

# 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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## The Holy Spirit

### Part 4 – Receiving the Spirit of Christ

(The Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (quarterly) for the second quarter of 2006 is on the subject of the Holy Spirit. This is the second of three issues especially dedicated to reviewing this subject in light of the quarterly.)

Jesus repeatedly stated that He would be with His followers and dwell with them.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. (John 14:18)

I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:20)

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:20)

Most students interpret these texts to mean that Jesus will be with us through the separate person of the Spirit, the Comforter; however, as we noticed last month (and as we will continue to see), Jesus *is* the Comforter.

In Colossians 1:27, the Apostle Paul wrote: “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” A parallel passage is in 2 Timothy 1:14: “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” In Colossians, Paul says that Christ dwells in us, and, writing to Timothy, he says that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. This makes perfect sense when we add 2 Corinthians 3:17 to the picture, “Now the Lord is that Spirit.”

### A Vital Point

A vital issue at stake in our understanding of the Holy Spirit is whether the believer may truly have the personal presence of God the Father, and/or the real, personal presence of His Son in his or her life. Many times congregations pray for the presence of God or Christ to be in their midst, but do we really believe that Christ Himself will meet with His people? Do we really mean that

**SPECIAL NOTICE: Extra copies of this issue will be available upon request for sharing among Sabbath School members and interested parties. Last month we printed several hundred extra copies, most all of which have been used.**

## Prayer Requests

By the time you read this, Pastor Stump will be in attendance at an international convention in the south-east part of Nigeria, the Lord willing. Please pray that his work will have lasting results and that he will return home safely. Also we thank you for your prayers for Lynnford Beachy’s trip to Brazil. He should be arriving home about the time you receive this issue of *Old Paths*. In addition, we covet your prayers for our upcoming camp meeting, scheduled for June 20-24, 2006, that it will be a Spirit-filled convocation, that God’s blessings will be richly received by all, and that every camping space will be filled. Because of the

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Jesus will and can be in some literal way in the presence of believers even if we cannot explain it? (After all, there are many things we can't explain that we accept as fact. I may not understand all that takes place under the cover of my computer case, but I know that something happens and I can believe in it even if I do not understand how it occurs.)

The Trinitarian, being consistent with his teaching, says that neither God nor Christ are present. They are only present by proxy via the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian doctrine then robs one of the hope of being in the real, personal presence of God, but thank the Lord that we need not be left comfortless. When we understand that Jesus Himself comes by His Spirit, we know it is not another person or being or a part of a triune god that comes to us, but Jesus Himself.

Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. (*The Desire of Age*, p. 827)

The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. (*The Desire of Age*, p. 806)

He gave this simple ordinance that it might be a special season when he himself would always be present, to lead all participating in it to feel the pulse of their own conscience, to awaken them to an understanding of the lessons symbolized, to revive their memory, to convict of sin, and to receive their penitential repentance. (*Review & Herald*, June 14, 1898)

Ephesians 3:17 tells us that Christ is to dwell in our hearts by faith. In Scripture the term heart is used for the mind. The Lord Jesus wants to dwell in our minds. This is also seen in the following texts: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." (Ephesians 3:16) "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (Romans 7:22) The expressions "the inner man" and "the inward man" are identical in the Greek. ( ) In Romans 7:22 Paul states that he delights in God's law "after the inward man," and then in verse 25 says that with "the mind" he serves "the law of God." So when Paul writes that we are to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," (Philippians 2:5) he is telling us to actively have and exercise the mind of Christ, which was the mind of the Father (His will, intellect, and character).

Can Jesus really dwell in His people in a literal way? The Bible seems to speak of this in such terms that it is difficult to deny the reality. The comprehension of how this reality occurs is beyond the limits of the human mind; however, the acceptance of it is a matter of faith in God's Word. The Bible teaches that even demons have literally inhabited and possessed people. (See Mark 1:23-26; 3:11, 12; etc.)

### *God's Words are Spirit*

Another way that Jesus explained this wonderful experience of dwelling in and with his disciples is described in John

6:63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*" Jesus said that "it is the spirit that quickeneth" or gives life. He later declared that He was "the resurrection, and the life." (John 11:25) Jesus gives His Spirit not only by His personal presence but also through His words. Paul speaks of this in his epistle to the Galatians:

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* (Galatians 3:1-5)

Paul states that the Galatians had first received the Spirit "by the hearing of faith." Since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," (Romans 10:17) the Galatians received the Spirit through the hearing of the Word of God. This explains the meaning of Galatians 3:5 when Paul speaks of ministering the Spirit. This text makes little sense when interpreted with a Trinitarian theology; however, if the Spirit that Paul speaks of as being ministered is God's thoughts and character being served through His words, then the text makes perfect sense. Paul emphasized that this Spirit is ministered by "the hearing of faith."

God's holy, educating Spirit is in His word. A light, a new and precious light, shines forth from every page. (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 132)

### *The Latter Rain*

Inseparable from the concept of receiving the Spirit of Christ is the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the latter rain. To have an understanding of the latter rain, its purpose and effect, we must first understand the mission of the Son of God. Jesus stated in Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Christ also declared Himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6) Jesus, "the truth," would send the "spirit of truth." (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13) This would be done for the purpose of guiding the disciples of Christ into all truth (John 16:13); therefore, a portion of the work of the Spirit of God is to reveal truth for the saving of souls.

On the day of Pentecost the disciples received the promise of the Spirit in what was prophesied as the "early rain." This, along with the latter rain, is described by Joel:

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my

spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call. (Joel 2:23, 28, 32)

The purpose of the message is given in verse 32: “whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered [saved].” Peter quotes the message of Joel 2:28-32 on the day of Pentecost. This was a message of salvation and redemption—the early rain that had been foretold. The disciples were given a message and then great power to give that message for the saving of souls and for the glory of God.

Seventh-day Adventists have been waiting for the latter rain to empower them to give the loud cry. We have been waiting for power to prepare our lives for the coming of Jesus, yet, sadly for most of us, each new year seems to reveal little progress. Why do most of us live in a spiritual drought? In part, it is because of our misunderstanding of what the latter rain is and what it is to accomplish.

An examination of the day of Pentecost reveals some important points. Concerning physical manifestations on the day of Pentecost, the Scriptures fail to tell us of any lame people being healed; of any blind eyes being opened; of any dead being raised to life; or of any visions being given. There were physical manifestations of healings, of visions, and even of raising of the dead *after* the early rain was first given. On the day of Pentecost the most visible special physical manifestation of the Spirit was the gift of tongues and that was given for the proclamation of a message! Pentecost reveals God’s plan for the early and latter rain. First, He gave a message through the Spirit of truth and then power to deliver that message. A very special message has been given to Seventh-day Adventists.

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92)

God sent a message to deliver us from the bondage of both sin and man that was to bring the people to a “genuine faith which works by love and purifies the soul.” (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 704) This faith leads the believer into obedience to all the commandments of God. Sister White continues:

Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless

human agent. *This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world.* It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.

Now, it has been Satan’s determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore *God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel’s message, in clear, distinct lines.* (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 92, 93)

Elders Waggoner and Jones, whom Sister White refers to, were two young ministers that God used as “messengers” to His church, especially at the Minneapolis General Conference of 1888.

The Lord has raised up Brother Jones and Brother Waggoner to proclaim a message to the world to prepare a people to stand in the day of God. The world is suffering the need of *additional light to come to them upon the Scriptures*, — additional proclamation of the principles of purity, lowliness, faith and the righteousness of Christ. This is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p.1814)

I have had the question asked, what do you think of this light which these men [A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner] are presenting? Why, I have been presenting it to you for the last 45 years,—the matchless charms of Christ. This is what I have been trying to present before your minds. (*Sermons and Talks*, pp. 117, 118—Sermon delivered at Rome, N. Y., June 17, 1889.)

Jones and Waggoner were presenting “the matchless charms of Christ” with wonderful clarity. Ellen White heartily accepted their message and rejoiced in it. She described the message as the beginning of the loud cry of the third angel!

The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth. (*Review & Herald*, Nov. 22, 1892)

The message that Jones, Waggoner, and Ellen White were giving from 1888 till the mid 1890’s was the beginning of the loud cry. The latter rain was beginning to be poured out, yet a search of our history fails to find great physical miracles during this time. God was sending a message to His people to give to the world. This was a message of salvation and its proclamation would lighten the whole earth with the glory of God. Obviously this message was cut off or God’s people would have long ago been in the kingdom. 1888 was the beginning of the Adventists’ Kadeshbarnea. God wanted to

take His people in the heavenly Canaan but we rejected His leading as the children of Israel did centuries before.

The Scriptures plainly testify of the rain that God still wishes to send His people today. "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." (Deuteronomy 32:1, 2) In verse two God's doctrine (His words) is equated with the rain and His speech with the dew and rain. Proverbs 1:23 says: "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." Here the pouring out of God's Spirit is equated with making known His words. This complements what Jesus said in John 6:63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Ellen White said:

God designs that the message of redemption shall come to His people as the latter rain. (*Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1900)

The latter rain is to be received as light from heaven for a sin-sick world, special light from heaven concerning the redemption of man. This helps enlarge our understanding of the following statements:

If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door. (*Review & Herald*, March 2, 1897)

But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection. (*Ibid.*)

Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. (*Ibid.*)

Truth is progressive. If we do not receive into our lives the light and truth of the early rain, we will not be able to receive the latter rain. The truth may be received by hearts all around us, yet we are unable to discern it or to receive it. A. T. Jones gave a series of studies at the 1893 General Conference Session entitled, "The Third Angel's Message." In his ninth message, Elder Jones clearly noted the relationship of the latter rain to light and the teaching of righteousness:

You remember the other evening when I was reading that second chapter of Joel, that one of the brethren, when I had read that 23d verse, — Brother Corliss — called attention to the margin. Do you remember that? And I said we would have use for the margin at another time. Now all of you turn and read that margin. The 23d verse says: "Be glad, then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord

your God: for he hath given you *the former rain*, moderately." What is the margin? "*A teacher of righteousness.*" He hath given you "a teacher of righteousness." How? "According to righteousness." "And he will cause to come down for you the rain;" then what will that be? When he gave the former rain, what was it? "A teacher of righteousness." And when he gives *the latter rain* what will it be? "*A teacher of righteousness.*" How? "According to righteousness." Then is not that just what the testimony has told us in that article that has been read to you several times? "The loud cry of the third angel," the latter rain has already begun, "in the message of the righteousness of Christ." Is not that what Joel told us long ago? Has not our eye been held that we did not see? Did not we need the anointing? Brethren, what in the world do we need so much as that? How glad we ought to be that God sends his own Spirit in the prophets to show us, when we did not see! How infinitely glad we ought to be for that!

Well then the latter rain — the loud cry — according to the testimony, and according to the Scripture, is "the teaching of righteousness," and "according to righteousness," too. Now brethren, when did that message of the righteousness of Christ, begin with us as a people? [One or two in the audience: "Three or four years ago."] Which was it, three? or four? [Congregation: "Four."] Yes, four. Where was it? [Congregation: "Minneapolis."] What then did the brethren reject at Minneapolis? [Some in the Congregation: "The loud cry."] What is that message of righteousness? The Testimony has told us what it is; the loud cry — the latter rain. Then what did the brethren in that fearful position in which they stood, reject at Minneapolis? They rejected the latter rain — the loud cry of the third angel's message.

Of course the brethren did not know they were doing this, but the Spirit of the Lord was there to tell them they were doing it, was it not? But when they were rejecting the loud cry, "the teaching of righteousness," and then the Spirit of the Lord, by his prophet, stood there and told us what they were doing, - what then? Oh, then they simply set this prophet aside with all the rest. That was the next thing. Brethren, it is time to think of these things. It is time to think soberly, to think carefully. (*1893 General Conference Daily Bulletin*, p. 183 - emphasis in original)

Commenting and expanding on these concepts, Jones stated in his eleventh study:

What is the margin? "He hath given you the former rain?" What is that? — "A teacher of righteousness." — "Given you the former rain moderately." What is that, moderately? What was the former rain at Pentecost? — "A teacher of righteousness." "He hath given you a teacher of righteousness according to righteousness." Was that the former rain? And he will give you "the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain," as at the first. What will the latter

rain be? — “A teacher of righteousness” again. According to what? [Congregation: “Righteousness.”] But what is another expression for the latter rain? [Congregation: “The outpouring of the Spirit.”] What is another one? [Congregation: “The times of refreshing.”] What is the latter rain to the third angel’s message? [Congregation: “The loud cry.”] What is the latter rain in connection with the fall of Babylon? — It is the bestowal of that power, and that glory, with which the angel of Rev. 18 comes down and lightens the earth.

Now let us read a few passages of those that we have had already to get the connection here definitely. On page 58 of the BULLETIN in Brother Haskell’s lesson, we had, as it was read from the REVIEW of Nov. 22nd, these words: [from Ellen White]—

“The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ. . . . This is the beginning of the light of the third angel, whose glory shall fill the whole earth.”

Another passage on page 16 of the BULLETIN, in that Testimony that was read:—

“Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness.”

What “work will be cut short in righteousness”? [Congregation: — “God’s work.”]

“The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the world to the other. This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.”

What is this message of Christ’s righteousness as we read here before in these other places? — “This is the beginning of the light of the third angel, whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” Now, “This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.” Then, when we have come to that time what time have we reached? [Congregation:— “The loud cry of the message.”] We have reached the time when God is going to close it up. That is the glory that closes the work of the message.

Now, another thing: What is that first expression which we have just read? — “He will cut it short in righteousness.” Then when that message of God’s righteousness — the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, God’s right doing — when that is received and is allowed to be carried on, and is held by his people, what does that mean about the work of God on earth? — It will be but a short time until the whole thing is done.

Now, that message of the righteousness of Christ is the loud cry. It is the latter rain. . . . Now there is the connection. The testimonies tell us what it is and Joel tells us what it is. . . . Joel says, according to the margin, that it is a teacher of righteousness, that which brings the teaching of righteousness according to righteousness. Whose idea of righteousness? [Congregation: “God’s.”] No, mine. [Con-

gregation: “No.”] Why? If I receive the righteousness of Christ according to my idea, is not that enough? Is not that receiving the latter rain? Is not that receiving the righteousness of Christ? [Congregation: “No sir, it is your own righteousness.”] But that is what is the matter with a good many people who have heard this message of the righteousness of Christ. They have received the message of the righteousness of Christ according to their own idea of what his righteousness is, and they have not the righteousness of Christ at all. (*Ibid.*, pp. 242, 243)

No false idea of Christ’s righteousness is more damnable than the pagan-papal Trinity doctrine that denies that God had a Son to send to die for the sins of mankind. Further, most who hold this dark error also deny that Jesus came in the same sinful flesh that humanity must struggle against sin with. The message that Jones and Waggoner taught was not Trinitarian. They taught and believed that Jesus was the literal Son of God and that He accepted our sinful nature in the incarnation. They also taught and heartily endorsed the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary. These three pillars of faith were evident in the preaching of the 1888 messengers. In comparison to that which is taught today, it becomes easy to see why the message has been cut off. We have denied the basic doctrines of the three angels’ messages, yet we have been led to believe that we already have the whole message and must simply await God’s timetable for the receiving of great power to give that message which has been reduced to Babylonian error!

Before the loud cry can be given, the message must first be restored to God’s people. Time is nearly finished. The wickedness of this earth and the thousands who perish each day constrain God to move quickly. The current revival of interest in the truth about God and His Son is the result of God’s attempt to restore that foundational light to His people. But even a return to the light of 1888 is only to be the beginning. The truth about God and Christ reveals the Scriptures as never previously seen. Old truths become clearer and more brilliant. New truths emerge, not teachings that set aside old truths, but teachings that magnify and brighten old truths. In our search for this truth we have the one great unerring standard of God’s word: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20)

### *Satan’s Unholy Influence*

The word of God, not miracles or the excitement of wild celebrations, must be the guardian of our souls. We may enter into churches and see miracles, healings, and celebrations, but that does not mean the latter rain has come. There is a spirit there, but it is the spirit of Satan. We are told that he can breathe his unholy influence upon people, imbuing them with his thoughts, mind, words, and character.

Then I saw the Father rise from the throne and in a flaming chariot go into the Holy of Holies within the veil, and

did sit. There I saw thrones which I had not seen before. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and most of those who were bowed down rose up with him. And I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after he rose up, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who rose up when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on him as he left the throne, and led them out a little way, then he raised his right arm and we heard his lovely voice saying, wait ye, I am going to my Father to receive the Kingdom. Keep your garments spotless and in a little while I will return from the wedding, and receive you to myself. And I saw a cloudy chariot with wheels like flaming fire. Angels were all about the chariot as it came where Jesus was; he stepped into it and was borne to the Holiest where the Father sat. Then I beheld Jesus as he was before the Father a great High Priest. ... Then Jesus shewed me the difference between faith and feeling. And I saw those who rose up with Jesus send up their faith to Jesus in the Holiest, and praying, Father give us thy spirit. Then Jesus would breathe on them the Holy Ghost. In the breath was light, power and much love, joy and peace. Then I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne. They did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne and pray, My Father give us thy spirit. Then Satan would breathe on them an unholy influence. In it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children. *I saw one after another leave the company who were praying to Jesus in the Holiest, go and join those before the throne and they at once received the unholy influence of Satan.* (*The Day Star*, March 14, 1846 – See also *Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56)

### *Miracles are not the Test*

The appeal of certain brethren is to “stay with the ship; she’s going through and the miracles and the thousands being baptized each day are proof.” This must be met with a “thus saith the Lord.” Miracles are not a proof, especially in the last days. Revelation tells us plainly that many false miracles will be worked in the last days by Satan and his agents:

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. *For they are the spirits of devils*, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Revelation 16:13, 14)

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those *miracles which he had power to do* in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. (Revelation 13:13, 14)

Christians of all times, but especially last-day Christians, must follow the counsel of 2 Corinthians 5:7: “We walk by faith [hearing of the word], not by sight.” The Spirit of Prophecy has given us insight to the reaction of unconsecrated men to the message to be given in the loud cry:

When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 300)

The third angel’s message will not be comprehended, the light which will lighten the earth with its glory will be called a false light, by those who refuse to walk in its advancing glory. (*Review and Herald*, May 27, 1890)

There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations, they will oppose the work. (*Review and Herald*, December 23, 1890)

The timing of the last two statements reveals God knew that the message being given by His “messengers” would be rejected. History testifies that our people did indeed view the message as something dangerous and perhaps the saddest part of our history is that we are repeating that same rejection today. The majority of Adventism today has rejected the light that was understood and taught by Jones and Waggoner. The nature of God, Christ in the incarnation, and His high priestly ministry are all under attack by the new theology. Sadly, many who profess to oppose the new theology under the heading of “Historic Adventism” reject the truth about God and His Son, and in so doing reject the early leading of God in the Advent Movement.

Brethren, it is time that we left our own ideas of righteousness behind and accept Christ’s righteousness which is “pure, unadulterated truth.” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 65)

Only as we receive of the early rain can we be ready to receive the latter rain. When we deny doctrines fundamental to the three angels’ messages we cannot expect to be led further into truth and righteousness. “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3)

“Daily he [Jesus] received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit.” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 140) If our Saviour needed this baptism, how much more do we need it?

*Allen Stump*

# *The Effects of the Trinity Doctrine on the God of Love*

In *The Review and Herald* of November 5, 1861 we find the this note written to James White:

“The following questions I would like to have you give, or send to Bro. Loughborough for explanation. Question 1. What serious objection is there to the doctrine of the Trinity.”

Elder Loughborough replied in part:

There are many objections which we might urge, but on account of our limited space we shall reduce them to the three following: 1. It is contrary to common sense. 2. It is contrary to scripture. 3. Its origin is Pagan and fabulous.

While Elder Loughborough was correct, the issue goes much deeper. The doctrine of the Trinity is considered by some to be on the same level as the teaching of Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. People might say, “we know they are not really true, but it doesn’t hurt anything either. They are our custom and kids enjoy them”; however, Trinitarian doctrine is dangerous because it attacks the very heart of the gospel message, and it does it in a most insidious way.

## *The Trinity Denies the Father-Son Relationship*

The doctrine of the Trinity was not part of the early Christian Church. At a recent symposium on the Trinity at Southern Adventist University, History Professor John Reeve, commenting on who understood the Trinity in the first few centuries, stated that nobody had it right between 100 A.D. and 381 A.D.

The Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) and the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) gave the basis for the Trinity which is defined as “One God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal persons.”

This doctrine destroys the Father-Son relationship between God and Christ, reducing it to role-playing. God is not really the Father and Christ is not really a Son. This is tragic! The Bible teaches the truth that God is the Father of Jesus and that Jesus is His only begotten Son. It is this very relationship that God says proves His love and provides to mankind the surety that all of God’s promises to leave no stone unturned for man’s salvation are true.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9, 10)

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)

The giving of God’s only begotten Son is noted in the Scripture as the grand proof of His great love for mankind. If God and Christ are coequal, coeternal and if the Father so loved us, then why did He not come and die for our sins? If “Jesus” could do this and He was coequal with the Father, then the Father could have come and died for our sins. If the Father could have died for our sins, it would have been self-ish of Him to send another when He could have come. Where is the love and giving and sacrifice in that plan? But wait! The Bible says that God the Father cannot die. He “only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” (1 Timothy 6:16) If God could have died for mankind I believe He would have, but He could not; however, He could send his only begotten Son, Who could die, and that was a sacrifice!

This sacrifice and struggle was typified in God’s command to Abraham to offer up Isaac, as recorded in Genesis 22. This event was a microcosm of the plan of salvation. Isaac represented Jesus Christ, Who was to die the sacrifice for our sin. Abraham represented God the Father, Who would give His Son. While we marvel at Isaac’s willingness to be bound and to put upon the altar, the focus of the story is the internal struggle of Abraham. Interestingly, Abraham was told to offer Isaac as a “burnt offering.” (Genesis 22:2) A burnt offering typified the total giving of oneself. In giving His Son, God could do no more.

Through type and promise God “preached before the gospel unto Abraham.” Galatians 3:8. ...

It was to impress Abraham's mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man’s redemption. No other test could have caused Abraham such torture of soul as did the offering of his son. God gave His Son to a death of agony and shame. The angels who witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God were not permitted to interpose, as in the case of Isaac. There was no voice to cry, “It is enough.” To save the fallen race, the King of glory yielded up His life. What stronger proof can be given of the infinite compassion and love of God? “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. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 154)

The demonstration of this beautiful plan is marred by the Trinity doctrine. Satan well knows that if mankind can be lead to question God’s love, it will bring about man’s ruin. It was doubting God’s love that put Satan on a collision course

for destruction. That is why the Trinity was devised by Satan. It destroys God's love and sets up a false person to be worshipped with God and Christ. This position Satan is well pleased to fill.

Our God is omniscient and He is well aware of Satan's plans and how truly dangerous they are for mankind; therefore, God has given some of the most plain, pointed, and easy-to-understand testimonies to warn His people. He declares the concept that denies the Father and Son relationship to be "antichrist!"

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:22)

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 7-11)

The doctrine that denies the Father and Son is described by Inspiration as evil and one that produces "evil deeds!" While Christians are to be kind and Christ-like to all, to support or enable those that teach such doctrines of devils is denounced by God in the most straight and plain terms.

To declare that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah is to confess Him to be the Son of God. The Pharisees taught that the Messiah was only David's son; however, the disciples knew better. (See Matthew 22:41-45.) Peter declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16) Martha confessed, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." (John 11:27) Even the demons were compelled to admit this truth: "And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God." (Luke 4:41)

The gospel of John is claimed by many to teach the Trinitarian doctrine, but John says the whole purpose of his writing the gospel of Christ's life was so that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:31)

### *The Cross Demonstrates God's Love*

The death of Christ proves the love of God. "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19) That love is what motivates the Christian: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." (2 Corinthians 5:14) Christ is the perfect revelation of the character of God. When Paul beheld Jesus lifted up on the cross, he saw the love and sacrifice of the Father. While the Father could not die physically, He could send a message

at the cross of the eternal, unselfish principles of His character. God, through Christ, has declared that He will love and serve even the creatures He has made, no matter what the personal inconvenience, pain, and suffering to Himself. He is willing to serve and save man at any cost to Himself. Referring to the charges that Satan had made against God, Ellen White wrote:

Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father. (*Review & Herald*, February 18, 1890)

Not only did the cross answer questions concerning the character of God, the death of Christ revealed the true nature of Satan and sin. Calvary revealed the character of rebellion. It showed that Satan would go to any length to cause suffering to God. There is no limit to the effort Satan would put forth to have things his way. Satan was demonstrating the principle that has motivated him: he expects others to serve him at any expense necessary. Unlike God, who is willing to offer service at His expense to us, Satan expects our service to him at our expense!

Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." What Christ is telling us is that as our love for Him grows, we will accept the principle of the cross which is a willingness to serve others at our own expense. The unconverted heart follows the principle of Satan. The converted heart follows the principle of Christ. Only the true death of the only begotten Son, as demonstrated at Calvary, can motivate men's hearts to make such a change. Satan knows this and tries to hide this great love from mankind with such diabolical teachings as the Trinity, but Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

*Allen Stump*



*"Prayer Request" continued from page 1.*

agitation in current Sabbath Schools around the world due to the present study on the Holy Spirit, please join us in prayer that the truth of God's Word will shine as a bright and clear light, illuminating each and every heart and mind as this important subject is studied.

*Onycha Holt*



# What does “Only Begotten” Mean?

By Allen Stump

Virtually all Christians give “lip service” to the claim that Jesus is God’s Son; however, most theologians do not accept that Jesus is the literal begotten Son of God. They believe, instead, that He is a coequal and coeternal “person” of the Godhead but not the literal offspring of the Father. They say the term “son” is to be understood as a role or a symbolic position assumed to help humanity in his own language understand the love and sacrifice of God for man.

May we leave the thoughts of the theologians behind and examine what the Word of God says? The term “only begotten” is from the Greek term, μονογενης (*monogenes*). This is a compound word from two Greek words. The first, μονος (*monos*), means “one” or “only one,” and the second word, γενος (*genos*), means kindred or offspring. Together they mean “only born.”

At a recent symposium on the Trinity held at Southern Adventist University, a speaker defined *monogenes* to mean “unique.” In doing this he is following the lead of many other theologians. The basis for such a translation is found in Hebrews 11:17 which states: “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten (*monogenes*) son.” Isaac was not Abraham’s only begotten son; he was not even Abraham’s first son. Ishmael was Abraham’s first son and Abraham also had sons by Keturah. If we read the next verse we can see a more complete picture because Hebrews 11:17 does not end with a period but with a comma. Reading verses 17 and 18 together as a unit, as they were intended to be read, the text says:

**By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called.**

Isaac was Abraham’s only born child of which the promise of the seed was made to! There was a condition given by Paul and *monogenes* fits that condition. It is interesting that the very theologians who decry the proof text method in the place of “higher criticism” would so conveniently neglect context in this vital topic!

Let us look at how the term *monogenes* is used elsewhere in the Bible. Does it really mean only born or only begotten? This term is used in reference to Jesus five times in the Bible, always by John. (John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16, 3:18, 1 John 4:9) The only other references are three passages in the book of Luke. An honest reading of John’s and Luke’s writings, without a preconceived notion, would lead the reader to accept them at face value. Since we are looking for a usage to enlighten us on the passages from John, let’s examine the three usages from Luke. The first is concerning the widow of Nain’s son.

“Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only (*monogenes*) [“only-begotten,” Rothrham, translation] son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.” (Luke 7:12) There is no indication that *monogenes* means anything other than only born child here.

The second reference is Luke 8:42 concerning Jarius’ daughter. “For he had *one only (monogenes)* [“only begotten”—Rothrham translation] daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.” No indication that *monogenes* means anything other than only born child here.

The third usage is Luke 9:38 where a man’s son was possessed with an evil spirit “And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine *only child (monogenes)*.” There is no indication that *monogenes* means anything other than only born child here. In each of these cases *monogenes* makes reference to an only born child.

Clearly, the Greek word *monogenes* means only born. Christ is the literal offspring of the Father and this certainly agrees with Proverbs 8 where, speaking under the symbol of Wisdom, Christ declares:

**The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth [Hebrew: born]; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth [Hebrew: born]. (Proverbs 8:22-25)**

Before anything else was ever in existence, God, through Christ, brought into existence all things, both things “visible and invisible.” (Colossians 3:16) This included the concepts of “time” and “space”; therefore, in the sense that Christ is the author of time, Christ has truly existed throughout all time with God. (See *The Sabbath*, pp. 54, 55 – M.L. Andreasen.)

Satan is behind the false view that Jesus is not the Son of God because he does not want you to know, believe and dwell in God’s love. (See 1 John 4:16) Satan knows that the Bible says that we love God as a result of our understanding and appreciating God’s love for us. (1 John 4:19) He also knows what 1 John 4:9 says: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” Anything he can do to keep the truth of God’s great love from us, he will do and he has invented a false understanding of *monogenes* to keep us from understanding God’s love. If

*Continued on page 24, column 1.*

# Youth's Corner - Beauties of the New Earth.

Dear Young Friends:—At the close of my communication in the first number of the Instructor, I stated that I would tell you something of the beauties of the New Earth, in the next paper, and now I will fulfill my promise.

The glorious City of God has twelve gates, set with pearls most glorious. It also has twelve foundations of various colors. The streets of the City are of pure gold. In this city is the throne of God, and a pure, beautiful river proceeding out of it, as clear as crystal. Its sparkling purity and beauty makes glad the City of God. The saints will

drink freely of the healing waters of the river of life.

On either side of this beautiful river is the tree of life. And the redeemed saints, who have loved God and kept his commandments here, will enter in through the gates of the City, and have right to the tree of life. They will eat freely of it, as our first parents did before their fall. The leaves of that immortal wide-spread tree will be for the healing of the nations. All their woes will then be gone. Sickness, sorrow and death they will never again feel, for the leaves of the tree of life have healed them. Jesus will then see

of the travail of his soul [Isa. 53:11] and be satisfied, when the redeemed, who have been subject to sorrow, toil and afflictions, who have groaned beneath the curse, are gathered up around that tree of life to eat of its immortal fruit, that our first parents forfeited all right to, by breaking God's commands. There will be no danger of their ever losing right to the tree of life again, for he that tempted our first parents to sin, will be destroyed by the second death.

All faces will reflect the image of their Redeemer. There will then be no anxious, troubled countenances, but all

*Continued on page 13*

## THE FIWAGOH MISSION (KENYA, AFRICA)

By Arlene Bailey

This year's drought in Kenya, Africa, has brought great hunger and suffering. Africa has experienced many tragic events, especially during the last part of 2005 and the beginning of 2006. Those most effected have been the children, due to the fact there has been no one to care for them as many of their parents have died of AIDS. Many children have died on the streets. Brother Benson Nganga (who knows Maurice from Hope Center) and his wife Florence started a little mission a few years ago and he now cares for 40 children. Benson has named the mission, The Fiwagoh Mission for Orphanage and Schools.

This mission is located on a rented piece of property; however, the owner of the land has asked that the mission move by December 1, 2006. Benson has located a piece of property. He states that he had initially located 10 acres for \$28,000; however, after much prayer he received another special offer of 16 acres for \$14,000. He feels that this location is an answer to prayer. He and his staff walked over the land. It has a borehole of clean, drilled water. In addition, there is an electric line around the property; the telephone line is just across the road; and it is situated on hilly, fertile land with clean fresh air. The mission has saved over \$2,000 and they wish for others to have the blessing of being used of God to help to raise the rest.

Benson states they do not need the property for their own self-glory but for the destitute children. Instead of sending

the children to public school, Benson has started a church school based on the principles used by Magan and Sutherland at the Madison School. They are struggling with daily expenses of living, the paying of bills, etc. I am sure there are many other children he will be accepting into the mission in the future.

“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.” (Proverbs 19:17)

If you would like to help with this project you may contact Benson and Florence directly.

**The Fiwagoh Mission for Orphanages and Schools  
P. O. Box 14390-20100  
Nakuru, Kenya, East Africa**

**Phone: 254-51-850229  
e-mail: beffag@yahoo.com**



**Benson and Florence with some of the children**

# Bits and Pieces

There are several points that could be addressed from lessons six through ten in the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide for this quarter, and I would like to address at least a few key points quickly for thought and consideration in this “Bits and Pieces” study.

## The Baptism of the Holy Spirit - Lesson 6

The sixth lesson is on “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit.” On page 46, for Sabbath Afternoon, we read:

There’s been a great deal of speculation and argument in the Christian church over the centuries about what the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” means.

One of the reasons that there has been speculation and confusion is that the identity of the Holy Spirit has been so misunderstood.

The Lord encourages all who seek Him with the whole heart. He gives them His Holy Spirit, the manifestation of His presence and favor. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 230)

We would encourage those who have not seen the April 2006 issue of *Old Paths* to request a copy and read pages 10-16, as well as read the article in this paper, “Receiving the Spirit.”

It is worthwhile to note that Ellen White speaks of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in at least two ways. She mentions it in connection with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the early and latter rain, and she mentions it as a daily experience of receiving fresh drafts from the Lord.

Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (*Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892)

Teach your children that it is their privilege to receive every day the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (*Counsel to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 131)

Here are a few thoughts from the pen of inspiration that may expand our thoughts:

It was not until after Christ’s ascension to His Father, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the believers, that the disciples fully appreciated the Saviour’s character and mission. After they had received the baptism of the Spirit, they began to realize that they had been in the very presence of the Lord of glory. (*Desire of Ages*, p. 507)

Like the wind, which is invisible—yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt—is the baptism of the

Spirit of God upon the heart, revealing itself in every action of him who experiences its saving power. (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 130)

## 1 John 5:7 - Lesson 6

1 John 5:7, 8 is a reference that often comes up when the Holy Spirit and the Trinity are discussed. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” (1 John 5:7, 8)

The editor of the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide did not put this reference in the main body of the quarterly, but it is referred to on page 71 of the Teacher’s Edition as a text for discovery. Perhaps the reason that little is said of this verse is that the editor knows there is a great deal of question concerning whether this verse is a legitimate part of Scripture or not. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* states :

Textual evidence attests ( cf. p. 10) the omission of the passage “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth.” The resultant reading of vs. 7, 8 is as follows: “For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” The passage as given in the KJV is in no Greek MS earlier than the 15th and 16th centuries. The disputed words found their way into the KJV by way of the Greek text of Erasmus. It is said that Erasmus offered to include the disputed words in his Greek Testament if he were shown even one Greek MS that contained them. A library in Dublin produced such a MS (known as 34), and Erasmus included the passage in his text. It is now believed that the later editions of the Vulgate acquired the passage by the mistake of a scribe who included an exegetical marginal comment in the Bible text that he was copying. The disputed words have been widely used in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, but, in view of such overwhelming evidence against their authenticity, their support is valueless and should not be used. In spite of their appearance in the Vulgate, *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* freely admits regarding these words: ‘It is now generally held that this passage, called the *Comma Johanneum*, is a gloss that crept into the text of the Old Latin and Vulgate at an early date, but found its way into the Greek text only in the 15th and 16th centuries.’ (Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1951, p. 1186)” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 675)

Some people would object strongly to the very suggestion that errors may have crept into the text of the Bible in any way whatsoever; however, it is interesting to note what Ellen White has to say concerning this:

*Continued on page 14, column 1.*

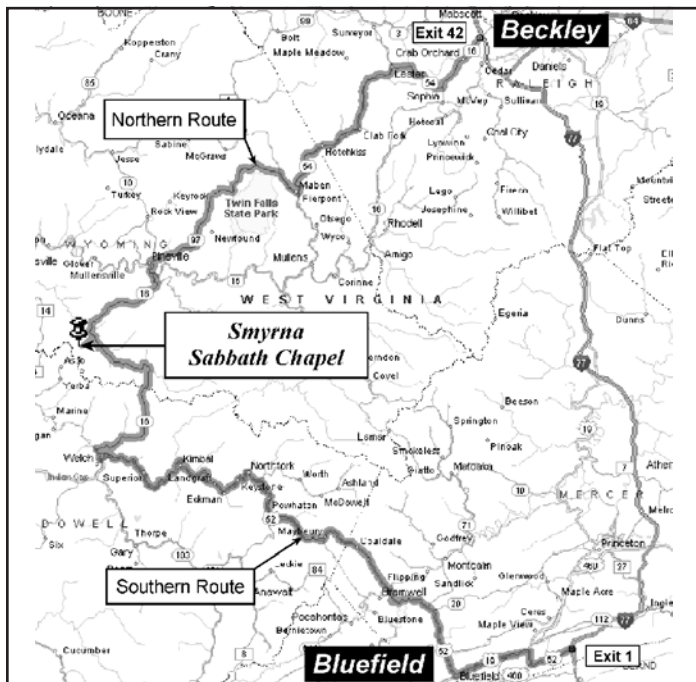
# WV Camp Meeting June 20-24

Smyrna Gospel Ministries would like to invite all who are interested in preparing for the return of the Lord to attend camp meeting this June 20-24, at the Smyrna Sabbath Chapel in West Virginia. As always, we eagerly look forward to this special time of study, prayer, and fellowship, and we are very anxious to see *all* of you once again. We are also very desirous to meet new friends and family. Don't let anything prevent your attendance this June because time is short and more than ever, we need to draw closer to one another and closer to our Redeemer. Our theme will be "Revival, Reformation, and Rededication—Let Us Look Unto the Hills."

While we acknowledge that meetings are the main focus of camp meeting, we realize that it is, at times, difficult to find the time for personal time with God and time for one another when the camp meeting schedule is very full, so we have scheduled free time in the afternoon and between sessions for this. Some of the speakers will include Lynnford Beachy, Dennis Robertson, Willis Smith, and Allen Stump, as well as brethren from overseas. We are also planning afternoon hydrotherapy classes and evening health segments, in addition to plenty of special music and time for testimonies.

We plan to have some meetings for all age groups, except children under age four. To help mothers with children who need a place to go when their children are fussing or when they just need a relaxing place, we will be sending a live video stream into the fellowship hall, dedicating it as a mother's-room area.

Camping is free to all, but each camper will be responsible for his or her own meals, except on Sabbath when a vegan



haystack lunch will be served. Kitchen facilities will not be available, but camp stoves are welcome in the camping area, and ice for ice chests can be obtained one mile away.

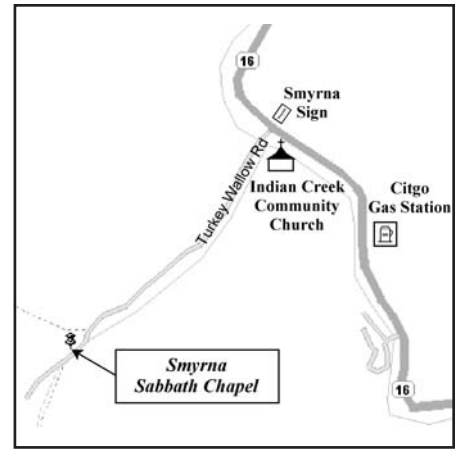
This is a camp meeting. You need to bring a tent or make other arrangements. We do not have cabins or rooms available. Smyrna has a few tents and other camping supplies for those who do not have their own and cannot afford to purchase them. The supply is limited, so if you need to use a tent, camp stove, sleeping bag, or other items, please request early. We have four showers with hot and cold water. Don't forget items such as tents, bedding, flashlights, food, toiletries, and insect repellent. Let our dress and deportment be such as becomes Christians.

While there is room for RV's, we do not have hook-ups. RV's will need to be self-contained. For those who wish, there are motels in the area. The nearest motels are: The Pocahontas Motel (304) 436-2250, Woody's Motel (304) 732-6540, The Cow Shed (304) 732-7000, Twin Falls State Park Resort (304) 294-4000. If you need a room, please call early as the better motels fill up fast due to a large influx of tourists at this time.

## Directions:

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

**Traveling from the South, Southeast, or Southwest:** From Wytheville, VA, traveling I-77 north, take exit #1 upon entering West Virginia, immediately after exiting East River Mountain Tunnel. Follow Route 52 north to Welch 38.7 miles. At Welch follow signs for Route 16 North. Once leaving town, you will travel 9 miles. You will pass a Citgo gas station on the right. We are about 1/4 of a mile past the Citgo station. Watch for the Smyrna sign on the right side of the



road. Turn left at the sign and go 7/10 miles. (These mileages are approximates and not exact values.) *Beware traveling through the towns of Northfork, Keystone, and Kimball, they are well-known speed-traps!*

### Rafting Trip

The last few years I have organized a white-water rafting trip the day after camp meeting. I have heard of some interest and would be willing to organize another trip for this year if there is enough interest. If you would like to go on a rafting trip on the lower New River though the scenic New River Gorge, please contact me as soon as possible. The minimum age is 14. Anyone with serious heart problems or other serious illness should not go.

*Allen Stump*



## Letters

Thank you for the April 2006 issue of *Old Paths*. I appreciate receiving your publication. As per the offer on p. 16 of the April issue, I would like to request that you send me the book, *What Did the Pioneers Believe?* Thanks for your thought-provoking articles. **FL**

I have particularly appreciated your April issue of *Old Paths* with the study on the Holy Spirit. I have not been a member of the SDA church for several years, but I have continued to attend Sabbath School classes. However, with the advent of this quarterly lesson on the Holy Spirit (with a clear Trinitarian emphasis), I faced the choice of either raising a very confrontational issue, or spending the next three months in class MUTE! Neither option appealed to me.

If possible I would appreciate five additional copies of your April issue for distribution. I will send a check to cover postage and to help defray printing. Blessing, **NH**

I would like to take you up on the offer for more newsletters. That is fantastic. I tried to email you for some help a couple days before I received the newsletter but your mail box was full. Could I please have ten more issues, if that will run you too short I could get by with a few less.

About two weeks ago I presented our little church group a sermon from the book, *What Did the Pioneers Believe?* Some were almost shocked, and it went down hard with others. I have been waiting for years to get the opportunity to give that talk. The Spirit timed it perfectly because I wasn't aware of the upcoming quarterly. Now we have this quarterly which I hope will expose the apostasy that has entered the Adventist Church. Plans were to use Lynnford's booklet on

*Continued on page 17, column 2.*

*"Youth's Corner" continued from page 10*


will be bright, and smiling in spotless purity. The angels will be there, also the resurrected saints with the martyrs, and the best of all, and what will cause us the most joy, our lovely Saviour who suffered and died that we might enjoy that happiness and freedom, will be there.—His glorious face will shine brighter than the sun, and light up the beautiful City, and reflect glory all around.

Children will be there. They will never be engaged in strife or discord. Their love will be fervent and holy. They will also have a crown of gold upon their heads, and a harp in their hands. And their little countenances, that we here see so often troubled and perplexed, will beam with holy joy, expressive of their perfect freedom and happiness. They will express in child-like purity their wonder and delight, as they behold every thing around them so new and lovely. They will look to the blessed Saviour who has given himself for them, and, with admiration and love for him who is smiling upon them, raise their voices and sing to his praise and glory, while they feel and realized the matchless depths of a Saviour's love.

This earth, dear children, is to be purified with fire; then it will be much more beautiful. The grass will be living green, and will never wither. There will be roses and lilies, and all kinds of flowers there. They will never blight or fade, or lose their beauty and fragrance.

The lion, we should much dread and fear here, will then lie down with the lamb, and everything in the New Earth will be peace and harmony.—The trees of the New Earth will be straight and lofty, without deformity.

The saints will have crowns of glory upon their heads, and harps of gold in their hands. They will play upon the golden harp, and sing redeeming love, and make melody unto God. Their former trials and suffering in this world will be forgotten and lost amid the glories of the New Earth. And they will ever have the approving smiles of Jesus upon them, and their happiness will be complete. There will be glory, glory all around.

Dear children, the future abode of the saints will be all over glorious, and will you strive to be there? Let your minds dwell upon the glories of heaven, for this you may do with safety, and this will bring substantial joys, and will make you heavenly minded. If you have trials here, and feel lonesome, look away from this dark world to the bright glories of heaven. Set your affections upon heavenly joys, and then you will not feel so deeply the trials and disappointments of this life, for you will feel that you have a home in glory, a crown, a harp, and a lovely Saviour there. Strive for that blest inheritance which God has promised to those that love him, and keep his commandments. (*Mrs. E. G. White—The Youth's Instructor*, October 1, 1852) 

I saw that God had especially guarded the Bible; yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition. But I saw that the Word of God, as a whole, is a perfect chain, one portion linking into and explaining another. True seekers for truth need not err; for not only is the Word of God plain and simple in declaring the way of life, but the Holy Spirit is given as a guide in understanding the way to life therein revealed. (*Early Writings*, pages 220, 221)

Even more interestingly, Ellen White, in all her thousands of pages of writing and thousands of Scripture quotations, never once quoted 1 John 5:7; however, if we accept this verse as Scripture, does it really teach three persons or beings in the godhead? In verse 8 we are told that there are three that bear witness in earth, which are the spirit, the water, and the blood, and that these three agree in one and that they bear a united witness.

Here we see that one does not have to be a living person to bear witness. The water bears witness and the blood bears witness, yet no one would suggest that the water and blood are persons. Why then should we insist that because the spirit bears witness in heaven it must be a living person?

There are three ways in which witness is borne to the truth in heaven. These witnesses are one, or they bear a united witness. It does not mean that they are one person, one being, or one God. Jesus explained what this oneness means when He prayed that we all might be one as He and His father are one. (See John 17:22.) Not that we might become one human, but simply that we might be in perfect harmony, even as He and His Father are in perfect harmony.

In heaven, God bears witness to the truth, so does Christ, and so does the Holy Spirit! While God and Jesus may witness audibly by the words they speak, the Holy Spirit, whether in heaven or on earth, witnesses by making impressions on the hearts of those who are willing to learn, giving them understanding of the truths of the plan of salvation.

In heaven there are three avenues of witness, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On the earth, there are three, the water, the spirit and the blood. Are the three on earth a Trinity because they are mentioned in the same breath or because they agree in one? Certainly no intelligent person would claim this. By the same reasoning we would have to conclude that the Father, the word and the spirit are not a Trinity simply because they are one (or are in harmony) or because they are mentioned in the same breath.

### **Wisdom and Knowledge - Lesson 7**

Lesson 7 discusses the gifts of the spirit. Concerning wisdom and knowledge, an interesting comment is made on page 58:

It's sad, but true, that through history some of the "greatest" Bible scholars didn't believe the truths of the Bible. They might have been world-renowned experts in the original languages and maybe even have been unsurpassed in their knowledge of biblical history. But the spiritual wisdom and knowledge about God found in those texts was completely lost on them. What a waste!

It would be hard to say this better! This would be especially true concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. Humble laymen can often see this truth as clear as crystal and gain an appreciation while the learned doctors of divinity reject it. Well did the Apostle Paul write:

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, *not many mighty, not many noble*, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. (1 Corinthians 1:22-27)

That which is called foolish is to confound the wise. At the recent symposium on the Trinity at Southern Adventist University I was told by one of the leading speakers that our Adventist Pioneers were "crackpot idiots," yet I tell you brothers and sisters, God used them and their teachings in a mighty way. Ellen White endorsed their teachings and encouraged their works to be reprinted. (See *Counsel to Writers and Editors*, p. 32)

If men of repute and intelligence refuse to do this [give the three angels' messages], the Lord will choose other instruments, honoring those who are looked upon as inferior. (Review and Herald, October 21, 1890)

### **Prophecy and Government - Lesson 7**

On page 60 under the section, "Prophecy and Government we find the following statement:

The prophet, consequently, is God's spokesperson to the people as the minister is humanity's spokesperson to God.

This statement is plainly papal and strikes decidedly against the Protestant belief of the individual priesthood of the believer. Christians do not need a minister to speak to God for them. We may come to God through Christ. The Catholic system is built upon the concept of many mediators, but the Bible says we have one mediator: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5)

In this same section, it is noted that God "works through appointed agencies in His organized church." (p. 60 -

quoted from *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 162) We agree with this statement, but the question may arise, “What is the organized church?” Paul, writing to Timothy, says that “the church of the living God, [is] the pillar and ground of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15) Ellen White noted that

God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. (*Upward Look*, p. 315)

If that which claims to be the true organized church is no longer the pillar and ground of truth, if it no longer keeps the commandments of God but in fact worships false gods, it cannot be the organized, true church of God.

Sadly there are some Adventists, who like the Jews of old, cling to promises made upon conditions without fulfilling the conditions of the promises. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus called the temple, “my Father’s house,” (John 2:16) yet when He was leaving the temple for the last time He said, “your house is left unto you desolate.” (Matthew 23:38) The temple’s status had changed from His Father’s house to their house. The Jews understood this to mean that Jesus was declaring that their ship was not going through as they thought. In the mind’s eye, we can see the Jewish leaders quoting Jeremiah:

Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:35-37)

While these promises seem unmovable, the Jewish leaders failed to understand that the promise was to a people in whose heart His law had been written. (See Jeremiah 31:33.) Peter understood this, for when he was preaching on the day of Pentecost he quoted Joel 2:32 except for the last part. The portion that Peter quoted from says, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered.” (Joel 2:32 – See Acts 2:21.) but the verse in Joel does not stop there. Peter rightly divided the word of truth by not making application to the last part of the verse that says, “for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.” (Joel 2:32) Peter understood that the only Jerusalem we look to today is that “which is above [which] is free, which is the mother of us all,” (Galatians 4:26) but to the unbelieving Jews this was blasphemy.

The Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham,

they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights. But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God. (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 294)

### Love - Lesson 8

The first fruit of the spirit mentioned in the Galatians 5 is love. Lesson 8 of the quarterly is on “The Fruit of the Holy Spirit.” On page 65 of the quarterly, under Sunday’s lesson, we read the following:

A crucial question, though, needs to be answered: What do we mean by “love”? The word itself has been so broadened and, hence, cheapened until it covers a multitude of acts and emotions that hardly do justice to the term. Scripture, however, gives verses that help us understand the biblical concept of love as a fruit of the Spirit.

God gives us an answer to the question, “What do we mean by ‘love’?” in *Patriarchs and Prophets* where we read:

True love is a high and holy principle, altogether different in character from that love which is awakened by impulse and which suddenly dies when severely tested. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 176)

The editor of the quarterly suggests we read John 3:16, 15:13, and 1 John 3:16. These texts speak of love as a principle that gives. We agree with this concept and only wish that that brethren could have expounded on these verses more and their rich meaning. (See article in this issue: “The Effects of the Trinity Teaching on the Doctrine of God’s Love.”)

### Gentleness and Goodness - Lesson 8

Two quick points might be fruitful for thought. While we are to learn from the meek and lowly Jesus, let us remember that even Jesus called Herod a “fox” (Luke 13:31, 32) and He with fervor overturned the moneychangers tables. (Matthew 21:12)

Elijah may not have appeared to many as a gentle man of love. He even killed 850 idolatrous priests, but he is in heaven today! John the Baptist called some of the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to his baptism a “generation of vipers,” (Matthew 3:7) yet Jesus said, “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.” And Sister White has noted:

In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God’s faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 321)

### “The Litmus Test” - Lesson 9

In Lesson 9, “The Christian’s Guide,” we read these words under the section, “The Work of the Spirit:”

The work and purpose of the Spirit are centered on Jesus. .... The litmus test of any alleged workings of the

**Spirit in believers or organizations is the place they accord Jesus. (p. 76)**

The highest position that Jesus is declared to have in the Scripture is that of “the Son of God.” The Father called Him “my beloved Son.” (Matthew 3:17) The disciples proclaimed Him to be “the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16) Jesus never claimed any place higher than to be God’s “only begotten Son.” In fact, in recording the words of Jesus as given in John 3:16 the apostle:

**... exhibits to us the great love of the giver, by setting forth the excellence of the gift. But all this excellence is comprised in the phrase, “his only begotten Son.” This phrase must, therefore, include the highest nature of our blessed Redeemer, or it is totally inadequate for the apostle’s purpose, to set forth the amazing love of God towards us in “his unspeakable gift.” [2 Corinthians 9:15] (Henry Grew - *An Examination of The Divine Testimony, on the Nature and Character of the Son of God*, p. 26)**

While some Trinitarians believe we would be all Jehovah’s Witnesses if it was not for “Saint Athanasius,” I assure you that God has kept and will continue to keep a witness in this world, though they be a little flock at times.

Placing Christ in a position of being the “Second person of the Trinity” is dishonoring to Him, lowering Him down from His exalted position as the “Son of God!”

### **Jesus is God - Lessons 8 and 10**

In lesson 8 of the quarterly, entitled, “The Fruit of the Holy Spirit,” under Sunday’s lesson, it is stated that “Jesus is God.” In Lesson 10, “Life Through the Holy Spirit,” page 81, Jesus is called “God.” While we heartily acknowledge that Jesus is divine and worthy of being called God in the sense of being divine, we do not wish to use the term God for Jesus in the sense that He is a part of a Trinity or that He is the same person as the Father, the supreme Being of the universe. As noted above, the highest and most exalted position the Scriptures give to Jesus is that of being “The Son of the living God.”

### **The Death of Jesus - Lesson 10**

An important and truthful saying is well written on page 81 of lesson 10. There we read:

**Any theology that ignores or weakens this point [“His substitutionary death in behalf of humanity.”] is deviating from the work of the Holy Spirit, who is to guide us into “all truth” (John 16:13).**

A hearty “amen” to this statement! The trinity doctrine, however, teaches that Christ is coequal and coeternal with God and that He possesses a natural immortality of Himself not given to Him by His Father. To be immortal means that you are not subject to death! Jesus Christ, therefore, could not fully die. The trinitarian says that only His humanity died and that of Himself Jesus came forth from the grave, without the power of the Father. However, the Bible says in at least

twenty-five places that Jesus was raised by the Father. A few such texts are:

**Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. (Acts 2:24)**

**This Jesus hath God raised up. (Acts 2:32)**

**... the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. (Acts 3:15)**

The Bible teaches that the Father’s “exceeding greatness of his power” towards us and “the working of his mighty power,” was shown “when he raised him [Christ] from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 1:19, 20) (See also Acts 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 34, 37; 17:31; Romans 4:24; 6:4, 9; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:15; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Galatians 1:1; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Peter 1:21; and Hebrews 13:20.)

There is one statement of Jesus that should be examined that many have stumbled over that would be helpful to consider.

**Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. (John 10:17, 18)**

According to the Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, the Greek word that was translated “I might take,” (*lambano*) also means: “to receive (what is given), to gain, to get, to obtain, to get back.” This same Greek word is used in verse 18 but it is translated “received.” Christ laid down His life that He might receive it again. The Greek word that is translated “power” is (*exousia*). It means power in the sense of “authority,” or “permission,” rather than physical force. With that in mind the verses could be translated,

**No one doth take it from me, but I lay it down of myself; authority I have to lay it down, and authority I have again to take it; this command I received from my Father. (John 10:17, 18 – Young’s Literal Translation)**

Christ had the authority, or permission, to lay down His life so that He could receive it again from His Father. Christ could not, and did not, raise Himself from the dead, or else He wouldn’t have been dead to begin with. In the prophecy of Christ’s complete death, recorded in Psalm 88:8, Christ says, “I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.”

To make the claim that Jesus Christ raised Himself from the dead would be to directly contradict the words of Christ, for Christ said, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” (John 5:30) It would also contradict at least twenty-five verses in the New Testament that teach that Christ was raised from the dead by His Father.

The testimony of the Bible that Christ died completely, and that His Father raised Him from the dead, is overwhelming. As we shall see later in this section, Isaiah 53 speaks of



the complete death of Christ. According to the Bible, the soul of Christ died. It was His soul that was made an offering for sin. A dead person can't even think, let alone raise himself from the dead.

So we can see that John 10:17 and 18 do not support the idea that Christ resurrected Himself from the dead, and if it did, it would contradict many other verses in the Bible.

The trinitarian doctrine teaches that among the divine spirit, the human soul, and the human body, only the most inferior part, the clay body, died as the sacrifice for the sins of the world! Commenting on this, J. H. Waggoner, an Adventist pioneer, wrote:

“And here is shown how remarkably the widest extremes meet in theology. The highest Trinitarians and lowest Unitarians meet and are perfectly united on the death of Christ—the faith of both amounts to Socinianism. Unitarians believe that Christ was a prophet, an inspired teacher, but merely human; that his death was that of a human body only. Trinitarians hold that the term “Christ” comprehends two distinct and separate natures: one that was merely human; the other, the second person in the trinity, who dwelt in the flesh for a brief period, but could not possibly suffer or die; that the Christ that died was only the human nature in which the divinity had dwelt. Both classes have a human offering and nothing more. (J. H. Waggoner, *The Atonement*, p. 165.)

The trinity denies “the dignity of the sacrifice made for our redemption.” (*Ibid.*) The truth elevates the dignity of the sacrifice to be the divine Son of God. A divine sacrifice not a human one! The Bible is clear that it was the soul of Jesus that was given for the sacrifice of sin:

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:10, 11)

“The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23) The Bible says that “The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6) According to Hebrews 9:15, 16, if Christ did not die then there is no new covenant experience! The trinity doctrine denies the New Covenant!

### **Satan's Power to Tempt and Deceive**

In closing this section off I wish to emphasize the importance of personal study, serious devotion, and dedication to the truth, and the awareness that Satan is not off guard or sleeping. Two statements from Ellen White's pen speak poignantly to this point.

I have been shown that Satan has not been stupid and careless these many years, since his fall, but has been learning. He has grown more artful. His plans are laid

deeper, and are more covered with a religious garment to hide their deformity. *The power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is ten-fold greater than it was in the days of the apostles. His power has increased, and it will increase, until it is taken away. (Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, p. 277)*

This statement was written in 1860. With the advent of many new and modern devices, ways, and means (rock music, television, the Internet, etc.), I am sure that if the servant of the Lord were alive today, 146 years later, she would have to acknowledge that Satan's power to “tempt and deceive is much more than ten-fold greater than it was in the days of the apostles.” Another similar statement notes:

Satan had sympathizers in heaven, and took large numbers of the angels with him. ... The insinuations of Satan took effect, and they really came to believe that the Father and the Son were their enemies and that Satan was their benefactor. *Satan has the same power and the same control over minds now, only it has increased a hundredfold by exercise and experience. (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 328)*

I am of good courage, however, because our God tells us, “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (1 John 4:4) Jesus has promised you His Spirit to “guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13) This will happen if God and His truth are dear to us and we want the truth more even life itself. “Buy the truth, and sell it not.” (Proverbs 23:23)



“Letters” continued from page 13.

the history of the trinity for my next opportunity to speak to the group which will be in April. **PA**

So grateful to learn the truth about God. This explains so clearly the mystery that has enshrouded the Godhead. May God bless you for revealing His truth. **WA**

My email today is just asking for extra copies of this months newsletters, so I can share it with some of my “now” very concerned brethren friends. I actually rarely attend church anymore as I am not very popular but I still have a few friends who haven't given up on me and I really want them to see the truth. So I only need about 5 copies. **Australia**

Grace, mercy and peace from our Father in heaven and our Lord Jesus. Praying all is well with you and yours. I'm writing also to ask if you could please send me 50 copies of the April 2006 *Old Paths* news letter so that I may hand them out here and also to mail to folks on my mailing list. If that is too many, I'll understand. Also if it pleases you to send “The Pioneers believe” Thank you very much. I pray that God our Father will richly bless you with more of His Holy Spirit to give you strength and courage to go on carrying the gospel in spirit and truth. **e-mail**

# Christ's Special Message of Love

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3:14-22)

Laodicea means “a people judged,” or “judging of the people.” We are living in the time of the judgment and when I think of all the great times in the Bible, I cannot think of any time mentioned that I would trade for today. Peter, John, and the rest of the apostles walked the dusty roads of Galilee with Jesus in a personal and intimate way, but I think everyone of them would trade that day for this time. To live in the last days, to give the last great warning message to the world, and to be a part of the 144,000 and then see Jesus come without seeing death, is something each one of them would wish to be part of, no matter how beautiful their experience had been with Jesus.

All the messages to the churches in Revelation are addressed initially to the angels of the churches. Angel is from the Greek word, (*aggelos*) and it means messenger or, in this application, it means the leader. It is also true that the message is given to everyone and applies to all of us, the sheep as well as the shepherds, but it is particularly given for the shepherds. It is a basic truth, friends, that the sheep generally will go in the direction the shepherd leads, and if the shepherd leads them beside still waters and in green pastures, then that is where the sheep will feed and find rest, but if the shepherd leads otherwise, then the sheep will tend to fail.

Jesus is the faithful and *true witness*. (Revelation 3:14) This means that everything in our lives, everything we might do or think, has been carefully scrutinized by Jesus Himself. He knows firsthand our true condition. We cannot hide anything from Him, beloved. The message to the Laodicean Church might be heard at any Adventist gathering, but there will come a time when this message will no longer need to be proclaimed. The message is for us today, but will we need it tomorrow, next month, or even next year? One day it will not be applicable to a single child of God. Revelation 18 contains a message for God's people to come out of Babylon and a statement in *Great Controversy* on p. 383 says that the great majority of God's people are now in Babylon, but there will be a time when that statement will no longer be true because all of God's people will be finally out of Babylon. If we are to be saved at last, we will have to overcome sin and we will have to heed the counsel of the Faithful and True Witness.

When this happens, the Laodicean message will no longer have a personal application to any of us because we will be out of Babylon and it won't be business as usual anymore.

Jesus says that He knows our works. (Revelation 3:15) Works are a measurement of force. In other words, we measure the force by works. In our households we have measuring cups and measuring spoons to measure the volume of flour or salt. We also have scales that measure the weight or the mass of an object. Rulers measure feet and inches and a meter stick measures meters and centimeters, but works are not measured by such instruments and devices. There are instruments that can measure certain types of forces, such as horsepower, but for us, the thing to be measured is our faith. God wants to measure our faith and the way He measures it is by our works. “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” (James 2:18) We may claim to have faith but if we don't have a way to measure our faith, we may be self-deceived. God has given us a measurement for our faith—the work it produces.

Jesus says, “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot.” (Revelation 3:15) This is the initial request of Jesus, but actually He wants us to be hot. In verse 19 He says, “Be zealous therefore, and repent.” The word “zealous” can also be translated “hot.” God wants us to be hot, and the Greek word for hot means to be boiling hot.

Many people proclaim they have faith. In fact, I don't know of any Christian who proclaims that we shouldn't have faith. There is a balance in the Bible between faith and works. We should have faith and that faith should work, but there are Christians who say faith is the good part and we should not worry about works at all. In fact, they even say it is counterproductive to have a concern about works, but remember Laodicea's problem is that she is lukewarm. Now, how is this attained? There are at least two ways to obtain lukewarmness. The first would be to start out with something that is cold and then partly warm it, which causes it to become lukewarm. There are many people who are like this spiritually. They are people who are dead in trespasses and

sins. They are cold and perhaps indifferent to God, but they achieve a smidgen of religion that is just enough to get them out of the bar and into the church pew, but Christ doesn't fully reign in the heart. They are not submitted to Christ. Another type of a lukewarm Christian is someone who has had a deep, genuine Christian experience and has been very hot and on fire for the Lord but whose prayer life has started to diminish, whose Bible study has started to go down, and who is choked by the cares of the world, yet he is one who hasn't stopped going to church. He maintains a semblance of religion. The shell is still there and he is not necessarily cold and indifferent to the claims of God, but he has become lukewarm. In both of these cases, a profession of faith is made, but Christ says that it is not enough and He will spue them out. They must become hot.

Jesus tells us that the people who have been hot at one time have had a first love experience. To the church at Ephesus Jesus says, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent." (Revelation 2:4) We need to consider what occurred in our first love experience and repent. What does having a first love mean? It could mean first in preeminence, and I think our love for the Lord should always be first in preeminence, but I think it also means the first experience of love that we had with Christ. Sometimes we see people who have had a first love experience but have lost it. Then it partially returns only to be lost again, and these people go back and forth only to be beaten down. Their experience is no longer in His love. They might have an *experience*, because Satan can give an *experience*, but unless they have some way to measure their experience and a way to weigh it carefully, that which is called faith and that which is called a Christian experience, might not be a Christian experience at all.

In volume 3 of the *Testimonies for the Church*, Ellen White has written a testimony to the Laodicean Church and I encourage each of you to read those pages. Any of us who are really concerned about how God wants to apply the message of the Laodicean Church to our lives should read the whole section, but on p. 253 we read: "God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a constant battle and a march." We start with a new birth and a first love experience and we continue to maintain a surrendered relationship with God because this is how we experienced the new birth in the first place; however, we did not know everything about ourselves when we first surrendered. So, step-by-step, the Lord gives us a clearer and better vision of the sinfulness of our sin and of what we really are like, so that we can indeed repent. Our love grows as we receive the fullness of His Spirit.

When I was first converted, I was twenty years old and attending college. I remember walking through the school campus from one class to another, singing songs like "Blessed Assurance" and "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." They expressed my experience. I had a new friend in Jesus

and it was a blessed assurance that He was mine. That was a good experience, but by God's grace I don't want that same experience today because that experience is not as good as what I have today. My experience today is so much better and so much richer and deeper, and I want my experience next week, next year, and even tomorrow, to be even richer. It has helped me to apply the message to the Laodicean church to my life and to constantly examine myself in the light of Calvary. If we cannot be hot, Christ would rather we were cold because we are more likely to understand our spiritual need when we are cold than when we are lukewarm.

I would say that I came out of a lukewarm experience in the world because my life at the time wasn't a bad life of drugs and alcohol. I had already given those things up and I had stopped stealing from my friends. I was on the Dean's List in college and was a personal friend of the President of the college. I didn't think I was such a bad guy, but it is in that very condition that it is hard to see your need of Christ and the fact that the Lord could save me out of such a state is quite a testimony to what God can do for a sinner.

As Adventists we use the expression, "We are at the eleventh hour," or "We are minutes before midnight." These expressions are part of our vernacular. Laodicea is clearly living on borrowed time. Ellen White tells us this is not a peace and safety message because it involves eternal interests. You see, we are either going to be spued out of His mouth or we are going to sit with Christ in His throne. There is no in between. This is a message of either being rejected by Christ finally, fully and forever, or of sitting with Him in His throne. It is very important.

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28) We are not to eat or drink of that cup unworthily. Part of the Christian experience is one of continual examination to see whether we really are in the faith or not. We don't believe in "once saved, always saved." We are in the process of being saved, it is true, but we can have the assurance at any given time that Jesus is with us and we are in Him. We need to examine ourselves and to do that we have to have some way to measure our experience. We might think the message to the Laodicean Church is only for lukewarm *church* people, but there are sinners in the world who realize they have a need, and interestingly the cure is the same. The message to the church of Laodicea is something that every human being on this earth needs. Everyone needs this cure. It is for us. Laodicea thinks she is very good, but she is the embodiment of that attitude that God says is as smoke in His nostrils. (Isaiah 65:5) In many cases she outwardly looks good, but inwardly she is depraved.

James says, "A man may say, Thou hast faith." (James 2:18) Laodicea makes many claims but none of these claims hold up. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." (Revelation 3:17) Rich, richer, and in need of nothing. We realize this applies mostly

to spiritual things. Laodicea says, “We have the truth.” You may think talking to a Jehovah’s Witness is difficult, but talking to a Seventh-day Adventist is more difficult, and talking to a Laodicean is even worse.

“And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.” (Hosea 12:8) Now, was this really Ephraim’s condition? Notice what else Hosea writes: “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone,” (Hosea 4:17) and “Ephraim, thou committestest whoredom.” (Hosea 5:3) Interestingly, even though the Lord says for us to let Ephraim go, He says of Himself in chapter 11:8, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?” This is the same way God feels about Laodicea.

There is a certain point when God’s mercy and longsuffering cease due to one’s cup being full of iniquity and there will be a time when Laodicea’s cup will be so full that Christ will have to say, “That which remains is spued out,” but just as with Ephraim, He feels “How shall I give them up?” In Jeremiah 31:3 He says, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” The Bible says there will be tears shed in heaven. God has promised to wipe away our tears, but He will never, ever forget those who were lost. If any of us are lost, it will break the heart of God forever, but it doesn’t have to be so.

Laodicea says, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” (Revelation 3: 17) In other words, “You really can’t teach me any truth. I don’t need what you have because I already have it all.” Why might we feel that way? Perhaps because we really do believe we have it all. We really believe that our lives are already where Christ wants them to be. Now I am not discounting the fact that there may be many people whose lives are exactly where Christ wants them to be in every respect and that they will never need the message of Laodicea for themselves again. This can be because Christ offers us victory, but I would like to consider Romans 7:12 and 13:

*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

Do we have an understanding of the exceeding sinfulness of sin? Ellen White states: “If we are to have pardon for our sins, we must first have a realization of what sin is, that we may repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance,” (*Faith and Works*, p. 49) and “The true people of God, who have the spirit of the work of the Lord and the salvation of souls at heart, will ever view sin in its real, sinful character.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 266) The Bible defines sin as the transgression of the law, but if we don’t understand what sin is, how can we view it in its real, sinful character? (1 John 3:4) “He would teach His people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to Him and are not to be

lightly regarded.” (*Ibid.*, p. 265) It is very important that we have an understanding of what we are fighting against and the cause behind this fight, but we have to also have a way to measure whether we are really gaining victory or not. If we really don’t understand these issues, we might base our faith and our Christianity on experience and not on the Word of God.

*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. (1 Corinthians 9:24-26)*

Paul is portraying someone beating the air in an attempt to find that which he is fighting against. If you were to go into a dark room and were struck by someone, you might want to strike back, but you would not know where or what to strike, for you would not know what you are up against. So, it is very important to have as deep and as thorough an understanding as possible of all the aspects of the Laodicean message.

We are miserable, poor, blind, and naked due to the sin in our lives, so understanding the Laodicean message involves understanding the nature of sin, for if we don’t understand this, we won’t know when sin is out of our lives. Sin is embodied in one great word—selfishness. “All sin is selfishness.” (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 331) If we want to understand the greatest depth of sin, we need only to look in a mirror.

In the past, people have given different definitions of sin and I want to consider a couple definitions now. Several years ago when I was first pastoring, a young man became a Bible worker at our church who had studied theology at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, where he received some strange ideas. He gave me his notes from one of his theology classes and I still have them. In this class, Christology and soteriology were addressed. The two great foundational points that Christology and soteriology are built upon are the nature of Christ and the nature of sin. This young man was taught by a leading professor of theology (currently still teaching at SU) that sin is a broken relationship and that to overcome sin means only to restore the relationship with God. In fact, it was stated that overcoming sin in what I would consider the Biblical sense of overcoming is not even encouraged or even looked upon as something good, but rather it is looked upon as a work of the flesh. We should not be worried, according to this professor, about trying to overcome any sin in our lives because this is actually righteousness by works. All we should do is keep our eyes focused on having a relationship with Christ.

A different definition of sin is that it is simply our inheritance from Adam or a state of evil. In other words, sin is actually the sinful nature. One of the implications of this

definition of sin is, if sin is our sinful nature, then Jesus could not have partaken of such a nature as ours, and in fact, this same professor of theology also taught the concept that Jesus did not accept the fallen nature of man. The character of God then comes into question. How can a just God impute the guilt of an adult (Adam) to an innocent infant, or is it even possible for the infant to be innocent? How can a just God consign that infant to the agonies of fire? If men acquire guilt simply by being born into the human race, what happens when that guilt rests upon Jesus at His birth? There is a multitude of other questions. We need to think about these things, because everything we believe has a practical application somewhere in our lives. We may not see it initially, but it does come into play in our thinking and even more importantly, in our lives, because as a man “thinketh in his heart so is he.” (Proverbs 23:7)

Jesus says Laodicea is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked and this is very true. In Revelation 18 we are told to come out of Babylon, but we haven’t begun to understand how much Babylon resides in us. We have been conditioned to think that coming out of Babylon simply means to leave the Catholic Church, a Baptist or Methodist fellowship, or a worldly situation, and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We stop attending church on Sunday and start attending on Sabbath and we change our diet and a few other things, but coming out of Babylon means much, much more. This world is permeated with all the philosophies and mindsets of Babylon, and one proof of it is to simply drive down the road and look at the billboards. Even though there will not be a scriptural reference telling you to worship Molech or Baal, the advertising is still full of Babylon. Consider, for example, the swimwear that most women wear today. If you were to find the most conservative swimsuit sold anywhere in this country, unless it is made by a rare specialty shop, it would have been considered indecent and immodest one hundred years ago. In fact, in the last century women were arrested for indecency in New Jersey for daring to wear things on the beach that we would consider very modest today.

I first attended high school in 1972 and just the year before the dress code at the high school was changed. Prior to 1972, girls were not allowed to wear slacks, pants or jeans to school, but they were required to wear dresses. This was a public high school and to even suggest something like that today would seem absurd. This is because we are seeing more and more of Babylon and we are becoming acclimated to it. Christian people used to be careful about the things they watched and about the things they heard. They were careful about the kind of music they listened to, but today we are forced to listen to piped music everywhere we go—at Wal-Mart or K-Mart, at restaurants, etc., and after awhile it becomes our second nature to accept that kind of music as satisfactory. I have been very convicted that I need to be much more careful on some of these issues because I know

they have an effect upon me and they have an effect upon you, whether you want to admit it or not.

Laodicea says, “I am rich, I am richer, and I don’t need anything.” Now, this is easy to understand in the spiritual realm, but in the physical realm we would never say such a thing. It simply would not make sense. How could we be wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked when we think we are rich, richer, and in need of nothing? Obviously if you did not have your jacket and shirt on, you would know it and other people would know it. If you take your glasses off, for example, you would not be able to read and it would be very apparent to you. If you have ever had a toothache or an earache, you know what being miserable and wretched feels like physically, but Jesus is not talking about physical issues here. He is talking about our spiritual lives, and it is sad that many times we don’t perceive these things at all because spiritually we think we are rich and richer.

Paul discusses this principle in 1 Corinthians 2:12:

**Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God.**

If we want to be able to say this, then we have to get out of the world more than we are now, because we are very much in the world and the things of the world. We are imbibing on the things of the world.

**That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (vs. 12, 13)**

Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. A good example of this is found in John 6 where Jesus says, “For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” (vs. 55, 56) Jesus goes on to explain: “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (v. 63) He is talking about Himself spiritually and He is not telling us that we are to physically eat of His body.

Laodicea is naked and cannot tell with physical eyesight that she is spiritually naked. Laodicea needs something more reliable than eyesight. “For we walk by faith, not by sight,” (2 Corinthians 5:7) and “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17) We will not know if something is right or wrong just by looking at it, but if we hear what the Word of God says to us, then we can judge and know. Ellen White makes this important statement: “What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong!” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 253) In other words, these people think they are right when they are completely wrong. When we think that we have obtained, we probably are in the greatest need. “The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception.” (*Ibid.*)

Where did sin begin? It began in the mind and the heart of Lucifer. We can’t explain it and we can’t make any excuse for

it. Lucifer brought this dissatisfaction to a third of the angels. Lucifer was very cunning to persuade a third of the angels. Yet we are told: “Satan has the same power and the same control over minds now, only it has increased a hundred-fold by exercise and experience.” (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 3, p. 328) A hundred-fold! Who are we, friends? Oh, “that the nations may know themselves to be but men!” (Psalm 9:20) We are made lower than the angels and here we are in sinful flesh, with all our degeneracy, and Satan has a hundred times greater ability to deceive than he ever had with the holy angels. Friends, this is very important. How dare we think we can stand on our own?

Jesus does more than tell us that we are in a wretched state and that we have problems. He provides a remedy. In Revelation 3 we read, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” (v. 18) It is very interesting that Jesus says “buy.” Normally we think of the gospel as something that is freely given, but to buy something implies there will be a cost to us.

**Eternal life is of infinite value and will cost us all that we have. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 255)**

All that we have and everything that we are—that is what it is going to cost and that is why a constant, unceasing surrender has to be a part of our Christian life. If it is not, we will not have eternal life, but we can have it because Jesus tells us to buy of Him gold tried in the fire.

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world *rich in faith*, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (James 2:5) “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but *faith which worketh by love.*” (Galatians 5:6) How do I know I have real faith? If it works. Faith can be measured and the motivating force that makes faith work in our lives is love. When we truly love God, there is nothing that we will hold back from Him. Do our check-books really belong to God? We might write out a tithe check because we have learned how to budget adequately, but is it a different story when the call for real sacrifice comes? Are the keys to our cars really His? Are our front doors dedicated to God, so that no matter what He wants to do with our homes, He can? That is what I want. I want my car dedicated to Him. I want my house dedicated to Him. I want everything dedicated to Him, because if I do that, then all that I am and have will be His. Giving everything to Him also includes erroneous doctrines and everything that I believe. It doesn’t matter what it is. If I have erroneous doctrines, I must give them up, and I can do that if I love Him.

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” (1 Timothy 6:17) The things that we can righteously become rich in, God

has given us to enjoy, and they do bring joy. There should be a joy in knowing the Lord. There should be a joy in serving God and if we don’t have that love, peace, and joy, we don’t have the fruit of the Spirit. This is what the gold tried in the fire is.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” (1 Peter 4:12) After we give our hearts to the Lord, life *seems* to get harder, but friends, these are the fiery trials Peter speaks of. It is the fire that purifies the gold and the gold is the faith that works by love. God uses trials to perfect our faith. If we never became hungry, if we never had a problem, we would never need to go to God and seek His help and ask for faith and for Him to work in our lives. In His goodness and graciousness, many times He allows trials to come into our lives.

A few years ago I was given the title, “Head of the Modesty Police” because I was concerned, and I still am, about the way I, as well as other people, dress. Friends, I don’t want to be naked and I don’t want you to be spiritually naked either, so I hope that I can be part of the spiritual modesty police, because we need the white raiment of Christ, His righteousness. The Bible tells us in Isaiah 64:6 that our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, but Laodicea is so bad that she doesn’t even have filthy rags to put on. She is naked. We need to allow Christ to come into our lives and to clothe us because we cannot even clothe ourselves.

**And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” (Zechariah 3:1-4)**

Joshua was a little better than Laodicea because he was at least clothed, but he was clothed with filthy garments. Christ offers us His righteousness—a pure, spotless, and holy robe. How? By faith through love. It is available to each one of us right now. Only God and Christ are good enough and only God and Christ can provide a pure garment for us.

There is a story in Matthew chapter 22 about a marriage feast, where everyone was given a wedding garment. The king came to see his guests and he found one man that did not have the wedding garment on. “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?” Now notice the next four words: “And he was speechless.” (vs. 11, 12) Interestingly, the word translated “speechless” is also translated in 1 Corinthians 9:9 as “muzzle.” The guest in the

parable couldn't say anything, just like a muzzled animal can't open its mouth. A time is coming when an investigation will be made of our lives and every mouth will be stopped and every tongue will be silenced on those who have not accepted the wedding garment.

Now, in addition to the gold tried in the fire and the white raiment, we need eye salve. We need this eye salve which is spiritual discernment to see the wiles of Satan so as to shun them, so as to detect sin and abhor it, and so as to see truth and obey it. (See *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 233) We need eye salve because we are blind. If we will accept from Him the gold tried in the fire, if we will accept from Him the white raiment, and if we will accept from Him the eye salve, then we can become cured from our Laodicean state, but we have to accept it all from Him. The Bible says that God has dealt to every man the measure of faith and then He gives us more faith as we allow the first measure of faith to grow. We don't have any love of ourselves. We don't have anything good of ourselves. We have to receive it all from the Lord.

In Revelation 3:19, Jesus says something very endearing: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Now we might not think that rebuking and chastening represent love. Perhaps when we were growing up we heard the saying and maybe we even used it with our own children as we would begin discipline of a certain nature, "Now, this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you." The Greek word used for love here is not agape but (phileo) which simply means an emotional and passionate love. Jesus is trying to make sure we understand that He rebukes and chastens us because He passionately loves us. If Jesus sends us rebukes and chastisements, we should accept them and be thankful for them.

In the testimony to the Laodicean church found in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 3, there is a large section devoted to the story of Elijah and how he dealt with sin and the apostasy that was occurring in Israel. Many of us consider Elijah to be a man of stern rebuke, a man of very stern chastisement, and a man not full of love, but I assure you that Elijah was indeed full of love. When a message comes from God His people so often reject it and want to hide from it instead of accepting it thankfully, but the message has to be given nevertheless. We have a message to give to the world and we think the world should listen. We have a message that we think is so powerful and important that every nation, kindred, tongue, and people should hear it, but the message that is especially for us, we don't want to hear. "It is in the time of conflict, in the time we now live, that the true colors should be flung to the breeze." (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 272) The message must be given.

Did Laodicea become Laodicean overnight? No. In the time of Elijah, the people of Israel (and this is an object lesson for us) had gradually lost their fear and reverence of God. It did not occur overnight, and our backslidings and spiritual apathy do not happen overnight, but there is good news. It

can be cured overnight. It can be cured now. We can give our lives fully to Jesus. We can surrender anything and everything that is in our lives if we love Him. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13)

The message of the church of Laodicea is sent first to the angel of the church, in this case the leader of the church, then it goes to the corporate body, and then to the individual person: "If *any man* hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Revelation 3:20, 21) Jesus overcame by abiding in His Father and we can do the same thing. He has offered it to each one of us if we want it. He has shown us plainly the pathway to walk. He has shown us how to evaluate our progress, how to know if we have real faith, and how to know if our faith is working. We don't have to be wretched, poor, miserable, blind, and naked. We can understand what our spiritual condition is. In fact, it is God's great purpose to alert us to our present condition and where we are at. This is why He gives us this message. He sends us His Holy Spirit to convict us of sin and to show us what is right, so that we might find the remedy in Christ.

I have had a chance to visit many places in this world. I've seen many nice things and have had a lot of good adventures, but one thing I haven't been able to do yet is become an astronaut. I want to go into space. Friends, Jesus is coming back soon and then we will all have the opportunity to be astronauts. We will be able to go boldly where no man has ever gone before. I hope to go to little corners of the universe that no one has ever seen before. I believe God has created places for us all to go where no intelligent being has ever been. My family and I were at Canyonlands National Park in Utah several years ago, a place that not many people visit. One of the rangers told us that there were areas in the park where he felt no human being had probably ever been because of its remote nature and the few visitors the park received. So we hiked in that area, but the thought of going some place in the universe where even an angel hasn't been is an awesome thought. We can all take that space ride when Jesus comes. He says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Revelation 3:22)

Our heavenly Father has bestowed upon us joy, peace, and goodness, even though at times it may appear to be rebukes and chastisements. He does this because He loves us and cares so much for us. He has loved us with an everlasting love. He wants to write His name in our foreheads. I pray that we will always be mindful of His presence and choose to walk in His paths, because one day, if we are joined to our idols, He will have to let us go, just like He did Ephraim of old, but if we accept the counsel of the Faithful and True Witness, we shall share Christ's throne with Him.

*Allen Stump*

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“What Does ‘Only Begotten’ Mean?” from page 9

*monogenes* meant “unique” or “special” then the Bible writers did not understand it, nor do the people who speak Greek as their first language understand it.

I have talked with people whose first language is Greek and always the term *monogenes* is understood to mean only born, not unique. I discussed this matter with a language professor once who has himself studied Greek for many years, years in which he held Trinitarian views. I asked him what *monogenes* means and he assured me that it solely means, “only begotten.”

As I consider this matter, it seems very strange that theologians, who do not speak Greek as their first and primary language, should presume to tell the Greek people what their own language means. If someone who knew or spoke English as a second language or who only studied it in part should begin to tell me that the English phrase “only begotten” meant “unique,” I would not put much stock or consideration into the rest of what he might say. Why do we dare redefine the Greek language to teach a doctrine of Satan? 

## Maine Camp Meeting

The Maine weekend camp meeting has been changed from May 10-13 to July 27-29. Brother Lynnford Beachy will be one of the speakers at this meeting. For further details contact Mervin and Rose Marie Shoemaker: 207-892-2338 

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