually try the experiment of testing God’s Word.” (*Review and Herald*, May 5, 1896) We need to test God’s Word. We need to know that He is telling us the truth and that we can trust Him. John 17:3 does not say that life eternal is *knowing about* the only true God! There is a lot of difference between *knowing* and *knowing about* something or someone. *The New World Translation* of the Bible published by the Jehovah’s Witnesses uses the term “about” in John 17:3, even though there is no word in the Greek text for it. “This is life eternal that they might know *about* thee.” I know a lot about George Bush. I know about other people, but I don’t know them. We have to personally know God, but we won’t get to know Him unless we spend time in His Word and we spend time on our knees, and if you are not really taking quality time in prayer, I want to encourage and implore you to do that. Whenever possible, pray with your families. Get together in little bands wherever you can and pray. We are not going to get to know God in any other way friends, and we will not have the latter rain experience unless we do this.

The Bible says that we can know that God accepts us and when we believe on Jesus we have eternal life. “But as many as received him, to them gave he *power* [ *exousia* - authority] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe [or have faith] on his name.” (John 1:12) Who is this promise for? “As many as received him.” So, we have a part to play, don’t we? We have to receive Jesus. We have to invite Him into our hearts. I want to be a son of God and Jesus says I can be, if I believe. It is a reality and it is true. “For ye are all the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26) How do we know that we are the children of God? Not because we feel better; not because we go to an altar and pray and have a euphoric experience with stars coming to our mind as in an explosion. You might have such an experience, but that is not what the Bible says *determines* whether you are a son or daughter of God. The Bible says if you receive Jesus, by believing in Him and having faith, you know that you are His child. How do you know this? Because God in His Word has told you so and you can trust what He says. The faith that you need, friends, is based in the Word of God. As you spend time in the Word of God and in prayer, you will come to know God and you will be able to trust Him.

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us *exceeding great and precious promises*: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:2-4) By the exceedingly great and precious promises, and they are all believable, we become partakers of the divine nature. How is it that I *know* I am a partaker? By the promises of God. Not by my feelings. If we go by our feelings it won’t work, because, friends, Satan can supply lots of feelings, and we all know we have moods. We have to go by what the Word of God says. The Word says that if we accept Jesus and come to Him (and I know there are issues of living outside of the will of God that we will discuss in the next segment) with an honest heart desiring to do His will because we love Him, and we ask Him to come into our lives, He will not in any way cast us out. We can know by these precious promises that He will indeed save us.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24) The Bible says we don’t need to come into condemnation. Interestingly, the word that is translated “condemnation” is also translated “judgment” in Revelation 14:7. Why? It is because Jesus stands in for us. He is our Mediator and when the Father comes to judge us, He only sees Jesus and not us. We don’t have to stand in judgment because friends, we wouldn’t pass, but Jesus stands in for us and He passes the inspection every time.

The book of Second Timothy is significant, in part, because it is the last epistle that Paul wrote. Paul is waiting on death row for the executioner’s sword to behead him, but before that happened, he wrote this epistle to Timothy. Notice what he said: “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” (2 Timothy 1:12) Now, the key word is “committed.” Friends, have we committed our lives to Jesus? Have we entered into a covenant relationship with Him? Have we truly given our lives to Him? Maybe we have gone to church, have sung hymns, have taught Sabbath School, have preached, and perhaps we have been baptized and have even taken communion service, but have we *committed* our lives to Jesus? The Bible says that when we commit our lives to Jesus, we will be persuaded that He is able to keep us. When we commit our lives to Jesus we don’t have to be ashamed because we know in whom we believe. We need to know this now.

People do not do well in situations of insecurity. They need security and stability in their lives. Having Jesus in your life and knowing that you have committed your life to Him, holding nothing back, you can have full assurance that He accepts you. You can depend on His believable promises!

“All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.” (Proverbs 15:15) Part of the fruit of the Spirit is joy. We can have a merry heart when we know Jesus is ours. The world can fall apart around us and we may be concerned and praying about it, but friends, we can still have peace, because we love Jesus and He helps us.

Ellen White wrote, “A cold, sunless religion never draws souls to Christ. It drives them away from Him into the nets that Satan has spread for the feet of the straying.” (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 488) Friends, it is hard to have a sunny religion if you don’t have the blessed assurance that Jesus is yours. Has anyone ever asked you to get toothpicks and prop up the corners of your mouth because you can’t smile in any other way? We can prop up the smiles and we can prop up our faces and try to act pleasant, but friends, true Christianity brings real inner peace and it brings joy to our hearts and if we have a cold, sunless religion it will not draw people to Jesus, it will only turn them away.

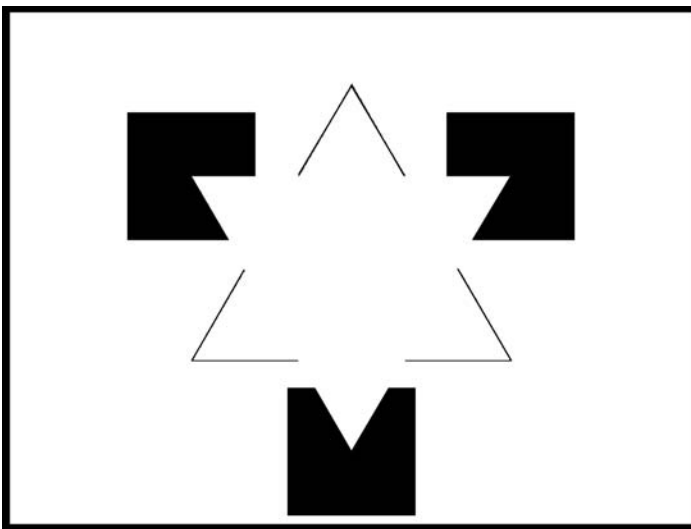
I want to encourage you, friends, to be sure that you have a well-grounded hope, because nothing short of this will satisfy your soul. Make no mistake about it; we are working for eternal results. “It is insanity to be quiet and at ease as so many are at the present time, having no assurance that they are indeed the sons and daughters of God.” (*Review and Herald*, November 9, 1886) It’s insanity to not have the assurance. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” (1 Corinthians 6:17) I want to be one spirit with Him, don’t you? “It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for

me.” (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 517) That is my privilege and it is your privilege also. “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

Sometimes we are anxious about how God looks upon us. “We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute.” (*The Faith I Live By*, p. 113) The Bible says God looks upon Jesus with love and understanding and He accepts Him. We can know that we are accepted in the Beloved. Friends, “Christ has made every provision for us to be strong. He has given us His Holy Spirit, whose office is to bring to our remembrance all the promises that Christ has made, that we may have peace and a sweet sense of forgiveness. *If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Savior and trust in His power, we shall be filled with a sense of security*; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness.” (*Review and Herald*, October 1, 1908)

When I have Christ’s righteousness, as my eyes are fixed upon the Savior, I can have that wonderful security, that blessed assurance that Jesus is mine. You can too! ✍

## Kanizsa’s Triangle



“This figure was introduced by Kanizsa, an Italian psychologist. Everyone sees a white triangle in front of the three black disks and inverted triangle. However, the white triangle actually does not exist. The contours of this triangle are illusory contours created by your brain. Note that the illusory triangle looks brighter than the background. This is a result of brightness contrast caused by the black disks being partially occluded by the corners of the illusory triangle.” (<http://www.br1.ntt.co.jp/IllusionForum/basics/visual/english/SC.K121a.overview.html>) ✍

## I Sign My Name

As might be expected, we get a reasonable flow of mail concerning *Old Paths* and our other publications. Some of the mail we receive is complementary and some is negative. But even in some of the negative mail we receive, we learn valuable lessons. From time to time a negative letter arrives that comes in an envelope without a return address and with no signature affixed to the letter. Recently I received such a piece of mail, asking us to request that “our agents” stop bothering the people of this writer’s church with our literature. It was signed, “a concerned brother.”

As I contemplate such letters I ask myself, “Why can’t people sign their name to what they write?” We currently live in a free country where, for the most part, we still have our first amendment rights. Nobody is going to be put in jail for differing with me. Nobody is going to be killed or harmed because they refuse to reject the Trinitarian doctrine. What is there about someone’s faith or religion that does not provide the courage and pride to sign their name to their thoughts?

As I think of this, several Bible texts come to my mind. Writing to the Romans, Paul noted, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” (Romans 1:16) In the same epistle he also noted, “whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Romans 9:33) And making reference to Isaiah 28:16, Paul writes: “For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Romans 10:11)

The love of God in Christ that Paul experienced was so great that he was not and could not be ashamed of the Lord or His gospel. Expressing that love-built courage to Timothy, Paul wrote, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7) The Phillips translation puts it this way, “For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but a spirit of power and love and a sound mind.” True Christians need not fear, for God’s “perfect love casteth out fear.” (1 John 4:18)

Paul also wrote: “I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” (2 Timothy 1:12) Knowing the real Christ, not just some intellectual idea or philosophical concept enables one to be courageous and not ashamed of our Lord.

I am not ashamed of Jesus Christ. I am not ashamed that He is the Son of God and I am not ashamed to let people know what I believe and what I stand for. The gospel that I believe in gives me the courage, like Paul, to sign my name to what I write and what I believe. What I am saying may have more of an application for those who have accepted the truth about God and His only begotten Son, Jesus, than to those who write negatively. Remember Nicodemus. He was a silent follower of Jesus, what might be described as a “closet Christian.” I know quite a few people who have accepted, at

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# Ellen White Clearly Draws the Lines

PORTION OF A SERMON AT WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, JULY 31, 1885, TITLED "THE TRUE STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS." PUBLISHED IN THE REVIEW AND HERALD, AUGUST 25, 1885.

The question now to be asked is, Are the professed followers of Christ complying with the conditions upon which the blessing is pronounced? Are they separating in spirit and practice from the world? How hard to come out and be separate from worldly habits and customs! But let us look well to it that Satan does not allure and deceive us through false representations. Eternal interests are here involved. God's claims should come first; His requirements should receive our first attention.

Every child of fallen Adam must, through the transforming grace of Christ, become obedient to all God's requirements. Many close their eyes to the plainest teachings of His Word because the cross stands directly in the way. If they lift it, they must appear singular in the eyes of the world; and they hesitate and question and search for some excuse whereby they may shun the cross. Satan is ever ready, and he presents plausible reasons why it would not be best to obey the Word of God just as it reads. Thus souls are fatally deceived.

## A Successful Deception

One of Satan's most successful deceptions is to lead men to claim to be sanctified, while at the same time they are living in disobedience to God's commandments. These are described by Jesus as those who will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?"

Yes, those who claim to be sanctified have a great deal to say about being saved by the blood of Jesus, but their sanctification is not through the truth as it is in Jesus. While claiming to believe in Him, and apparently doing wonderful works in His name, they ignore His Father's law and serve as agents of the great adversary of souls to carry forward the work which he began in Eden, that of making plausible excuses for not obeying God implicitly. Their work of leading men to dishonor God by ignoring His law will one day be unfolded before them with its true results.

The conditions of eternal life are made so plain in God's Word that none need err, unless they choose error rather than truth because their unsanctified souls love the darkness rather than the light. The lawyer who came to Christ with the question, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" thought to catch Christ, but Jesus laid the burden back upon the lawyer. "What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Then said Christ, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25-28). These words meet the individual cases of all. Are we willing to comply with the conditions? Will we obey God and keep His commandments? Will we be doers of the Word and not hearers only? God's law is as immutable and unchangeable as His character. Whatever men may say or do to make it void does not change its claims or release them from their obligation to obey.

We need divine enlightenment daily; we should pray as did David, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psalm 119:18). God will have a people upon the earth who will vindicate His honor by having respect to all of His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous, not a yoke of bondage. David prayed in his day, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law" (verse 126).

Not one of us can afford to dishonor God by living in transgression of His law. To neglect the Bible and give ourselves up to the pursuit of worldly treasure is a loss which is beyond estimate. Eternity alone will reveal the great sacrifice made by many to secure worldly honor and worldly advantages, at the loss of the soul, the loss of eternal riches. They might have had that life which measures with the life of God; for Jesus died to bring the blessings and treasures of heaven within their reach, that they might not be accounted poor and wretched and miserable in the high estimate of eternity.

## None Enter As Commandment-breakers

None who have had the light of truth will enter the city of God as commandment-breakers. His law lies at the foundation of His government in earth and in heaven. If they have knowingly trampled upon and despised His law on the earth, they will not be taken to heaven to do the same work there; there is no change of character when Christ comes.

The character building is to go on during the hours of probation. Day by day their actions are registered in the books of heaven, and they will in the great day of God be rewarded as their works have been. It will then be seen who receives the blessing. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14).

Those who make a raid against God's law are warring against God Himself; and many who are filled with the greatest bitterness against the commandment-keeping people of God make the loudest boast of living holy, sinless lives. This can be explained only in one way: they have no mirror in which to look to discover to themselves the deformity of their character. Neither Joseph, Daniel, nor any of the apostles claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived nearest to

God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than to knowingly sin against Him, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have acknowledged themselves to be sinners, unworthy of His great favors. They have felt their weakness and, sorrowful for their sins, have tried to copy the pattern Jesus Christ.

## Just Two Classes— Obedient and Disobedient

There are to be but two classes upon the earth, the obedient children of God and the disobedient. Upon one occasion Christ thus set before His hearers the judgment work: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:31-40).

Thus Christ identifies His interest with that of suffering humanity. Every attention given to His children He considers done to Himself personally. Those who claim modern sanctification would have come boastingly forward, saying, “Lord, Lord, do You not know us? Have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?” The people here described, who make these pretentious claims, apparently weaving Jesus into all their doings, fitly represent those who claim modern sanctification but who are at war with the law of God. Christ calls them workers of iniquity because they are deceivers, having on the garments of righteousness to hide the deformity of their characters, the inward wickedness of their unholy hearts.

Satan has come down in these last days to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ Himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the

law of Jehovah. The Lord tells us if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. The sheep’s clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf can be discerned only as we go to God’s great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah.


## Now, if There Was Ever a Time

If ever there was a time when we needed faith and spiritual enlightenment, it is now. Those who are watching unto prayer and are searching the Scriptures daily with an earnest desire to know and do the will of God will not be led astray by any of the deceptions of Satan. They alone will discern the pretext which cunning men adopt to beguile and ensnare. So much time and attention are bestowed upon the world, upon dress and eating and drinking, that no time is left for prayer and the study of the Scriptures.

We want the truth on every point, and we must search for it as for hid treasures. Dishes of fables are presented to us on every hand, and men choose to believe error rather than truth, because the acceptance of the truth involves a cross. Self must be denied; self must be crucified. Therefore Satan presents to them an easier way by making void the law of God. When God lets man have his own way, it is the darkest hour of his life. For a willful, disobedient child to be left to have his own way, to follow the bent of his own mind and gather the dark clouds of God’s judgment about him, is a terrible thing.

But Satan has his agents who are too proud to repent and who are constantly at work to tear down the cause of Jehovah and trample it under their feet. What a day of sorrow and despair when these meet their work with all its burden of results! Souls who might have been saved to Jesus Christ have been lost through their teachings and influence.

Christ died for them that they might have life. He opened before them the way whereby they might, through His merits, keep the law of God. Christ says, “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” (Revelation 3:8). How hard men work to close that door; but they are not able. John’s testimony is, “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” (Revelation 11:19). Beneath the mercy seat, within the ark, were the two tables of stone, containing the law of Jehovah. God’s faithful ones saw the light that shone forth to them from the law, to be given to the world. And now Satan’s intense activity is to close that door of light; but Jesus says that no man can shut it. Men will turn from the light, denounce it, and despise it, but it still shines forth in clear, distinct rays to cheer and bless all who will see it.

God’s children will have a fierce conflict with the adversary of souls, and it will become more exceedingly bitter as we approach the close of the conflict. But the Lord will help those who stand in defense of His truth. (Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works*, pp. 41-46) 



# Report on the Work in Romania

By Vlad Ardeias

My dear brothers and sisters,

There have been so long since I wrote last time, but this is no reason to worry, but to give thanks to our Lord because the reason for my delay was that we have been traveling a lot and we had so many wonderful experiences in His work!

We have now abundant evidence that God took His work in His own hands here in Romania, as so many people understood the present truth and became free, free from any human or satanic bondage and they are now walking with Him, the One that died for their freedom! After the meeting that we had in autumn, the people went home and studied the issues that were presented during our 10-day meeting, and some of them went to their churches and affirmed their faith and asked for their names to be removed from the church's books! The pastors and the leaders begun a terrible war against us all, but we are strong in His power and Word. Those who oppose the truth are so weak, as the leaders of the Jews were powerful to stop the gospel in the times of the apostles. See Acts 5:33-42.

We concluded the year 2005 with five days of meetings devoted to the study of the imminent coming of our Lord and about the reasons of His delay. We came to the conclusion that only our sinful lives keep Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary and prevent us from receiving the latter rain. We studied about the blessed victorious life in Christ, and we conclude that, as God had to give His only begotten Son to die for our redemption, it was harder for Him to forgive our sins than to keep us away from sinning. As long as we will keep the whole armor of God upon us by faith (Ephesians 6:10-18), as long as we will keep our will on the side of His plans, as long as we will keep our eyes on Him, the victory over sin is as easy as breathing. As the heavenly Light will go deeper and deeper in our characters, we will see more and more sins and we will have struggles, yes, but "by the faith of Jesus Christ"

we can choose His righteousness to fill us instead of each and every sin! We concluded that we need to meet often and we decided to have a three-day convocation each month.

As we discovered that by video recordings we can spread the message cheaper, faster and more efficient, we started to make series of studies and sent them out to many that expressed their will to have them. The Lord blessed us with a



**Vlad & Andi Ardeias**

video camera and we have now more than 40 sermons ready to go out! I still need to learn some things about editing, but I hope that by God's grace and with the help of the brothers that are more experienced in this matter, we will soon be able to make better recordings.

Another good news is that Sister Ruxandra finished the translation of, *What Did the Pioneers Believe?* in French, and now she is working on *God's Love on Trial!* Please don't forget to pray for her and her Sister Gabriela! They have such beautiful experiences with God as He transformed their home in a church, and they have meetings every week there, and many people from different churches are coming to listen to the Word of God from their lips!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we see so many signs everywhere around us that the time is so very short. It became so obvious that we are witnesses of the last days of this world. Our Lord wanted to come for many years, so we may say that it's 12 o'clock but the watch stopped to wait for us! It is my prayer that all, and each one of us, will fully consecrate himself to the One that loves us so much and that is waiting to embrace us!

Please keep us in your prayers! I hope to meet you soon, and I really hope that our next meeting will be on our way to heaven, along with our Lord!



**Believers from the Romanian Meetings**

# Youth's Corner – Words to the Young

Of the child Jesus it is written, “And the Child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.” “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” The physical constitution of Jesus, as well as his spiritual development, is brought before us in these words, “the child grew,” and “increased in stature.” In childhood and youth attention should be given to physical development. Parents should so train their children in good habits of eating, drinking, dressing, and exercise, that a good foundation will be laid for sound health in after life. The physical organism should have special care, that the powers of the body may not be dwarfed, but developed to their full extent. This places the children and youth in a favorable position, so that, with proper religious training, they may, like Christ, wax strong in spirit.

The life of Jesus was filled with industry, and he took exercise in performing varied tasks in harmony with his developing physical strength. In doing the work that was marked out for him, he had no time for indulgence in exciting, useless amusements. He took no part in that which would poison the moral and lower the physical tone, but was trained in useful labor, and even for the endurance of hardship. Many claim that it is necessary for the preservation of physical health to indulge in selfish amusement. It is true that change is required for the best development of the body, for mind and body are refreshed and invigorated by change; but this object is not gained by indulgence in foolish amusements, to the neglect of daily duties which the youth should be required to do. The active mind and hands of youth must have employment, and if they are not directed to tasks that are useful, that will develop them and bless others, they will find employment in that which will work injury to them in both body and mind.

The youth should cheerfully share the burdens of life with their parents, and by so doing preserve a clear conscience, which is positively necessary to physical and moral health. In doing this, they should be guarded from being taxed in the same direction for any great length of time. If the youth are kept steadily at one kind of employment, until the task becomes irksome, less will be accomplished than might have been through a change of work, or a season of relaxation. If the mind is too severely taxed, it will cease to become strong, and will degenerate. By a change in the work, health and vigor may be retained. There will be no need to cast aside the useful for the useless; for selfish amusements are dangerous to the morals. It is not necessary that the youth should be inactive, or should engage in folly, in order to retain physical strength. Let heart and mind and hands be engaged in doing

good, in blessing others; let the work be regulated by the principles of truth, in harmony with the dictates of conscience; and let the worker feel his accountability to God.

No amusement is safe for our youth to indulge in, unless they can bow down and ask God's blessing upon it before engaging in it. If they cannot take Jesus with them to their scenes of pleasure, they may take it for granted that such amusements are positively dangerous, both to physical and moral health. If you would not be willing to have Jesus come and find you engaged in your chosen amusements, you may know that you cannot engage in them today with safety. If your conscience tells you that you are doing wrong in the pursuit of pleasure, you may know that your amusements are not calculated to make you grow as did Jesus, waxing strong in spirit, to resist the devices of the enemy.

The youth generally are weak and vacillating. They have but little strength to pursue a right course. If sinners entice them, they have no courage to say, “No.” Yet God has commanded that we should decidedly refuse to do evil. “If sinners entice thee, consent thou not,” are the words of Inspiration. We cannot afford to sin against the light that God has given us; for by so doing, the conscience becomes blunted. We are now passing through the period of our probation, and we may know for a certainty that it is wrong for us to engage in any amusement of a character that will destroy our love for serious reflection, and destroy a relish for spiritual things. The welfare of the soul should not be endangered by the gratification of any selfish desire, and we should shun any amusement which so fascinates the mind that



Ellen G. White

the ordinary duties of life seem tame and uninteresting. By indulgence in such pleasure, the mind becomes confirmed in a wrong direction, and Satan so perverts the thoughts that wrong is made to appear as right. Then restraint and submission to parents, such as Christ rendered to his parents, seem unbearable.

The greater part of the amusements of the present time are originated through the agents of Satan, to allure and deceive the young, and even to allure those of more mature age, so that the things of eternity may be dropped out of our reckoning. Amusements coming from such a source will unbalance the mind, disqualify the body for the performance of daily responsibilities, and create a positive dislike for practical domestic duties. Christ presents before us a pattern for youth and

**“No amusement is safe for our youth to indulge in, unless they can bow down and ask God's blessing upon it before engaging in it.”**

children. His early life was lived under conditions favorable to the obtaining of physical development, and to the acquisition of moral power to resist temptation, so that he might remain untainted amid the corruption of wicked Nazareth.

Parents make a mistake in rushing their children into society at an early age, fearing that they will not know anything unless they attend parties, and mingle with those who are lovers of pleasure. Even while they are at school, they allow their children to attend parties and mingle in society. This is a great mistake. In this way children learn evil much faster than they do the sciences, and their minds are filled with useless things; while their passion for amusement is developed to such an extent that it is impossible for them to obtain a knowledge of even the common branches of education. Their attention is divided between education and a love of pleasure, and as the love of pleasure predominates, their intellectual advancement is slow. Thus it is that during the time when youth should take

advantage of their privileges to lay a strong foundation for character and usefulness, they live in inactivity and vanity, and fail of the object that they should attain.

The education of Christ, during the time he was subject to his parents, was of the most valuable kind. In performing the common duties of life, he became inured to a life of privation and hardship. The physical and mental exercise that was necessary to the performance of his tasks, developed both physical and mental strength. His life of industry and retirement closed the avenues through which Satan could enter to tempt him to the love of vanity and display. He waxed strong in body and spirit, thus gaining a preparation for the duties of manhood, and for the performance of the important duties that afterward devolved upon him. He increased in wisdom and stature, growing in favor with God and man. Let our youth do likewise. (Mrs. E. G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, July 27, 1893)

*"I Sign My Name," continued from p. 6*

least on an intellectual basis, the truth about God, but they believe that they are called to be silent followers of Jesus because they can accomplish much this way. I cannot be conscience for anybody; however, how many converts did Nicodemus win before the cross? Historically, how many people really came out ahead being "closet Christians?" The real truth of the matter is, it is because some are ashamed of the Lord that they try to work so quietly, looking for those that will not be offended and carefully avoiding anyone else.

Beloved, if we can take only a little bit of scorn now, how shall we stand during the greatest trial God's people will ever see? God asks through Jeremiah, "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jeremiah 12:5)

In America, when we want someone to affix their signature to a document we often say, "Put your John Hancock to this." The term, "John Hancock", has become a synonym for a signature.

The story behind it, according to the *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia*, goes

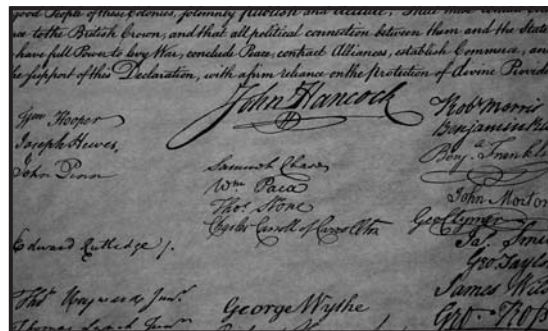
like this: John Hancock was born on January 23, 1737, in Braintree (now part of Quincy), Massachusetts, and was educated at Harvard College (now Harvard University). After his graduation (1754), he joined the mercantile firm of his uncle and guardian, the colonial businessman Thomas Hancock. In 1764 he inherited the business

1770, he served on the committee that demanded the removal of British troops from Boston. He was prominently identified with the colonial cause thereafter, working closely with the revolutionary patriot Samuel Adams in the leadership of the Whig, or Patriot, Party in Massachusetts. After the Battles of Lexington and Concord on April 18-19, 1775, which began the American Revolution, he and Adams were specifically excluded from the general amnesty offered to the revolutionary leaders by the British two months later.

"From 1775 to 1780 Hancock was a member of the Continental Congress, serving as a presiding officer during the first two years. By virtue of this office, he was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence."

When Hancock signed the now famous document, he affixed his signature abnormally large to be sure that King George III of England would be sure to see it. He was not ashamed to be one of the rebels against the king.

Paul says that we are epistles, "known and read of all men." (2 Corinthians 3:2) Are you willing to put your "John Hancock" to all you do, write, and say? Are you willing to stand up for the Lord now and always? You need an experimental knowledge of



**John Hancock's signature on the Declaration of Independence**

and a substantial fortune. He was elected to the Massachusetts legislature two years later.

"Hancock first became embroiled with the British government in 1768, when customs officials seized his sloop Liberty because he had unloaded a cargo of Madeira wine without paying import duties. His vigorous defense in the ensuing lawsuits won him wide popularity among the anti-British elements in Massachusetts. After the Boston Massacre of

*Continued on p. 12, col. 2*

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*“Prayer Requests,” continued from p. 1*

and for God’s people, that God alone will direct and lead in the plans made and that they, as His servants, will do all for His honor and glory.

This past month has been filled with much sickness and death. Please remember Pastor Allen’s mother, Mary Sinnett, in your prayers, as her husband, Robert, recently died. Other deaths have occurred among the family of God and we want to uplift the bereaving ones, by prayer, into the loving arms of our Savior, Who has promised to comfort them that mourn.

Soon a new pressman will join our staff, and we will introduce him to you next month, but please pray now that the press will once again frequently roll with fire and determination to spread God’s Word to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

And finally, let’s pray that we all will be faithful to our high calling in Christ Jesus, for the end of all things is surely upon us.

*Onycha Holt*

*“I Sign My Name,” continued from p. 11*

Jesus. When we have this we can boldly go forward, not fearing what man can or will do.

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” (Psalms 118:6)“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Hebrews 13:6)

*Allen Stump*

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