

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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A Spirited Subject

By Allen Stump

Within Adventism the subject of the Holy Spirit and the Godhead has become a spirited subject of discussion. This has been highlighted by the recent release of several publications, as well as by the Adventist Theological Society's recent symposium on the Trinity held at Southern Adventist University this Spring. This symposium was held because "The subject [of the Trinity] receives the highest number of questions at the Biblical Research Institute in the General Conference" (Email from employee-admin@southern.edu on behalf of Star Stevens to employees at Southern University).

With the publication of the second quarter's adult Sabbath School lessons on the Holy Spirit, there has been a flood of response materials written by interested parties. The April, May, and June issues of *Old Paths* dealt with some of the pertinent points and concepts of the Sabbath School lessons.

Samuele Bacchiocchi has thrown his voice into the ring of discussion recently as well. His "Endtime Issues Newsletter," No. 147 (hereafter referenced as EIN-147) lists the main topic as "The importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity." In the second paragraph Bacchiocchi states:

The struggle our Adventist Church has faced in accepting the doctrine of the Trinity, is reflected in the current challenge of this doctrine by an increasing number of Adventists. Surprisingly, recently a significant number of Adventists have emailed me studies defending the historical anti-Trinitarian position of our pioneers (EIN-147; all emphasis in this article is supplied unless otherwise noted).

Bacchiocchi states that he will be devoting the next three newsletters to the subject of the Trinity because of "numerous requests to re-examine the question of the Trinity (*Ibid.*)."

Bacchiocchi states he plans to discuss "the social, ecclesiastical, and political implications" of the Trinity doctrine and then in issue No. 148 publish "chapter 16 from the book *The Trinity: Its Implications for Life and Thought*. The title of the chapter is 'The Holy Spirit and the Triune Oneness of the Godhead.' The author is Woodrow Whidden, Ph. D. (*Ibid.*)."

Bacchiocchi writes that he plans to later post a summation of Professor Jerry Moon's chapters from the book, *The Trinity: Its Implications for Life and Thought* which cover a "historical survey of the gradual evolution of Adventist pioneers from anti-Trinitarian to Trinitarian beliefs (*Ibid.*)."

Professor Moon is head of the Church History Department at the Andrews University Theological Seminary.

Prayer Requests

We are thankful for all the prayers you have offered in response to concerns mentioned in past columns and this month we humbly ask for your prayers for the Beachy family. Brother Lynnford will be traveling to Europe soon, so please join us in prayer that he will continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit as he shares God's Word and that angels will continually guard while he is away from us, for we know we are living in fearful times. Also, his wife, Kendra, has been having difficulty with an allergic reaction to mold. Please pray that speedy solutions can be found for the complications arising from this health concern. We consider it a high privilege to stop our work in the office, in response to frequent requests for prayer, and as a group entreat our heavenly Father on behalf

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Old Trinitarian Challenges

Bacchiocchi begins the section of his newsletter especially dealing with the Trinity by noting:

The doctrine of the Trinity was really the first doctrine that captivated the early church, causing an enormous investment of time and money. The first seven ecumenical councils from Nicea in 325 to Constantinople in 687, were convened mostly to define and refine the church position on the nature and relationship among the three members of the Trinity (*Ibid.*).

Notice that “the early church” and “the church position” are spoken of but nowhere are we told that the seven noted councils mentioned are Catholic ecumenical councils! We then read:

In a very real sense, it was on the doctrinal issues of the Trinity that early church leaders cut their intellectual teeth. The matter was forced upon them by the need to explain to Greek thinkers how the *three Beings* of the Godhead can be defined and worshipped as one God. It is unfortunate that those apologetic endeavors often resulted in *heretical* anti-trinitarian teachings that have *plagued Christianity* until our time. In fact, most of today’s anti-trinitarian heresies found in such religious movements as the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Unitarians, and liberal theologians, trace their roots to the early church (*Ibid.*).

Here those Adventists who do not believe in the Trinity are listed with fringe groups such as Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses, stating that such are “heretical” and that they “have plagued Christianity.” This reminds one of the statement by Adventist leaders a half century ago documented by Donald Barnhouse in *Eternity* magazine of September, 1956. Barnhouse wrote an article entitled, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?” in which he described the meetings that took place between some of the foremost evangelicals in the United States and Adventist leaders. In trying to explain how some of our older literature carried positions not readily accepted by evangelicals, the Adventist Church leaders told Walter Martin, “that they had among their number certain members of their ‘lunatic fringe’ even as there are similar wild-eyed irresponsibles in every field of

fundamental Christianity (*Eternity*, September, 1956).”

Early in his article, a term is used that surprises us greatly. The author refers to the Trinity six times as “three Beings,” and three times he uses the term “three equal Beings.” As we noted in the April issue of *Old Paths*, the General Conference has signaled an official position in clear favor of the orthodox Trinity doctrine (one being in three persons, not three beings which is considered polytheism) in the release of the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, also known as volume twelve of the Commentary Reference Series. Notice the following references in the *Handbook* concerning the nature of God:

... one divine reality and not to a plurality of divine beings (p. 121).

... divine Being singular, with a plurality of persons (p. 122).

In the being of God is an essential coprimordiality [existing from the beginning] of three coequal, coeternal, nonoriginated persons (p. 150).

The danger of Tritheism...becomes real when the oneness of God is reduced to a mere unity conceived in analogy to a human society or a fellowship of action. Beyond such a unity of action, however, it is necessary to envision God as the one single reality which, in the very acts by which He reveals Himself directly in history, transcends the limits of our human reason (p. 150).

These statements in the newsletter go directly against all mainstream Trinitarian orthodoxy, which declares a three-being godhead to be anathema and polytheistic! Is this simply carelessness? A single incident might slip through the editing process, but nine such statements could hardly be published by accident. The Bible plainly states, “But to us there is but *one God, the Father*, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him (1 Corinthians 8:6).” The one true God of the Bible is the Father, not a three person or triune being. Jesus Christ is the “only begotten Son” of the Father (John 3:16).

New Challenges to the Trinity

The next section is an expansion on the challenges to the Trinitarian doctrine, in addition to those presented by the “historic anti-trinitarian heresies (EIN-147).” Liberation Theology, Feminism, and New

Age Movement concepts are discussed before dealing with what he considers unbalanced views of the Trinity. In the section on Liberation Theology, the author claims that having the idea of “God the Father as the supreme Ruler of the universe, has fostered a hierarchical system where secular and religious leaders emulate the role of God by dominating and oppressing the masses (*Ibid.*)” When reading this, one should remember what God says in these verses:

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

My Father is greater than I (John 14:28).

The head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Christ made every effort so to sweep away the misrepresentations of Satan, that the confidence of man in the love of God might be restored. He taught man to address the *Supreme Ruler of the universe* by the new name “Our Father.” This name signifies his true relation to us, and when spoken in sincerity by human lips, it is music in the ears of God. Christ leads us to the throne of God by a new and living way, to present him to us in his paternal love (*Review & Herald*, September 11, 1894).

It is a mistake to try to make God fit into our pattern of thought instead of making our pattern of thought fit God. While Liberation Theology may claim to use *false* ideas of God as a role model to dominate and oppress the masses, those who have fostered the Trinity doctrine have caused the greatest persecutions the world has ever seen. The real truth about God teaches that He is loving, kind, merciful, and gracious.

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s

children, unto the third and to the fourth generation (Exodus 33:6, 7).

Bacchiocchi also discusses the issues of Feminism and the New Age Movement as resulting from misunderstandings of the Trinity.

Unbalanced Views of God

Bacchiocchi next discusses three views of Christian belief: one that emphasizes the Father alone, one that emphasizes Christ alone, and one that emphasizes the Holy Spirit alone. In the section on the “The Religion of the Father Alone” Bacchiocchi states:

In a more subtle way, the doctrine of the Trinity suffers also from the devotion given by some Christians to one member of the Trinity at the exclusion of the other two. There is, for example, the Religion of the Father Alone, practiced by those Christians who believe that God the Father is the central figure of the Trinity. He is the Almighty Ruler who decides the life or death destiny of every person. Therefore, Christians must submit themselves to Him without questioning as minors. “Such an understanding,” as Catholic theologian Leonardo Boff points out, “can lead Christians to feel resigned to their misery and to nourish a spirit of submission to those in charge, to the pope and the bishops, with no creativity. God is certainly the Father, but the Father of the Son, who, together with the Holy Spirit, lives in communion and equality.” (Leonard Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community*, 2000, p. 9) (EIN-147).

While staying within the framework of the Trinity, Bacchiocchi speaks of those that consider the Father as the supreme “Almighty Ruler.” As we have seen earlier, God the Father is the supreme Ruler and Being in the universe. There is an order to the rule of heaven. Christ has been exalted to be equal with God. The angels then follow Christ, but there is no spirit of supremacy in heaven. Only the spirit of love reigns where the spirit of God is allowed to rule. Jesus said, “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren (Matthew 23:8).”

The Trinity’s Importance

The next major section of Bacchiocchi’s article is entitled “The Importance of the

Doctrine of the Trinity.” Within the first paragraph of this section Bacchiocchi states that “the Christian faith is based on mysteries (EIN-147).” He then states that although we cannot understand creation, the incarnation, or the resurrection we still accept them, therefore we should accept the Trinity also, even though we cannot understand it. What the author fails to note is that the creation, the incarnation, and the resurrection are all taught in the Bible, while the Trinity is not. We must seek the Catholic ecumenical councils to find where the Trinity is first taught within professed Christianity.

Bacchiocchi declares that the Trinity “sets Christianity apart from all other religions. On the one hand, it clearly distinguishes Christianity from the strongly monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Islam. On the other hand, it separates Christianity from polytheistic and pantheistic religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism (Ibid.).” The Trinity surely sets Catholicism and its proponents apart from other religions and prevents the acceptance of Jesus by the Muslims and Jews who are monotheistic. Neither the Muslims nor the Jews can accept a Jesus who is exactly like, or who is a part of, the Father. The Koran declares:

They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: For there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them (Su 5:76).

Even though Bacchiocchi tries to distinguish Trinitarianism from all other religions, the rejection of Jesus as the literal begotten Son of God is what binds Trinitarianism into the common fabric of Babylon. The one great error that is common to Catholics, apostate Protestants, Muslims, Jews, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, polytheists, and pantheists is that they all deny that Jesus Christ is the literal begotten Son of God!

The Trinity and Salvation

Under the section, “Trinity and the Message of Salvation” Bacchiocchi writes:

The doctrine of the Trinity is of great importance because it affects the formulation of other doctrines. Theology is organic and the alteration of one doctrine affects the formulation of other doctrines. If the doctrine of the Trinity is

not true, then the biblical message of salvation must be radically changed. Instead of a voluntary self-sacrifice by a member of the Godhead, the atonement becomes an unfair and unethical treatment of Jesus by God, who punished His own Son for something he did not do (EIN-147).

We agree that one’s concept of God is important and is the basis of all other religious teachings, but the author uses a straw-man approach in his attempt to undermine non-Trinitarian positions. He implies that any teaching other than the Trinity has an unloving God that punishes “His own Son for something he did not do” and that the sacrifice of Christ denies that He voluntarily gave of His own life. These are not true propositions and the logic is flawed. The Bible does not teach the Trinity and neither does it teach that God punished Jesus or that Jesus did not come of His own free will.

The Trinity — Institution Model

The final section of Bacchiocchi’s study in EIN-147 is entitled, “The Trinity as a Model for Religious, Political, and Social Institutions.” He begins by stating:

The importance of the doctrine of the Trinity is indicated especially by its impact on religious, social, and political institutions. The exercise of power in most societies generally reflects the prevailing understanding of how God rules the universe. The tendency has been to represent God as the only all-powerful ONE, who rules the world as a monarch. The usual conclusion has been that those who wield power on earth, are to act as God’s natural representatives (EIN-147).

Again, the author defines God to fit into his pattern of thought instead of making his pattern of thought fit God. God is the ruler of the universe. If He is not, then who is? He is the “all-powerful One.” If God is not the all-powerful One, then who is? Nowhere in the Bible is God pictured as a ruling despot, rather He is depicted as the kind “Father” upon Whom one may cast all his cares because God cares for His children. (See 1 Peter 5:7.)

In order to strengthen our confidence in God, Christ teaches us to address Him by a new name, a name entwined with the dearest associations of the human heart. He gives us the privilege of calling the infinite

God our Father. This name, spoken to Him and of Him, is a sign of our love and trust toward Him, and a pledge of His regard and relationship to us. Spoken when asking His favor or blessing, it is as music in His ears. That we might not think it presumption to call Him by this name, He has repeated it again and again. He desires us to become familiar with the appellation (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 141).

The next concept developed is “that those who wield power on earth, are to act as God’s natural representatives” and the author then applies this concept to church government, politics, Muslim Totalitarianism, and Machismo in the family. In each case he builds a false view up as what is in opposition to true church government, politics, Muslim Totalitarianism, and Machismo in the family and then tears it down straw-man style. For example, in the section “Machismo in the Family,” Bacchiocchi writes:

The understanding of God as a male who controls everything and hold [sic] all power for Himself, has fostered male domination in macho-oriented cultures. Believing to be acting in the name of God, the man views himself as the “boss” and “owner” of his wife and children (*Ibid.*).

This view fails to note that the same Bible which teaches the truth about God and His Son, also teaches that agape love demands the husband to support the rights of women and children, that the husband is to love his wife, “even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it,” and that the fathers are not to provoke their children to wrath (Ephesians 5:25; 6:4). The Trinity directly strikes against the gospel order of love laid down in 1 Corinthians 11:3. No wonder families are in such disarray. Husbands do not guide in love and wives do not submit in love because the Trinity doctrine teaches that God and Christ are the same in all respects.

EIN No. 148

As promised, Bacchiocchi published material by Elder Woodrow Whidden in issue #148 of his newsletter. The material is credited to be from “chapter 16 from the book *The Trinity: Its Implications for Life and Thought*.” The title of the chapter is supposed to be, “The Holy Spirit and the Triune Oneness of the Godhead.” However, a search of the Adventist Book

Center website reveals no such book. We called the toll-free number for the Adventist Book Center published in the newsletter and were told that the only book they have that nearly fits the description is entitled, *The Trinity: Understanding God’s love, His plan of salvation, and Christian relationships*. This book was coauthored by Jerry Moon and John Reeve. The material quoted by the newsletter is almost a verbatim account of chapter 4 of the book, *The Trinity: Understanding God’s love, His plan of salvation, and Christian relationships*. All references to Whidden’s work in this article will be from Bacchiocchi’s newsletter.

Before proceeding, I would like to say that I recently met and talked with Elder Whidden at the symposium on the Trinity at Southern Adventist University and I am glad to say that he appears to be a man of strong and sincere convictions. While I obviously do not agree with all his theology, I respect him as a person.

Personhood of the Holy Spirit

The bulk of Elder Whidden’s material deals with the personhood of the Holy Spirit and here is where we come to a partial agreement and, yet, a disagreement with him. Elder Whidden covers verses from Acts 5, Ephesians 4:30; Matthew 12:31, 32; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11; and John 14-16 to show the personhood of the Holy Spirit. We are agreed with him that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, but, we must differ with him because the Bible does not teach that the Holy Spirit is a person separate and apart from the Father and the Son as the Trinity doctrine teaches. While Whidden makes some interesting remarks paralleling the experience of man and God, the one point he misses is that man and man’s spirit are set in parallel to God and God’s spirit. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:11).” No Seventh-day Adventist believes that man’s spirit is something that is separate and consciously exists apart from man’s physical body. Man’s spirit is clearly his inner self, his conscience or inner being, but not a person different and separate from himself. Yet, when God and His Spirit are mentioned, Trinitarians automatically assume that they are different and separate from each

other. Realizing that a similar parallel exists between God and God’s Spirit and man and man’s spirit clears up the supposed non-trinitarian problems that Whidden sees in many texts. (This concept was covered in detail in the April–June issues of *Old Paths*.)

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is the very person and presence of God. Of course, the Father can be “lied to,” “grieved,” and “blasphemed.” God has a “will” and “the ability to make choices.” God, in the presence of His Spirit, reveals the things He has prepared for us.

Use of Masculine Pronouns

Elder Whidden then proceeds to discuss the pronouns used that describe the Holy Spirit in masculine terms. Whidden correctly notes:

First of all it should be observed that while the word “Spirit” (Gk. *pneuma*) is in the neuter gender in Greek, the personal pronoun *ekeinos* (“that one,” or “He,” clearly used to refer to the neuter Spirit) is in the masculine gender. ... The neuter Spirit (*pneuma*) can certainly be interpreted to be impersonal, but the fact that the personal pronouns are masculine (especially *ekeinos*) and are used repeatedly, strongly indicates the personhood of the Spirit (EIN-148).

It should be noted that some of the references for masculine pronouns Whidden uses are for the masculine word “comforter” and not for the neuter word “spirit.” However, to us the issue is not the masculine personhood of the Holy Spirit. We take exception with any attempts to show that the Holy Spirit is a person different from God or Christ.

2 Corinthians 13:14

Whidden states that the “final piece of evidence for the Spirit’s personality comes from 2 Cor. 13:14 (*Ibid.*)” This verse states: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” Whidden goes on to write:

The first thing to note about this verse is that the Holy Spirit is here described as the *third named being* headed up by the [sic] God the Father and the Son. The vast majority of Bible-believing Christians agree that the Father and the Son are *personal divine beings*. *Most certainly* the “grace” which comes from

Jesus Christ is only something that can have a personal origin. The “love of God” is *obviously suggestive* of the personality of the Father since love is the essence of any experience which is inter-personal and expressive of caring sentiments. The Holy Spirit is then mentioned in a most straight-forward way, *strongly suggestive* that He is a personal, coordinate *divine being*—the Third Person of the tri-personal Godhead (EIN-148).

While 2 Corinthians 13:14 is discussed in detail in the April 2006 issue of *Old Paths*, we should note that there is only one individual in the verse that is mentioned as being “God.”

Interestingly, Whidden also uses the term “being” to describe the Holy Spirit, and then he uses the term “Third Person.” With such uncertainty of vocabulary, is it any wonder that many church members are confused on this issue?

Further Thoughts

Although Elder Whidden uses 2 Corinthians 13:14 to build his case for the Trinity, he is compelled to use expressions like “Most certainly,” “obviously suggestive,” and “strongly suggestive,” for there is no clear-cut statement about a Trinity in this text. The Bible teaches that the Father is a God of truth and that which is necessary for the salvation of mankind is simple enough for a child to understand. Yet, according to the author, the evidence for the most fundamental doctrine of the Bible is, at best, only “strongly suggestive.”

Next, an attempt to link Deuteronomy 6:4 with Matthew 28:19 and Genesis 1:26 is made, endeavoring to show a unity of three. In Genesis 1:26, however, it is clearly God the Father speaking to Christ. (See *Early Writings*, page 145.) Ellen White never mentions the Holy Spirit in connection with this verse. Matthew 28:19 speaks of baptizing in the name (singular) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father has a personal name (Yahweh), the Son has a personal name (Jesus), but the Scripture is silent concerning a personal name for the Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4 is the Shema of Israel and it is virtually impossible to convince a Jew that the plural word *echad* means a plural in numerical essence, rather than a plural of majesty.

God is Love

The last section of Whidden’s study declares the Trinity doctrine proves the love of God. The author accurately states that God’s very essence is love, basing that statement on John 3:16 and 1 John 4:8. We then read:

Could One who has existed from all eternity past and who made us in His loving image—could this God truly be called love if He ever existed as a solitary Being? Is not love, especially divine love, only possible if the One who made this universe was a plural Being who was exercising “love” within His divine plurality from all eternity past (EIN-148)?

On the surface, the logic might appear plausible. The main problem with it is that the author uses his finite human logic instead of the infinite, divine wisdom of God’s Word for the criteria to determine God’s nature and the manifestation of His love. Whidden makes reference to John 3:16, which says nothing about God being plural or needing to be plural to demonstrate love. On the contrary, the basis of God’s great love in John 3:16 is that He is the great God Who gives His only begotten Son for mankind. 1 John 4:8 states, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” Of course, as Christians we believe that God is the embodiment of love. The next verse tells us plainly how that love was made known or demonstrated. “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 (1 John 4:9).” As in John 3:16, the great manifestation of God’s love is declared to be demonstrated in the giving of His Son.

Let us consider the author’s logic a little more. According to his theory, God could not be singular because that would mean there was a time when only He existed with no one else to love, so God could not be love. Suppose you were deserted on a tropical island without any possibility to contact anyone. Would you be incapable of having love? Would your finite mind be incapable of loving others even though you have no way to be in contact with them? You would still be capable of love. What you would be incapable of would be demonstrating or expressing your love. This expression is

conditional upon others to love. God, however, is infinite. No matter how far back we might consider Him to have existed before He brought forth mankind, God’s infinite heart of mercy loved mankind. We know this because before man was created, God counseled with His Son on how to save mankind. (See Zechariah 6:12, 13 and Revelation 13:8.)

Babylonian thinking continues by quoting the theologian Bruce Metzger:

“... perfect love is possible only between equals. Just as a man cannot satisfy or realize his powers of love by loving the lower animals, so God cannot satisfy or realize his love by loving man or any creature. Being infinite, he must have eternally possessed an infinite object of his love, some alter ego, or, to use the language of traditional Christian theology, a consubstantial, co-eternal, and co-equal Son” (Metzger 83) (EIN-148).

Metzger is quoted to support a concept of God that is not carefully thought through. If God’s love is infinite and can only find fulfillment in infinite love among an equal, then God could not love mankind as He loves the infinite Jesus. While this may sound logical on the surface, our only safety is found in the Word of God. In His high priestly prayer, Jesus noted:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:23).

Here Jesus declares that the Father loves us (clearly not equals) as He loves His own divine Son! It is dangerous to try to use logic to define God and make Him fit into our finite mind patterns. Finally, Otto Christian is quoted:

“Inspiration and reason both demand a triune God composed of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Christian 70) (EIN-148).

However, neither inspiration nor reason demands a triune God composed of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If reason demands a Triune pluralistic god so that love can be expressed, why is the number three? Could not the number be any plural, such as two or four? Why not five, six, or myriads of gods? Logic does not and cannot “demand” that there are three persons in the Godhead.

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Sharing God's Love

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 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. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* (1 John 4:7–11)

In this article, we will consider God's love for us and how He wishes for us to love and respond to others. God loves us and desires us to *know* of His love and of His desire for fellowship with us.

Recently an individual told me that he does not believe in a God that communicates with us, even through the Bible. We know this is not true. The Bible tells us repeatedly that God is willing and desirous of communicating with us, and the most important message that He wants to communicate with us is that *He loves us*. Think back to the Garden of Eden and the creation of Adam and Eve. God created a paradise for them to live in. They did not need a house for shelter, for there was no violent weather or oppressive sun. They had a living carpet underneath their feet. They had a beautiful, blue sky overhead by day and a magnificent canopy of stars by night. It was never too hot and never too cold. The temperature and humidity were always perfect in the Garden. Beautiful food was readily available just for the picking. God did all this for them because He infinitely loved them, and as wonderful as all this was, they had something infinitely more valuable. They had direct communication with God and with Jesus.

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 50).

It truly was a paradise, but this paradise was lost. Adam and Eve sinned and after they were driven from their garden home, they lost their perfect environment in which to live. Thorns and thistles came forth, the air could be chilled or hot, and the once friendly animals now became wild. They now had to work for their

food, but even in this work they were blessed. God cursed the ground *for their sakes*, for He knew that work was essential for them. The greatest loss Adam and Eve sustained was their direct communication with God. They could not now see the face of God and live.

Satan told Eve, in effect, that God really did not love them. He caused Eve to disbelieve “the words of God, and this was what led to her fall (*Patriarchs & Prophets*, p. 55).” Satan said if they ate of the fruit they would not die but would be as gods, but in reality Satan was saying God was holding something good back from them. God told Adam that if he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would die. The Advent movement was raised up, in its most basic conceptual form, to clarify the misconceptions Satan has promulgated about God and His character and to reveal the real nature and character of God to not only this world but also to the entire universe. This clarification is accomplished not only by the preaching and teaching of God's Word, but also by living lives that demonstrate God's love and what He can do for sinful people. “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men (2 Corinthians 3:2).” The prophet, Jeremiah, speaks to us of God's changeless love:

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee (Jeremiah 31:3).

Sheep are unusual animals in many respects and God uses them as an illustration of what people are like. You can drive cattle but it is hard to drive sheep. You have to lead sheep. God says, “I have not driven you, but I have drawn you with love.” And even more than that, He says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love,” a love that never ends. Beloved, I

believe that there is going to be a place in the heart of God throughout all eternity for His first created being that went wayward. There is going to be a place in His heart for every person who ever lived that will not be in His kingdom. God does not forget His children.

God makes a solemn statement in Hosea 4:17: “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.” Ephraim seemed to be a tribe that did indeed fall into the sin of idolatry very easily. God said to Israel to leave Ephraim alone because he was joined to idols, but the good news is *God* did not leave Ephraim alone. Notice what He says in Hosea 11:8: “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?” He said this because He loved Ephraim so much. When we love someone, we have compassion, emotions, and feelings for them, and we just don't let go of them. To demonstrate His love for His people, to warn them about the idolatry they were in, and to woo them back to His love, God sent them prophets. “Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them (Jeremiah 7:25).” God sent His people messages of His great love by His spokesmen, the prophets. The great, central message of the Bible, from cover to cover, is a message of the Father's love for us.

Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place (2 Chronicles 36:14, 15).

According to 2 Corinthians 3:18, we become like that which we behold. If we behold an imperfect God, our characters

cannot become what it is our privilege for them to be. So, God sent His Son to reveal Himself to mankind. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the *express image of his person*, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3)." The majority of the people of Christ's day rejected Him. What did Jesus do? He healed the sick, He fed the hungry, He restored sight to the blind, and He gave strength to the cripples to enable them to walk. You would think the people would have loved and wanted this Man, but He was not appreciated by most of them. The Bible says He came to call sinners to repentance (John 1:11), but the first time He went to the synagogue (church) and preached, they tried to throw Him over the precipice and kill Him. (Luke 4:16-30)

Jesus loved us and it broke His heart to see the reaction that His ministry of love and reconciliation received.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it (Luke 19:41).

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not (Matthew 23:37)!

The tears of Jesus were not tears "of ordinary grief, but of intense, irrepressible agony (*The Great Controversy*, p. 17)." His tears were not just little trickles, but were tears that He could not hold back. In John 11:35 we read that "Jesus wept," but He was not weeping for Lazarus, because He was about to bring Lazarus forth from the tomb. He was weeping because He knew that many of the people watching Him would later cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Jesus had fed, clothed, and healed the people. He had only shown them mercy and kindness, but was condemned to be crucified instead of the vile criminal Barabbas. Can you imagine that lack of appreciation? Jesus went to the extreme of doing everything He could to shower love upon mankind and reveal how much He and His Father cherished humanity, but He was treated with contempt and indignity.

Our natural reaction in such a situation would be to retaliate with hatred and bitterness, but Jesus did not feel that way toward the people.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

We might think we would not have treated Jesus with such cruelty, but I dare say that, outside of the regenerating power of Christ, we would have cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Many of the same people who shouted "Hosanna to the Highest" on the day He marched into Jerusalem later called for His crucifixion.

How should I react to God's love? The Bible says that the love of Christ constrains, or motivates, us and it is because of this love that we desire to love others. (See 2 Corinthians 5:14, 1 John 4:8-12.) We love God because He first loved us. God longs for a people to demonstrate to the world what His character is like. In dealing with mankind, God uses the least chastisement that is needed to help them. He has used the least intervention necessary to try to encourage and help us, but the "least" really is the "maximum," because He gave His Son for us. What more could He do? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." He loved the "world," yes, but what about us as individuals? "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)." I owe my salvation to the little word "whosoever," because that includes me.

John 17 records Jesus' High Priestly prayer to His Father. Jesus speaks about His love for His disciples and about the perfection and unity He wants them to have:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:23).

Jesus says *the Father loves us just as He loves Him*. This is the great love of God, that He could love sinful, undeserving, rebellious, vile sinners just like He loves His pure, worthy, obedient, holy

Son. He loves us and wants to do great things for us. He wants to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He wants our characters to be like His.

Please contemplate for a moment how you would feel if your child was spit upon, cruelly treated, nailed to a cross, stripped naked, beaten, and abused. Contemplate how you would feel if I uncaringly passed by your loved ones who might be alcoholic, mentally ill, suicidal, or indifferent to spiritual things, thinking, "Well, I can't be bothered by them. They are not important. Things might get messy. I might be rejected and spit upon." Well, Beloved, God cared enough about us that He allowed His Son to be vilely treated to provide for our redemption and this is the message of love found in the Bible. There is a dying and indifferent world that needs to be warned. Even if people do not want to hear the message, they still must be given the warning, for it can change their hearts. As a youth when I was using alcohol, people tried to warn me to stop, and even though I did not want to listen at the time, I am thankful that the Lord finally touched my heart through their pleadings.

Matthew 28:19 begins by saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." This commission is given in many other places in the Bible. The first angel's message in Revelation 14:6, 7 tells of an everlasting gospel that is to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Who does this include? It includes professed Christian people who must come out of Babylon and it also includes non-Christian people who might live, for example, in Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Christianity is not welcome in these places, and if you proselytize there you could be arrested and deported if you are fortunate, but it is more likely that you would be killed. Many people do not want to hear the gospel, but the character of God is on trial and His judgment has begun. Jesus died for these dear people and He wants them in His kingdom. Friends, your careless indifference may contribute toward their eternal destruction, and it will be to the heart-breaking of God.

Brother and Sister Glen Ford's house caught on fire during the first night of the 2000 West Virginia camp meeting. Because someone yelled, "We have a

fire!” the Fire Department was alerted and the house was saved. But if somebody had said, “Well, I love Brother and Sister Ford and I don’t want to trouble them. I don’t want to tell them their house is on fire because they might not like to hear it. It might disturb them and cause them to have a panic attack.” Would that be love? Would that really have been kind to them? The kindest thing to do was to quickly and efficiently warn them of the fire. Jesus said, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16).” Even though He is sending us forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, we are still to go.

Remember, the Lord said that because He loved us He sent prophets with messages of warning. “But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy (2 Chronicles 36:16).” The situation in Judah became so bad that God could not keep sending His people prophets, but had to, instead, send them into Babylonian captivity. It was the only thing that could possibly help them.

Shortly after Pentecost, Peter and John went to the temple to pray and there they met a man who was lame. The Lord used them to raise the man up to strength and then Peter and John started to preach. Notice what Peter said, “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. (Acts 3:14, 15).” Peter must have appeared unbalanced, fanatical, and at least insensitive and unprofessional, but his message is exactly what the Jewish people and leaders needed to hear and the Holy Spirit prompted him to speak these very words. Now, imagine going into a General Conference session and saying, “You have denied the Holy One of Israel!” We would think someone so bold to be unbalanced, fanatical, and at least insensitive and very unprofessional, but the denial of the church today that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is more blasphemous than the denial of the Jewish Church. The blatant, well-thought out acceptance and promotion of the Trinitarian doctrine is even more abominable of a

denial that Jesus Christ is the Son of God as was the denial of the Jewish church because of the greater light of Scripture and Inspiration that we now have.

Acts chapter 4 records Peter and John being put into prison for preaching Christ, with Caiaphas’ strong command to quit their preaching.

But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:17, 18).

Once the apostles were released they asked God for boldness to be able to continue their witness. “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word (Acts 4:29).” The divine record tells us that God answered their prayers and they continued to witness with boldness and even though they were put into prison again, God sent an angel to release them from prison with the instruction to go back to the temple and continue their preaching of Jesus.

Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning and taught (Acts 5:17-21a).

In the parable of the great supper, the Lord says, “Go out into the highways and hedges, and *compel* them to come in, that my house may be filled (Luke 14:23).” The concept of *compel*, in this instance, does not mean to use physical force, but it means to urge and to use all the honest Christian persuasion that can be used to encourage one to accept the offer of God. I say honest Christian persuasion, because we are aware that there are ways to manipulate people with certain mind-controlling techniques and hypnotism. As Christians, we cannot use these methods, but we do want to urge and *compel* the people.

A few years ago a brother and I went to a conference camp meeting. For the most part, we were not well received, but we wanted to visit the people and witness in a Christ-like way. I am really glad that we did because we met a family there that accepted the truth and is with us today. A group of believers in the pioneer message went to the 2000 General Conference Session in Toronto, Canada, and, because of that, some members of a family accepted the truth, including the man who is to become my son-in-law. So, witnessing in a sometimes hostile environment can result in some very precious fruit.

Like the apostles, those who now are proclaiming the truth about God and His Son have limited resources, talents, and possessions. We are sort of like the little band that David had in the cave of Adullam. Saul was bent on killing David at the time.

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father’s house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men (1 Samuel 22:1, 2).

I don’t know how David’s kindred and these four hundred men knew about David and how they all came together, when Saul did not even know where David was, but the divine hand of God was directing these events, because Jesus was to sit on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7). David was a “type” of Christ, and David’s little band prefigures a type of Christ’s people in the last days. The people who were in debt and who were discontented had problems, but David became a captain over them, and Jesus will be a captain over us if we will let Him. He wants to do that for us and He will use us. We are not all talented in the same way, but we can all have a part in God’s work. We are a body and a team and each one is needed.

When David and his men returned to Ziklag, they found the city burned and all their women and children taken captive. David and his men pursued the Amalekites, but some of his men could not continue on the full journey and had to

be left behind. David was able, with the smaller band of men, to find the Amalekites and recover all their material possessions and all the women and children. His men who fought the Amalekites thought that they should be able to keep all of the spoil for themselves and not share it with the men who had stayed behind, but David would not allow that to happen. They were to all share alike. Friends, the Lord wants us to share with each other alike and this is how it was in the New Testament Church. Possessions did not belong to one person alone, but to all of them. We have to have that same commonness and love for our brethren that they had, if we want to receive the latter rain as the disciples received the early rain. We are going to have to learn to pray together as those people prayed. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:14)." We need to be of one accord, and we need to be praying more than we are. We need to be praying in our closets and with our families. We also need to get together in groups and pray fervently to the Lord. As you come to know God, you will know what to say, what to ask for, and what to praise Him for. Not only that, but you will learn to listen.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

Do you want to speak God's Word with boldness? Do you want the Holy Spirit in your life? Do you want the latter rain experience now? I do. The main thing that preceded the early rain was prayer. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you... If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him (Matthew 7:7, 11)?" The Holy Spirit will not come without our asking, seeking, knocking, and praying.

We are at the end of time, and we cannot let many opportunities slip through our fingers. We may not, at this time, know how to spread this message to the entire world. With the Internet and a world phone network system, something can happen on

one side of the world and just seconds later someone on the other side of the world can know about it, but we still are challenged. We are a very small number when you think about trying to warn the six and a half billion people in the world. That is a staggering task to think about.

Even though we are a small band having limited resources, such as the Internet and some evangelist tools, we should remember the early church did not need such resources. The one thing they did have was the Holy Spirit. If we have the Holy Spirit, God will use us and the world will be warned, and it must be warned soon, for its cup of iniquity is almost full!


We have lost much time, but, the Bible says to redeem the time. (Ephesians 5:16) We may not be able to correct everything, but we must do what we can now. The world we live in is a tremendously wicked place. Things happen on the streets of New York City, as well as in the little back hollows of West Virginia that are wicked and deplorable, and there may be something very sad going on even in the homes of those reading this article, but it does not have to be.

I watched a news clip about Slobodan Milosevic, who was on trial at The Hague before his death. The clip also told about some of the Serbs who had murdered Muslim people. The Serbs laid the Muslims down in a ditch and then fired bullets over their heads as a type of mental torture. Then they got the Muslims up and marched them to another place, where they executed them one at a time until there were just a couple of people left. The Serbs made the remaining ones dig graves for those who had been executed, and then they brutally tortured and murdered the few that were left. We wonder how people can be so cruel. Friends, that is what happens when Jesus Christ is not in our lives, and that is why the gospel has to go to all the people of the world.

For instance, in some of the tribes in Africa near Uganda there is brutal prostitution and slavery of young girls. It is hideous, and these perpetrators need to hear the gospel so that they might repent of their wickedness and find forgiveness for their sins. The gospel also needs to go to the victims of these crimes so that they might have the peace of Christ in their lives with a forgiving spirit. This will only be done with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

We have to witness in season and out of season. Probably every one of us has had an experience of not speaking for Christ when we should have spoken up. If my loved one or your loved one needed help, how would you or I feel if someone passed by indifferently?

I read a story about a man who was in a hurry one day and he stopped to get his shoes shined. After a few moments he looked down, but his shoes were still a mess. It didn't look like anything was getting accomplished, even though the little shine boy was trying to clean them. The man started to berate the little boy and say harsh and cruel things to him. The little boy looked up at the man with tears in his eyes and said, "I'm sorry, sir. My mum's died and I am just trying to get some money to put some flowers on her coffin." People are cruel and indifferent, but as Christians, we must be compassionate and long for the salvation of others, even those who abuse us.

May God grant us a fire to melt the ice of our indifference and complacency. May He help us to understand how deep and important His love is to us, so that we will be interested in taking that love to others. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another (1 John 4:11)." Did God try to communicate that love to us? Does God still try to communicate that love to us? Yes, He does. Friends, my hands and feet are the only ones I have that God has. The Bible say, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth (Isaiah 52:7)!" I struggle sometimes to say the right words. I know my grammar is not always the best, and when I was young I had a very bad lisp. It was very hard for me to speak and hard for people to understand me, but the Lord has helped me with that. I am still very imperfect, but my tongue is the only tongue I have that the Lord can use. The Lord wants to use you. He wants to use your hands, your feet, your tongue, and He may need to use your back sometimes, too, in His work, and I know that He will help you if you will let Him. 

(This the fourth and concluding sermon on salvation presented at the 2005 Smyrna Camp Meeting by Allen Stump.)

Youth's Corner – Grace Darling

(The following was presented to the children at Smyrna Chapel on a recent Sabbath morning for the young people's story, but has a wonderful lesson for all the "older" children as well. . . . Editor)

This story is about a very brave girl. Do you know what it means to be brave? It means doing something that you know is the right thing to do even though it is very hard to do. Perhaps in school everyone is doing something you know is wrong and you think you would like to do it too. Then you remember that God would not be happy if you did the wrong thing. Your Mommy and Daddy would not be happy either! So you decide to be brave and do what is right even though no one else is doing the right thing. For example, if your teacher were to leave the classroom and other children were to get up from their desks, talk loudly and maybe even throw things, it might look like fun to you, but you know that you should stay in your seat and so you do. You are being brave.

You can also be brave when you have to do something that is scary to do, but you know you have to do it to help someone else. An adult may ask you to do something that you have never done before, but he knows it is important for you to do it and that you can do it. When an adult asks you to do something to help in an emergency, even though it may be hard to do, when you try to help, you are being brave.

Sometimes it is even hard for adults to be brave. I remember a story in the Bible about the disciples rowing their boat during a bad storm on the lake. The wind blew very hard and the rain was very heavy. The trough of the waves was very deep. The disciples were afraid their boat would turn over and that they would all die. Then they remembered Jesus, who was asleep in the boat. They quickly woke Him up and asked for help, and, of course, Jesus helped them. He stood up and said, "Peace, be still," and the storm stopped. We can always ask Jesus for help when we are in danger or when we are afraid.

Our story is about Grace Darling. She did something very brave that helped nine people who could not help themselves.

Grace lived in a lighthouse with her father and mother and with her two sisters and six brothers. Her father was the keeper of the lighthouse. That meant his job was to make sure the light shone from the top of the lighthouse at all times. The lighthouse alerted all the nearby boats that there were dangerous rocks near the lighthouse and to keep their boats away so that they would not crash on the rocks.

Grace had always lived in the lighthouse and she knew all about storms on the sea and that the waves could get very high and rough and that the wind could blow very hard. She knew what it was like when it rained very hard and when the clouds shut out the sun or the moon and



Grace Darling

stars. When a bad storm came, she always stayed indoors with her mother and father and her eight brothers and sisters. They knew that when the storm ended, they would be able to go back outside again.

One time a very bad storm had driven a ship onto the rocks, even though the light was shining from the lighthouse. The wind was so strong that the crew of the boat could not keep the boat from hitting the sharp rocks, and the rocks broke the boat in two. Many people died in the sea, but nine people managed to stay on a broken piece of the boat caught on the rocks, and they were in danger of slipping off the rocks and down into the deep sea. They were calling loudly for help, but no one at

the lighthouse could hear them during the night because the storm was so fierce and loud, although Grace thought she could hear something, but it was not until the morning that she could see the shipwreck one mile away. Half of the boat was still on the rocks and she could see people trying to stay out of the water.

"We must go help," she told her father, but her father said the waves were still too strong to take a boat out into. He had lived by the sea for a very long time and he knew about the strength of storms. "We will have to wait until the storm dies down more," he said. "But we must try," she said, "for the people may die!" She was being very brave.

So, her father decided to take their lighthouse boat out into the angry waves. He pulled on one oar and she pulled on the other. Both of them were being very brave. It was difficult to pull the boat through the strong waves to the shipwreck, but they did. Then Grace had to keep the boat from crashing onto the rocks while her father climbed onto the rocks to help the survivors get down into the boat. One by one, the tired sailors climbed down into the boat, and then Grace and her father rowed back to the lighthouse through the rough sea.

This happened a long time ago, but we still remember the heroism of Grace Darling. She was twenty-two years old when this happened, and even though that may be older than you are, she was still brave to go in a row boat out into the stormy sea to help stranded sailors. She did something that was hard to do but something that was very important to do.

You may have to do something very hard one day, but if you ask God to help you, you can be brave also, and you do not have to wait until you are twenty-two years old to be brave. Jesus needs brave boys and girls right now who are willing to say "No!" to Satan and who are willing to do what is right even though everyone else is doing the wrong thing. When you do that, you are being very brave and you are making Jesus, your heavenly Father, and your guardian angel very happy! ✍

Ornycha Holt

Christ the Way of Life

By Ellen White

“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Repentance is associated with faith, and is urged in the gospel as essential to salvation. Paul preached repentance. He said, “I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is no salvation without repentance. No impenitent sinner can believe with his heart unto righteousness. Repentance is described by Paul as a godly sorrow for sin, that “worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” This repentance has in it nothing of the nature of merit, but it prepares the heart for the acceptance of Christ as the only Saviour, the only hope of the lost sinner.

As the sinner looks to the law, his guilt is made plain to him, and pressed home to his conscience, and he is condemned. His only comfort and hope is found in looking to the cross of Calvary. As he ventures upon the promises, taking God at his word, relief and peace come to his soul. He cries, “Lord, thou hast promised to save all who come unto thee in the name of thy Son. I am a lost, helpless, hopeless soul. Lord, save, or I perish.” His faith lays hold on Christ, and he is justified before God.

But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ’s righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

James writes of Abraham and says, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith


wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” In order for man to be justified by faith, faith must reach a point where it will control the affections and impulses of the heart; and it is by obedience that faith itself is made perfect.

Without the grace of Christ, the sinner is in a hopeless condition; nothing can be done for him; but through divine grace, supernatural power is imparted to the man, and works in mind and heart and character. It is through the impartation of the grace of Christ that sin is discerned in its hateful nature, and finally driven from the soul temple. It is through grace that we are brought into fellowship with Christ, to be associated with him in the work of salvation. Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ’s perfect obedience instead of the sinner’s transgression and defecation. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then, according to his unfailing promises, God pardons his sin, and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his substitute and surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness.

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of his Son

to the sinner’s account. Christ’s righteousness is accepted in place of man’s failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as he loves his Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness; and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to a greater light. He can say with rejoicing, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Again: it is written, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Jesus declared, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” It is not a low standard that is placed before us; for we are to become the children of God. We are to be saved as individuals; and in the day of test and trial we shall be able to discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. We are saved as individual believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many are losing the right way, in consequence of thinking that they must climb to heaven, that they must do something to merit the favor of God. They seek to make themselves better by their own unaided efforts. This they can never accomplish. Christ has made the way by dying our sacrifice, by living our example, by becoming our great high-priest. He declares, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” If by any effort of our own we could advance one step toward the ladder, the words of Christ would not be true. But when we accept Christ, good works will appear as fruitful evidence that we are in the way of life, that Christ is our way, and that we are treading the true path that leads to heaven (*Review & Herald*, November 4, 1890). 

NO FEAR REVISITED

By Allen Stump

God has been merciful to counsel us through His servant:

Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 292).

Each of the three sentences in the quotation above is worth noting. "Error is never harmless." No matter how supposedly simple or naïve a teaching may appear, if it is erroneous, it is *never* harmless!

"It never sanctifies..." In these last days, those who wish to be a part of the 144,000 will be pure, without "guile" or deception in their mouths. (See Revelation 14:5.) There is no doctrine more devilishly deceptive or from the pit of hell than the concept of the godhead called the Trinity—a pagan doctrine that has been symbolically washed by a baptism of official ecclesiastical approval and then presented to the people as clean, pure, and holy!

We are told that error "always brings confusion and dissension." No doctrine is more confusing than the Trinity. It is repeatedly called a mystery:

The *mystery* of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church...The Church studied this *mystery* with great care and, after four centuries of clarification...(*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 16, 1994 edition; all emphasis supplied in this article unless otherwise noted.).

While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, it is *assumed* as a fact by Bible writers and mentioned several times...*Only by faith* can we accept the existence of the Trinity (*Adventist Review*, Vol. 158, No. 31, p. 4; undated, but published in July 1981.).

God makes the most pointed statement concerning this *mystery* in terms that need not be misunderstood. Under the image of a great harlot, He states irrefutably:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HAR-

LOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (Revelation 17:5).

Error "is always dangerous" because it will cause one to lose the way of eternal life. As we noted last month, there is no doctrine more basic to our Christian belief system than the study of God. All Bible doctrines are established upon our concept of God. Paul lays out a principle that is important to note here:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).

This has been paraphrased to say that "By beholding we become changed." It is a rule of our being that we will become like the God that we serve and worship. If we have false views of God and His character, we will have an imperfect love and a faulty character. This fact cannot be escaped. The most important element of God's character, of His very being, is love. John 3:16 declares God's great revelation of love in the giving of His only begotten Son to die for our sins. It is *this* great gift that reveals God's love and, in turn, creates a character of love within us.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for *God is love*. 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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as

he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. *We love him, because he first loved us*. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also (1 John 4:8-21).

Last month we published an article entitled "NO Fear," which discussed both the hatred and fear that the papacy has for those who will not accept her foundational Trinity doctrine. The article closed by noting that since the papacy's Protestant daughters still cling to the doctrine of the Trinity, they cause the Vatican no real sense of fear. It should be noted that the fruit of the Trinity doctrine is seen in papal hatred and persecution. This is because the Trinity doctrine does not declare the Father's love as revealed in the Bible. It teaches, instead, of a God who gave up nothing, who has no real Son, and who sat selfishly aloof while "the second person of the Trinity" supposedly died, but who really could not give his life for humanity because a member of the triune godhead cannot suffer death. Satan has a hatred for the truth about God because it will reveal God's love and convert sinners as nothing else can, thus robbing him of the subjects of his kingdom; therefore, Satan inspires those under this spell of false doctrine to persecute and hate those who hold onto the truth. These principles of hatred and persecution are held by the Protestants because they hold onto the same doctrine of Rome. Their fruit is and can only be the same! The issue of persecution and hatred among Protestants may be lying dormant now, but as the spirit of truth is re-kindled and loudly proclaimed, so there will be a rekindling of persecution.

The persecutions of Protestants by Romanism, by which the religion of Jesus Christ was almost annihilated, will be more than rivaled when Protestantism and popery are combined (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 239.3).

The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of Spiritualism; they will reach over the

abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience (*The Great Controversy*, 1888 edition, p. 588).

Brother Glen Ford and I were invited to speak on the truth about God at a camp meeting, and Brother Ford spoke on the Holy Spirit. One member of the congregation became very upset and later confessed that he was so infuriated over what Brother Ford was teaching that he wanted to kill him. Thankfully, the Lord was able to work on this man's heart and he finally accepted the truth. When he did, he lost his hatred and persecuting spirit.

Many of the early reformers were men of God who came out of great darkness, but who had not yet obtained all the light. Since they were not free from all of the errors of the Roman Church, especially the Trinity, it is not surprising that the fruit of false teaching was manifested in their lives.

A good example of the hatred that even the Protestants are capable of demonstrating when the Trinity doctrine is challenged is found in the case of Michael Servetus. Servetus was a physician who, nearly seventy-five years before William Harvey, was on the verge of discovering the method by which blood circulates throughout the body. Michael Servetus's studies branched into many areas, including astrology.

On October 27, 1553, Michael Servetus was burned to death, but not for teaching astrology or for heretical medical practices. He was condemned on two counts—for preaching against the Trinity doctrine and for preaching against infant baptism.

One of their [Protestants'] most famous victims was the remarkably talented medic Michael Servetus, who held dangerously outspoken religious views. He expressed these ideas in his *De trinitatis erroribus* (*On the Errors of the Trinity*) of 1531, a treatise that bluntly called for the abandonment of the cherished concept of the Holy Trinity. Arrested by the Viennese Inquisition in 1553, Servetus escaped to Geneva, the center of Calvinism, where he believed he would find sanctuary.

His belief was terribly misplaced. [John] Calvin, who held no official public office in Geneva but was considered the city's spiritual leader, had heard of Servetus. He knew of his erudition and accomplishments in the field of medicine and a decade earlier he had been sent a draft of *De trinitatis erroribus* by Servetus himself. But Calvin had no more liking for Servetus's religious views than did the Catholics of Vienna (Michael White, *The Pope and the Heretic*, pp. 26, 27).

On February 13, 1546, seven years prior to Servetus's arrest, Calvin wrote his friend, Farel, saying:

If he [Servetus] comes [to Geneva], I shall never let him go out alive if my authority has weight (*Schaff-Herzog*



Michael Servetus

Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, p. 371).

Instead of offering the man sanctuary, Calvin had him arrested, tried as a heretic, and sentenced to death (*The Pope and the Heretic*, p. 27).

From the time that Calvin had him arrested on August 14th until his condemnation, Servetus spent his remaining days: "...in an atrocious dungeon with no light or heat, little food, and no sanitary facilities (<http://www.evangelicaloutreach.org/ashes.htm>)."

During the trial, Calvin called Servetus a "villainous cur (<http://latter-rain.com/eccles/servetus.htm>)."

His execution is said to have involved a slow roasting on a spit that took

two hours to kill him (*The Pope and the Heretic*, p. 27).

Some accounts say that it took as long as three hours for Servetus to die over a fire built with green wood and that "a wreath strewn with sulfur" was put upon his head (<http://www.evangelicaloutreach.org/ashes.htm>) What was it that made Servetus such a villain, such a heretic?

Protestants admired some aspects of Servetus' thought, they deplored many others. Moreover, *they were especially defensive concerning their trinitarian orthodoxy*, having no desire to call upon themselves still more Roman Catholic denunciation. The Lutheran reformer Melancthon, commenting on *De Trinitatis Erroribus*, lamented, "As for the Trinity you know I have always feared this would break out some day. Good God, what tragedies this question will excite among those who come after us!"

Spectators were impressed by the tenacity of Servetus' faith. Perishing in the flames, he is said to have cried out, "O Jesus, Son of the Eternal God, have pity on me!" Farel, who witnessed the execution, observed that Servetus, defiant to the last, might have been saved had he but called upon "Jesus, the Eternal Son." A few months later Servetus was again executed, this time in effigy, by the Catholic Inquisition in France (<http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/michaelservetus.html>).

Later Calvin said,

Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt (<http://www.sullivan-county.com/identity/reformers.htm>).

Thus we see the fruit of the Trinity doctrine and how its tentacles reach out to those who reject her.

Revelation 13 begins by depicting the rise of the papacy under the symbol of a composite beast. This beast was given power "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations (Revelation 13:7)." Shortly after this, John sees a second beast coming up out of the earth.

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns

like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 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. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed (Revelation 13:11-15).

For years, Seventh-day Adventists have long understood this second beast to be the United States of America, which began as a lamb but later speaks as a dragon. The second beast makes an image to the first beast and gives life to the image of the beast. Thus empowered, the image of the beast (apostate Protestant America) brings persecution and even a death decree upon those who will not unite upon their common points of faith.

When the churches of our land, uniting upon such *points of faith* as are held by them in common, shall influence the State to enforce their decrees and sustain their institutions, then will Protestant America have formed an im-

age of the Roman hierarchy (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 278).

Nothing caused the ire of the papacy more during the 1,260 years of papal supremacy prophesied in Revelation 13:5 than a rejection of the Trinity doctrine. This same ire will resurface in the last days against those who will not accept the false god of Babylon, nor worship on her false sabbath. Do not be deceived, beloved, especially if you are living at ease in a “first world” country, persecution is not dead upon this earth and will be rekindled with a zeal that has never been matched in intensity in the history of this earth.

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time (Daniel 12:4).

The “time of trouble, such as never was,” is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal (*The Great Controversy*, p. 622).

While the days ahead are to be extremely challenging and wicked, we have been promised that “the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits (Daniel 11:32).” Trust to the firm hand of Jesus and He will not let you go. While the world and most of professed

Christianity hates the truth about God, Jesus has promised to stand up in heaven for us if we will stand up for Him on earth. “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 10:32).” Times ahead will be fearful for sinners living just before Jesus comes. The seven last plagues will be poured out, but the righteous may claim the following promises of protection, assurance, strength, and courage:

Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways (Psalms (91:9-11).

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (1 John 4:18).

I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears (Psalm 34:4).

Only the *strongest* force in the universe, the love of God, will carry the righteous through the time of trouble very soon to come upon this earth. When troublesome times come, *only those* who really *understand* the love of the Father and the Son and are empowered by that love will have **NO FEAR!** ✍

Upcoming Meetings in Your Area

Here is the currently-planned 2006 itinerary for Lynnford Beachy:

July 7, 8 Asheville, North Carolina, contact Carl Felts, 828-667-8156.

July 9 Hickory, North Carolina, contact Dr. Herb Cole, 828-322-5316.

July 27-29 Southern Maine Camp Meeting, contact Mervin and Rosemarie Shoemaker, 207-892-2338.

July 31-Aug. 6. Germany Camp Meeting, contact us here at Smyrna.

August 7-20 . . . Romania, Hungary and Poland Visit, contact us here at Smyrna.

September 1-4. Eastern Pennsylvania Spanish/Portuguese Camp Meeting, contact Pascual Flores, 347-232-4151 or 718-453-3556.

Nov. or Dec. . . . Southern California Camp Meeting, contact us here at Smyrna.

Note: The camp meeting in Southern California is tentatively planned for this fall, but dates have not been finalized. More meetings are being planned for September through December. Between these meetings we will be available to visit people in their homes and to have additional meetings. Check upcoming issues of *Present Truth* and *Old Paths* (available on our web sites) to keep informed about these meetings, and others in your area. Please contact us if you would like to host meetings in your area. ✍

How Simple is Simple?

By Allen Stump

Within the last three issues of *Old Paths*, we have written several articles that were designed to focus on the materials in the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* (quarterly) on the subject of the Holy Spirit. The lesson guide for the third quarter of 2006 is entitled, “The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment.” The principal contributor and editor for the lesson is Clifford Goldstein, author of *1844 Made Simple* and then later, *Graffiti in the Holy of Holies*. The lesson guide covers some of the basic concepts of judgment and then proceeds to cover Daniel chapters 2-9. We do not plan to write extensively on this quarter’s study guide as we did on the quarterly on the Holy Spirit, but we feel that there are some points that should be noted concerning the first eight lessons. We briefly discuss some of these points below.

In the introduction, the author lists some of the different objectives for the lessons:

- “First, we’ll let Scripture fill in the background for the judgment and the whole plan of salvation
- “... establish the biblical basis for the 1844 judgment
- “... look at some questions the teaching faces
- “... look at the judgment in the context of the gospel
- “... seek to answer such questions as: What does a judgment whose beginning was dated in the nineteenth century mean for us in the twenty-first?”
- For the reader to “come away with a greater understanding of the Cross, of Jesus, and of His ministry in heaven for us (*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, July–September 2006).” (All page references in this article are for the Teachers Edition of the lesson.)

The Sure Word of Prophecy?

These are certainly worthy goals and an effort is made to seek to fulfill these goals in a very simplistic fashion. The level of depth in the study guide certainly is aimed at the new-born believer. Little in-depth

study is provided. Most of the material is basic and straightforward. There are some glaring omissions that make my mind question why certain well-defined points of the prophecies of Daniel are not covered. While a reasonable case is made for the ending of the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 in 1844, not one single mention is made of the specific date of October 22, 1844. Not one in the whole quarterly. While in lesson #4, the 1,260-year prophecy is mentioned, no specific beginning nor ending date is offered. Instead we read statements such as:

If we date the beginning of papal Rome to the late fifth, or early sixth century, 1,260 years later brings us to the late eighteenth, or early nineteenth, century (*Ibid.*, p. 4—Lesson for Wednesday, July 19).

Thus, what’s clear so far from Daniel 7 is that this massive judgment scene in heaven leads to the establishment of God’s kingdom and occurs sometime after the 1,260 years of papal persecution, sometime after the late eighteenth, or early nineteenth, century but before the Second Coming (*Ibid.*, p. 52—Lesson for Friday, July 21).

One might wonder why these omission and also wonder, why is it important to note these omissions? Let us begin with the date of October 22, 1844.

The teaching of Adventist that something special happened in heaven on October 22, 1844 has received a great deal of criticism over the last 160 plus years. Yet its validity has been well demonstrated by William Shea in *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, volume 1 in the Daniel & Revelation Committee Series. Shea clearly shows that the validity of this date is not dependent upon the Kiaraites sect and their calendar, as some have previously thought. The last chapter of the book makes a very strong case for October 22 being the date of the Day of Atonement for the year 1844. While the material borders on being technical for some, it is plain and understandable. While it might have been too long and complex for the quarterly, it certainly could have been

used as a reference for those who might have disagreed with the October date.

Concerning the dating of the 1,260 years, the usual dates (A.D. 538 – A.D. 1798) for the years are not mentioned. Instead, approximate dates, varying over a wide space, are used to distinguish the rise and fall of the four great world empires, since it is not always possible to accurately declare that one specific battle or event completely changed the rulership of the countries involved.

What we’ve added, too, are the approximate times that each of the empires collapsed. Though historians often put specific dates on these events, centering often around decisive military battles, the collapse of one empire and the rise of another usually occurs over many years, not just one (*Ibid.*).

This vagueness may suffice for the dating of the rise and fall of the four empires of Daniel because there is no prophecy within Daniel that dates or specifies the length that these powers were to reign. However, there is a specific prophecy concerning the length of papal persecution that is mentioned in Daniel 7:25 and then repeated in Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5. The problem with being vague is that if we cannot provide more specific time periods, then neither can we provide specific events and without the specific events we have no sure way of describing the specific fulfillment of these prophecies.

For 1,260 years the Roman Church was persecuting those who dissented from her established views. This includes persecuting those who disagreed with her Trinity doctrine. In Daniel 7:8 we read that the little horn power was to pluck up three of the ten horns by the roots. These three were the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Vandals. These three powers did not believe in the Trinity so the little horn power removed them.

In connection with the closing date of the 70-week prophecy we find this statement:

Though the prophecy itself doesn’t give a specific event for that last year, A.D. 34, many believe it was the year that the apostle [sic] Paul accepted the gospel and became the great preacher to the Gentiles (Acts 9). In other words, Is-

rael's history was inaugurated at the end of the 490 years as the gospel went to all the world (*Ibid.*, p. 96—Lesson for Wednesday, August 16).

Here the quarterly partly breaks from the standard Adventist position that it was the stoning of Stephen that ended the 70 weeks and sealed the fate of the Jewish people as a nation. While this event would coincide with the conversion of Paul, we wonder why the stoning of Stephen is not mentioned, especially since this is the interpretation given in the Spirit of Prophecy:

The one week—seven years—ended in A. D. 34. Then by the stoning of Stephen the Jews finally sealed their rejection of the gospel; the disciples who were scattered abroad by persecution “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4); and shortly after, Saul the persecutor was converted, and became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (*Desire of Ages*, p. 233).

The seventy weeks, or 490 years, especially allotted to the Jews, ended, as we have seen, in A.D. 34. At that time, through the action of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the nation sealed its rejection of the gospel by the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the followers of Christ (*Great Controversy*, p. 328).

Truth Trampled to the Ground

The teacher's edition of the quarterly has three statements that strongly declare that the papacy has tried to change God's truth and has supplied unbiblical doctrines in their place.

It was also the Roman Church that changed “the set times and the laws” by abolishing the seventh-day Sabbath, introducing Sunday worship, and making way for nonbiblical doctrines, such as Mariolatry, salvation by works, the adoration of the doctrine of idols, and purgatory (*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 45).

How has the papacy taken away the “daily” and cast down the sanctuary? By introducing various false doctrines that thwarted God's sovereign role in salvation. By displacing Christ's role as our High Priest and Mediator with the confessional and the intercession of human priests. By introducing the Mass, thereby crucifying Christ afresh and set-

ting aside His ministry in heaven (*Ibid.*, pp. 57, 59).

Certain factors relating to the scene of this heavenly judgment must be noted. First, it takes place in heaven. Second, it occurs before the establishment of God's kingdom. Third, it deals with the judgment of a false religious system, implying the restoration of truth before God restores His kingdom on earth. Fourth, this restoration will involve the truths trampled down by the little horn, truths such as the Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, salvation by faith, the non-immortality of the soul, etc. (*Ibid.*, p. 49).

We can agree with all of these statements. The papacy did attempt to change times and laws. The papacy has tried to displace Christ as our High Priest and has introduced many false doctrines. But we must go further than the quarterly! The axe must be laid at the root of the tree to kill it. While we abhor many of the false teachings of the papacy mentioned above, we must not forget that the Trinity doctrine is the central pillar that undergirds all her other teachings.

The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic faith. Upon it are based all other teachings of the Church (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 16).

The teacher's edition commentary writer, John Fowler, correctly notes that the judgment emphasizes a false religious system. Should not the basis of this religious system be examined in the judgment? How is it that this evil entity should be built upon such a so-called orthodox foundation and yet its structure is so brittle?

The judgment of the little horn power will encompass every word and action. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Ecclesiastes 12:14).” This must include her Trinity doctrine.

The Nature of Sin

Two statements found in the first lesson of the quarterly are of interest concerning the nature of sin, man, and salvation. The first statement is in the commentary section on page 9. It states:

With Adam and Eve's fall, all humanity fell victim to sin (*Rom. 3:23*).

This idea is brought out in the book of Genesis, where the serpent, Satan (*Rev. 12:9*), cast out of heaven to earth, bought about the fall of our earthly parents (*Gen. 3:1-7*), which in turn, led to the fall of the whole human race, along with all its horrible consequences (*Rom. 5:12*) (*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 10—Lesson for Tuesday, June 27).

These statements might of themselves appear ambiguous as to whether the concept of original sin (that all humanity sinned in Adam and each person is born as a sinner by nature) is being advanced or not. But, as we continue reading the statement on page 10, we begin to hear a note that is not coming from a trumpet giving a certain sound.

It's clear, too, that Satan is now taking advantage of what happened to us, and among the things he does is to accuse us regarding our sins and fallen condition (*Ibid.*).

Is it true that Satan accuses God's people of their fallen condition today? Is this to be understood as the same as accusing God's people of their sinful nature? Only the writer of the lesson may be able to answer this and we will not presume to answer for him. What we can do is look at some inspired statements concerning the matter.

In Revelation 12:10 Satan is called “the accuser of our brethren.” The book of Job records the classic story of the righteous Job who is repeatedly accused of wickedness before God by Satan. Zechariah 3:1 in the RSV states, “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to *accuse* him.”

The people of God are here represented as a criminal on trial. Joshua, as high priest, is seeking for a blessing for his people, who are in great affliction. While he is pleading before God, Satan is standing at his right hand as his adversary. He is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible. He presents before the Lord their *evil doings and their defects*. He shows their *faults and failures*, hoping they will appear of such a character in the eyes of Christ that He will render them no help in their great need. Joshua, as the representative of God's people,

stands under condemnation, clothed with filthy garments. Aware of the sins of his people, he is weighed down with discouragement. Satan is pressing upon his soul a sense of guiltiness that makes him feel almost hopeless. Yet there he stands as a suppliant, with Satan arrayed against him (*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 166, 167).

Ever since his fall, it has been the work of Satan to oppose Christ's efforts to redeem the race. In the Bible he is called an accuser of the brethren. It is said that he accuses them before God day and night. Every time he leads them into temptation, he rejoices; because he well knows that their power of resistance will thus become weakened, and that he can then the more easily lead them to commit other sins. *And when they have taken step after step in the wrong direction, he turns and begins to accuse them of the very sins which he has led them to commit.* He thus causes them to become discouraged, and to lose confidence in themselves and in the Lord; and after they have separated from God, dishonored his name, and broken his law, he claims them as his captives, and contests the right of Christ to take them from him. Pointing to their sins, as he did to the filthy garments of Joshua, he says: "They profess to be thy children; but they do not obey thee. See the traces of sin upon them. They are my property (*Historical Sketches*, p. 154)."

Those who honor God and keep His commandments are subject to the accusations of Satan. The enemy works with all his energy to lead human beings into sin. *Then he pleads that on account of their past sins, he should be allowed to exercise his hellish cruelty on them as his own subjects.* Of this work Zechariah has written, "And he showed me Joshua the high priest"—a representative of the people who keep the commandments of God—"standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him (*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, p. 211)."

When we sin against God, there is a disposition to fall behind Jesus a day's journey; we seek to separate from His company because it is distasteful, for every ray of light from His divine presence points to the sin of which we have been guilty. *Satan exults over the sins which he has induced souls to commit, and he*

makes the most of all these failures and sins. He rehearses them to the angels of God, and taunts them with these weaknesses and failures. He is in every sense an accuser of the brethren, and exults over every sin and wrong which God's people are beguiled to commit (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 106).

In these statements we find that Satan is an accuser of the brethren in regard to their sins that they have committed, especially those he has tempted the people to do. Inspiration is silent however, upon the subject of Satan accusing God's people on account of their birth. In other words, while Satan may at times exult that a man has sinned and this sin can be presented before God as an excuse for Satan to retain this person as his prey, even Satan does not accuse God's people of being worthy of condemnation due to having been born with a sinful nature. Let us be clear. "There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist (*Education*, p. 29)." Jeremiah asked the question: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil (Jeremiah 13:23)." The implied answer is "no." Paul writing to the believers in Rome stated:

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. . . . the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 7:14; 8:7).

To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Co-operation with that power is man's greatest need (*Education*, p. 29).

Men and women are born with sinful or carnal natures but this is not the same as being born a sinner. Jesus Christ took upon "His sinless nature our sinful nature (*Medical Ministry*, p. 181)." And here too, we fail to find Satan accusing Jesus of His accepting our sinful nature. Even Satan does not dare to bring this before God as a reason that men should be given to him as his victims.

Acts 20:21 says that we are to have "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." But we ask, repentance for what? Are we to repent for our fallen nature?

Unless we individually *repent toward God because of transgression of His law*, and exercise faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the world has rejected, we shall lie under the full condemnation that the action of choosing Barabbas instead of Christ merited (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 38).

Good News in the Judgment

The lesson for Sunday, July 2 is entitled the, "Hour of His Judgment." There we read the following concerning the idea that the judgment is to be understood as inseparable from the gospel or good news.

But if it's good news, it's good news about what? It's the good news that Jesus died as our Substitute (*1 Peter*: 2:24); that at the Cross He paid the penalty for our sins (*Isa*: 53:6); that through faith in Him we stand perfect in God now because we are covered with perfect righteousness (*Rom*: 3:22); and that because of what He has done for us, we have the promise of eternal life (*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 18—Lesson for Sunday, July 2).

A few good points have been made here, but there is an important point that is not clearly laid out that we need to consider. The sinner is spoken of as being saved from the *penalty of sin* and from the *presence of sin* (which according to Revelation 20 happens in totality at the end of the 1,000 years), but there is no mention of being saved from the *power of sin!*

Beloved, if the power of God cannot help us to overcome sin, then we will have to stay as prey to Satan. But wait, the Bible speaks plainly of the power of the blood of the Lamb to enable the sinner to overcome every sin and defilement.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11).

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

It is gospel truth that Jesus said, "without me ye can do nothing (John 15:5)." However, under inspiration Paul says, "I

can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Philippians 4:13).” Yes we may have power over all sin and weakness, but only through Jesus Christ. It is like a man who has no strength, no not so much to move a flea. But then Christ comes to our aid. All we can do is cry out for help, but then Christ comes and lives within us (Colossians 1:21) and the same miracle of Jesus living sinless in sinful flesh is reproduced in our lives anew!

A Point Well Made

Although we have noted this before in May 2000 and March 2004 issues of *Old Paths*, one point that is well made in the quarterly and worthy of continual consideration is study on the Hebrews words that are translated “vision” in Daniel 8 and 9. The lesson for Thursday, August 3 discusses the difference between the Hebrew words “chazown” (*hazon*) and “mareh.” The word *chazown* is used to designate the vision of Daniel 8 as a whole, while *mareh* is used to specifically speak of the part of the vision that deals with the 2,300 days. This is important because it serves as a link to bridge the vision of the 2,300 days to Daniel 9 where Gabriel says to Daniel, “I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision (*mareh*) (Daniel 9:23).”



“A Spirited Subject” continued from p. 5

Summation

Bacchiocchi uses several false premises, sets up straw men, and then tumbles over them. Bacchiocchi tries to define God to fit his pattern of thinking instead of devising a pattern that fits the divine outline.

Elder Whidden makes a valiant attempt to show the personhood and divinity of the Holy Spirit that is worthy of a better cause. Several of the Bible texts Whidden uses clearly describe the personhood of the Holy Spirit, but Whidden fails to make the connection that Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 2:11 that parallels man and his spirit to God and His Spirit.

The Trinitarian’s belief that a plural Godhead is needed to be capable of love is illogic and is based upon finite human reasoning rather than the infinite Word of God.

Love That Works

By Onycha Holt

When I lived in Maine, there were many times that I admired, from the distance of a kitchen window or from the back yard, our woods on a snowy winter evening. There were also many times that I took walks in those woods throughout the year. Our farm was composed of many acres and at the far edge of the back field there was an opening into several acres of the woods surrounding the farm. In the springtime the woods were full of unfolding ferns, and by the summertime their large, broad leaves were picked to fan away the annoying black flies. In the fall, one could kick up a symphony of music in the fallen leaves, and in the winter I was always captured by white birch buried in a thick blanket of snow, standing in silent array under a full moon. The fall seemed to be the most spectacular time of the year for the woods, though, and in celebration of its splendid activity, the trees around the opening into the woods came alive and beckoned with all their might with flaming yellow, orange, red, and fading green. No other portion of the back wall of woods was as colorful as this opening path into its depths. I often thought of Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Not Taken.”

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.

It may be that many of us are standing in one path of our Christian experience but are looking yearningly into a yellow wood, bending over and peering as far as possible down this different path, seeking to see what it holds. Beautiful colors invite closer inspection, while shimmering leaves float gently to the earth in the slanting rays of the sun. The path appears open and flat, with no thorny bushes pushing

through the edges. Gentle curves can be seen further down the walkway while birds and squirrels scamper across, playing in their own native homeland.

It may not seem to matter to you that two spiritual roads diverge before us, and it may not seem to matter to you which road you take through the woods, *but it does matter to God*. For example, some people do not see the importance of clarifying their understanding of whether there are really three gods or only one, and because of this they continue to believe an error.

In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 55).

Now you might think, for example, “Does it really matter if I believe in a trinity or not? In the judgment will I be forever

condemned because of my error on this *one subject alone*? Surely many, many wonderful people have gone to their graves in the past believing this error but will be saved at last as part of God’s kingdom.” The fact of the matter is, my brothers and sisters, you *will be* condemned and you *will* lose all if you are given the opportunity to learn what truth is and you then reject such a high and glorious gift from the “Father of lights” (James 1:17). It is not possible for us to rely on the experience of our forefathers. We may fondly remember our grandparents or our parents as saintly, loving people and even though they may not have known the truth, for example, that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord our God, we still hope to meet them again in the earth made new because they were living up to all they light they had. Is it not so? And while it may be true that they will be part of God’s kingdom, God expects and demands more from us.



There are many at the present day thus clinging to the customs and traditions of their fathers. When the Lord sends them additional light, they refuse to accept it, because, not having been granted to their fathers, it was not received by them. We are not placed where our fathers were; consequently our duties and responsibilities are not the same as theirs. We shall not be approved of God in looking to the example of our fathers to determine our duty instead of searching the word of truth for ourselves. Our responsibility is greater than was that of our ancestors. We are accountable for the light which they received, and which was handed down as an inheritance for us, and we are accountable also for the additional light which is now shining upon us from the word of God (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 137).

We cannot continue to live in the spiritual lifestyle that they lived in, because *they died!* Somewhere along the line God will have a people that will not die! He is calling us to a higher standard, one of bringing honor and glory to Him and of vindicating His character. In order to be able to do this, we must cherish and value all truth.

Why is God so unbending on such an issue as truth? Why is He so exacting? The reason is because when you reject truth, you reject Jesus. It is that simple.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

Jesus is the truth, and in rejecting Him, you reject His words and His Spirit, the only process available for your sanctification.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:17).

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

So, even if our parents and grandparents and our aunts and uncles did not understand all the truth God has provided for us in this day, we must understand it. God has given us every opportunity to advance in our Christian walk, but we are often slow to take the first step. He has promised us His Spirit to lead us into all

truth, but are we even seeking His Spirit? I realize many are seeking God's Spirit, and to those who truly are, He graciously leads them along, but those who are indifferent, who are content with their current lifestyle, who are even busy doing good things in the church but are neglecting extended personal time with God, He requires them to seek Him with all their hearts now while it is yet day, for the night quickly approacheth.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear.

Today we may be yearningly looking down a spiritual path that may very well appear as truth. It looks fair and may seem to have a better claim because it is cool and grassy and invites burdened travelers to find rest, but it is not at the start of a journey that one gains the crown. It is in the completion of the journey that one finds the victory. Do you remember Ellen White's dream of the Advent people walking along a narrow path beside a steep precipice? At every portion of their difficult way, many turned aside. (See *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 190.)

Let us examine together what some might consider a pleasant-looking spiritual pathway before us, because none of us truly would want to come to the end of life's journey to only find loss and disappointment. A seemingly apparent divergence is found on the path to heaven. We are each seeking victory as we travel this path, and one crucial issue we must consider is, "What is involved in our salvation?"

The rich, young ruler was uncertain about his salvation, and so he approached Jesus. "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus answered, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:16, 17) The scribes and the Pharisees would readily have agreed with Jesus' answer, for they rigidly and fervently advocated abiding by the law, but "A legal religion is insufficient to bring the soul into harmony with God. The hard, rigid orthodoxy of the Pharisees, destitute of contrition, tenderness, or love, was only a stumbling block to sinners (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 53)."

Even the rich, young man stated that, from his youth up, he had faithfully kept the commandments, but he *knew*, deep down, that he still lacked something needful for his salvation. Keeping the commandments did not seem to be enough for him, but Jesus knew that even "His claim that he had kept the law of God was a deception" for "riches were his idol (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 520)." It is important to note that the solution Jesus gave him was threefold.

The man was to *do* something—*sell* all that he had, *give* the proceeds to the poor, and then *follow* Jesus. All were actions. No mental assent was Jesus asking for, no meditative belief in Him as the Son of God, as important as that is, but He commanded an active response.

This presents a dilemma, a fork in the road, so to speak, that all followers of Jesus have faced. Is it our actions or our faith that saves us? Remember, the man was asking how he could obtain *eternal life*. The answer Jesus gave him was not that he should believe in Him as the Son of God, or that he should repair the relationship with God that he was breaking by his transgression of the first commandment, or even that he should be of good courage for keeping nine of the ten commandments and that His (Christ's) righteousness would make up for his deficit. Jesus demands from His followers, and has every right to expect, an active, visible response to His answer of how eternal life is gained. We are to surrender all and follow Jesus. "God has given us the rule of conduct which every servant of Jesus Christ must follow. It is obedience to his law, not merely a legal obedience, but an obedience which enters into the entire life, and is exemplified in the character (*Youth's Instructor*, May 27, 1897)." The question is: "How can we have an obedience to the law 'that enters into the entire life,' both internally and externally?" Our external obedience must be prompted by the internal action of the heart and mind, and these actions transform the character.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing (John 15:5)." The only way that we can perform right actions is by abiding in Christ and allowing Christ to abide in us. Jesus

says, “The same bringeth forth much fruit.”

Bible religion is not made up of theological systems, creeds, theories, and tradition, for then it would not remain a mystery. The worldly would understand it through their own natural abilities. But religion, Bible religion, has a practical, saving energy, elements proceeding wholly from God—a *personal experience of God’s power transforming the entire man* (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 236; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted.).

We access this transforming power of God, the great mystery of Christ and the church (Ephesians 6:32) through faith. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).”

Faith in Christ will be the means whereby the right spirit and motive will actuate the believer, and all goodness and heavenly-mindedness will proceed from him who looks unto Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith...By beholding Christ, you will become changed, until you will hate your former pride, your former vanity and self-esteem, your self-righteousness and unbelief. You will cast these sins aside as a worthless burden, and walk humbly, meekly, trustfully, before God. You will practice love, patience, gentleness, goodness, mercy, and every grace that dwells in the child of God, and will at last find a place among the sanctified and holy (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 388).

The faith of Jesus is often referred to as the essential element for our salvation because, as Paul declares in Ephesians 2:8, 9, we are saved by grace through faith and not by works. There are many people who emphasize the importance of obedience to the law, to the seeming exclusion of a faith that accesses salvation. We may even suspect such people of adhering to the law as their means of obtaining salvation, which would then be legalism. It should be remembered that it is not works or keeping the law that is undesirable, but it is the motive for doing so that we must examine. If our good works are our means of securing salvation, then we will never obtain it, for we are saved purely and only by grace through faith, but our faith is revealed by works, as we learn in James chapter 2. The

need for obedience to the law cannot be denied, for Jesus honored every jot and tittle of the law (Matthew 5:18) and He commended the scribes and Pharisees for tithing mint and cummin saying, “These ought ye to have done (Matthew 23:23).”

Ellen White also affirms the need for obedience:

But the gospel of good news was not to be interpreted as allowing men to live in continued rebellion against God by transgressing his just and holy law. Why cannot those who claim to understand the Scriptures, see that God’s requirement under grace is just the same he made in Eden,—perfect obedience to his law. In the Judgment, God will ask those who profess to be Christians, Why did you claim to believe in my Son, and continue to transgress my law? Who required this at your hands—to trample upon my rules of righteousness? “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to meet the sinner and save him in his sins. God requires of all his subjects obedience, entire obedience to all his commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven. Christ is our hope and our refuge. *His righteousness only is imputed to the obedient.* Let us accept it through faith, that the Father shall find in us no sin. But *those who have trampled on the holy law will have no right to claim that righteousness.* Oh that we might view the immensity of the plan of salvation as obedient children to all God’s requirements, believing that we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, our atoning sacrifice (*Review & Herald*, September 21, 1886)!

God, as the supreme ruler of the universe has ever required prompt and unquestioning obedience. Even Christ, in the days of his flesh, was obedient to the law of the Father (*Signs of the Times*, July 22, 1886).

Without faith, all this work will avail nothing, for we are told in Galatians 5:6 that it is the “faith which worketh by love” that is important, and we are also told that “love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:10).”

With Ellen White, our pioneers often referred to the impossibility of having faith without works, and we are faced

today with the same extremes—legalism on the one hand and antinomianism (the teaching that we are not under the restraint of God’s law) on the other, but the answer found in God’s Word is to have a faith that *works by love.*

Let us not be deceived by the oft-repeated assertion, “All you have to do is to believe.” *Faith and works are two oars* which we must use equally if we press our way up the stream against the current of unbelief. “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone (*Review & Herald*, June 11, 1901).”

Notice these statements by two of our pioneers:

When Paul wrote to the Romans, the great difficulty with the church was that they thought they could obtain salvation by works alone. The idea was, Do good things, and be saved. To meet that, Paul taught them justification by faith. But when he came to write to the Galatians, the case was somewhat different. Then the idea was winning favor that salvation came by faith and works. So the most prominent thought in the epistle to the Galatians is, that salvation is by faith, and faith alone. James wrote his epistle to correct another error. In his time it had come to be thought that salvation came by simply talking about faith. But he showed that the faith which saves a man is one that produces works. We meet the same things today. Some have thought that we could be saved by a theory of justification, but we must have a faith that works because there is life in it (Elder J. H. Durland, *The General Conference Bulletin*, vol. 7, February 15, 1895).

It is not said that some of the just shall live by faith, or that they shall live by faith and works, but, simply, “the just shall live by faith,” and that proves that it is not by their own works. All of the just are made and kept just by faith alone. This is because the law is so holy. It is greater than can be done by man; only Divine power can accomplish it; so by faith we receive the Lord Jesus, and He lives the perfect law in us (E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, p. 112).

We must cooperate with Jesus and allow Him to live within us, submitting our will to Him just as He submitted His will to His Father, and the faith that works by love will then be a reality in our lives.

“By faith Enoch lived in the presence of God three hundred years (*This Day with God*, p. 275),” and we must live by faith also. When someone close to us indulges in a disparaging moment, we must rise above it and remain unflurried. When another speaks an unkind word, we must instead think the understanding word. When a brother takes joy in the mistakes of others, we must ponder how to best encourage the faltering one. And whenever we are belittled, looked down upon, or thought less of, we must remain considerate, kind, and humble, thinking only thoughts of well-being for the other.

The voice of God is speaking to us in clear, distinct utterances. He would see the works of righteousness in our lives. Instead of pleasing ourselves the Lord would have us to do deeds of mercy, manifest tender forethought to those who are pressed down with burdens, cramped with poverty, who are hungry and naked and destitute. If we fail in doing works of mercy, in manifesting true love and sympathy, in helping and blessing others, whatever else we may do, we shall fail of pleasing God (*Ellen White, General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 18, 1897*).

The woman at Jacob’s well had a profound encounter with Jesus, for to her “He opened His richest treasures (*Education*, p. 231).” “He reasoned more earnestly and eloquently with her than with kings, councilors, or high priests (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195).” “She felt the power of his holy character and the heavenly influence that went with his words of truth. Perfect trust filled her heart (*Gospel Workers*, p. 338).” Why was He able to speak thusly with her? Because within her “He discerned the impressible heart, the open mind, the receptive spirit (*Education*, p. 231).” Would that we had the same impressible heart, open mind, and receptive spirit; for then the richest treasures of Jesus will also fill our hearts, minds and spirits; and everything this world has to offer will fade into insignificance and irrelevancy.

Amazingly, Eve took the word of a serpent, which had done *nothing* for her, over the Word of God. God had made a beautiful world filled with limitless treasures of creation for both her and Adam to learn of and experience, in addition to providing face-to-face communion with Himself and with the holy angels. Would that we may learn from her sad example and remain

faithful to our heavenly Father and to our Savior, Jesus Christ, in spite of what others may say or do!

Satan seeks to win us over by his pleasing sophistry and lying wonders, by holding our minds in darkness, by enticing us to lay aside reason and the fear of the Lord in order to follow custom, tradition, or even a more pleasing means of salvation that does not require strict obedience to God’s Word. Satan seeks for ministers and leaders to present the perfect law of liberty of the Scriptures as a yoke of bondage and he seeks for people to accept these explanations, rather than study for themselves, so that they will eventually concede that the requirements of God are less strict than they once believed. And he seeks to misrepresent the motives of every true and noble deed, to circulate insinuations and arouse suspicion in the minds of people, causing that which is pure and righteous to be regarded as foul and deceptive. But Jesus does not want us to be swayed by appearance or smooth talk or any talk, and He never wants us to entertain doubts about His Word or His love for us. Our only defense is our trust in and our obedience to the Word of God.

If we are experiencing dissatisfaction in our spiritual life, there is a better experience God wants to give us. If we see the futility of striving to work our way to heaven by depending on our own efforts to do what is right, there definitely is a better way. We may be longingly looking for something more, as the rich, young ruler was, and if we, like the woman at the well, have an open mind, heart, and spirit, we will be filled with the riches of heaven and we will find supreme pleasure and joy in doing God’s will.

A new heart and spirit have been promised us and God has promised to write His law in our hearts:

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them (*Ezekiel 36:26, 27*).

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people (*Jeremiah 31:33*).

Time and again God has called us His children. He has come running to meet us and has sung to us. He has opened His hands to us, talking with us personally. When we have fallen, He has tenderly lifted us up. He has abundantly fed us and has tied our shoes, so to speak, and sent us on our way. If we will only focus on knowing Him, we will fall in love with Him and there will be no need for us to focus on either our works or our faith, because both will be bountifully provided in knowing Him. The only path we need to pensively look down and yearn for is the path that leads to the throne of God, for there all our needs for righteous obedience and for saving faith will be found.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference

—Robert Frost



“Prayer Requests” continued from p. 1
of each caller’s burden. As we do this, will you also uplift us to our heavenly Father’s throne as we endeavor to be faithful in doing our part to finish God’s work on this earth? May God richly bless you is our continual prayer for you.

Orlycha Holt

Nigeria Trip Report

By Allen Stump

I left Smyrna on April 17th of this year to travel to Charleston, West Virginia, for the first leg of my trip to Nigeria. I had been invited by the leaders of the Liberated Church of God in Nigeria to speak at their camp meeting, originally scheduled to start April 18, and to visit with their people. The Liberated Church is a group of Sabbath-keeping Pentecostals who have learned the truth about God (that God is not a Trinity), the identity of the antichrist, and many of our other doctrines.

I had packed my luggage extra heavily with literature and expected to pay an additional charge for each checked bag. But, when I got to the airport I was not charged despite the fact that I made the person at the counter aware that my bags were overweight. This was a real blessing!

My flight from Washington, D.C., to Germany went well until we were near Frankfurt, when the pilot announced that Frankfurt was currently fogged-in and we might have to hold too long for the amount of fuel the plane had. This meant that we might have to divert to Dusseldorf to refuel before going to Frankfurt when the fog lifted. This would cause me to miss my connecting flight to Port Harcourt, so I prayed that God's will would be done. Shortly afterward, the pilot announced that the fog had lifted enough to proceed. When we landed, I could not see the runway at first, but as we neared the terminal the view was clearer.

Upon arrival, I quickly found my gate for my flight to Port Harcourt and the

flight to Nigeria over the Sahara Desert was interesting.

The airport at Port Harcourt is small by international standards. I was cheered to see a sign being held that said, "National Liberated Church—A. Stump" on it. Pastor Paul Sunday and two other brethren were waiting for me.

I noticed that all the police carried automatic weapons. The United States State Department lists Nigeria as one of the most dangerous countries for United States citizens to be in and highly recommends that they not travel there. Many of the homes in Nigeria are within compounds that have walls around them with sharp spikes and razor wire going around the top!

The driving in Nigeria is the wildest I have ever seen. I could only pray, and, thankfully, I was never in an accident while there. The number of lanes any road has and where they are at depends on how many columns of cars are on the road at any given time and where the cars are traveling to. People drive on the sidewalks, between lanes, and go the wrong way against traffic a good bit.

There are countless motorcycles that swarm like locusts in Nigeria. They dangerously weave in and out of traffic, often cutting in front of cars! Some carry two, three, four and even five people, many times with a load.

The weather in Nigeria was hot and muggy. My first Sabbath the temperature was about 113°F (45°C). Few places have air conditioning and electricity is only on a few hours each day to run fans and other

appliances. However, there was usually cool water for showering and that was a real blessing.

Soon after arriving, I was disappointed to learn that the camp meeting had been delayed till the following week (April 25th–30th). Until camp meeting started, I stayed with the family of Geoffrey Amadiogwu and I was treated like a king. Geoffrey and his wife, Felicia, are the backbone of

the local church in Port Harcourt and their experience in Christ is precious. During my stay, I was able to give Bible studies to family and friends whom I met.

One person with whom I studied was Anthony, who worked as the gatekeeper for the Amadiogwu family. I asked him one day if he was a Sabbath-keeper. He said, "No, I keep Sunday." I asked him why, and he said that he did not know except that his minister said that they should keep Sunday. I then asked him if he wanted to know what the Bible said about the Sabbath and he replied, very positively, "Yes." For the next three hours we opened God's word and Anthony soaked it in like a dry sponge. At the end of our study Anthony was very happy to learn the truth and decided to begin keeping the Sabbath.

On my first Sabbath in Nigeria, about four churches from the area got together for services. When we arrived at the chapel, a song service was already in progress and continued for another twenty minutes. Some of the songs were hymns I knew, and some were selections I had never heard.

The men all sat on the right side of the church (as viewed from the back) and the ladies all sat on the left side. Children were segregated, too, according to gender with all the small children sitting on the front. The elders were seated on the front right facing inward and some sisters, perhaps deaconesses, were on the left side facing inward. The different ministers were all seated on the platform.

After the Sabbath School lesson, there was more singing and then the offering! A large chest was first placed in the front of the church. Then, row by row, ladies "danced" up to spirited music and put their offerings in the chest. Then, in like fashion, the men took their turn, and then the whole process started again. This continued for a long time.

I then spoke on the three angels' messages and the need to come all the way out of Babylon. I discussed the need to know God and His character and then expounded on Genesis 22. From there, I discussed living in the world without being a part of the world with all of its sins and allurements.

After my sermon, there were a few announcements and prayer. The Amadiogwu family and I then went to Pastor Sunday's house, beside the church,



Some Ministers at the Camp

to rest and eat some food that Sister Amadiogwu had brought.

Nigeria is a land rich in resources, but the people are very poor. I hoped to be able to meet with the ministers before the camp meeting, but there was no way they could come together due to lack of time and resources. These brave, dedicated men only receive about \$35 per month. This meager sum must support their families and cover their ministerial needs. This is a real challenge to say the least!

Pastor K. S. Kitomari from Tanzania was scheduled to be at the camp meeting, along with Pastor Agyeman of Ghana and Brother Fischer of Germany. Pastor Kitomari was not able to attend though, and Pastor Agyeman and Brother Fischer were delayed two days. The leaders of the Liberated Church at first had thought that as many as four thousand people might attend the camp meeting, but only about eight hundred were there the first night. Yet, the crowd swelled to about 1,500 by Sabbath, so there were still many precious souls with whom to share the truth.

I went to the camp with Pastor Sunday, whom I learned to appreciate very much. He was always helpful and the people really seem to love him. I rode in the front seat of his car. His wife, two young ladies, and two small children rode in the back seat. The trunk was very full of luggage.

We arrived at camp just before dark. Many people were coming to the camp and the place was like a little ant farm with many workers doing their various jobs!

The camp was held at a very run-down public boarding school. It had the look of an institution that had been built 70 years ago and left abandoned for the last twenty years. There was a big open field where a platform had been erected and then canopies, with benches and chairs under them,



Youth Groups Singing

were arranged in a square much like what I had seen when I was in Ghana. This was only the second camp meeting for this group, so they are new to much of what they are doing, but there seemed to be a good bit of organization to it all.

The people were eager to see me. Pastor Lewis George, whom I had met in Ghana, quickly found me and it was very good to greet him. Later, I was able to greet Pastor Jerome Madu, the church's general overseer, whom I had also met in Ghana. We discussed some items of the schedule and after meeting several people I was taken to the place I would stay during the camp meeting.

I emphasized in my messages some of the special truths that God has been pleased to give us as a people, especially the three angels' messages and the 2,300-day prophecy, which is the foundation of Adventism. The people in Nigeria have a wonderful gift to be able to sit for hours through very hot meetings and, for the most part, not lose interest in what is being said. When Pastor Agyeman from Ghana arrived, he spoke on the second coming of Christ, the state of the dead, and other key points. Pastor Agyeman had visited these brethren before and it was clear that he was greatly loved by them. Both of us were always busy talking, studying with people, visiting, or just getting our pictures taken with the church members.

Pastor Agyeman had, on prior visits, shared principles of health reform with some of the people and it showed in their changes of diet and lifestyle, but not all yet understood. The "kitchen" at the camp was a big open area with several pots cooking rice and other food over open fires.

Each day, except Sabbath, a group of men would butcher a cow to help supplement the feeding of the vast group of people. The butchers were surprised to learn that I did not eat any meat. They asked me if I ate chicken or fish. I said that I didn't eat anything that moved! It seemed like a strange concept to them, but they were willing to listen.

I was able to have a seminar with the pastors and their wives, where we discussed



Pastor Agyeman Preaching

basic issues of the ministry. I then opened up the meeting for questions. The brethren wanted to know what the Bible said about speaking in tongues and many other important topics. I always emphasized what the Bible says, and instructed them not to accept any teachings from men without a "thus saith the Lord." It was quite a beautiful meeting, as the brethren were so willing to follow what the Bible says.

When I said good bye to the people it was an emotional event. Many of these dear people who had only known me for a few days cried as I said good-bye. It was hard to leave the camp. Many wanted to shake my hand or tell me a personal good-bye, but I finally left with the Amadiogwu family. It was difficult to say good-bye to this dear family, who had adopted me while in their country. Their oldest son, Charles, was especially helpful to me and we became very close friends. Finally, I had to leave them at the airport door, as only ticketed passengers are allowed in any part of the terminal.

After a slow check-in process, I arrived in the boarding area only to hear that the flight would be delayed at least three hours. "Africa time" caught me once more before I could leave! Thankfully, I had just enough lay over in my schedule to make my connection in Frankfurt by running the long distance as fast as I could from the receiving gate to the boarding gate. As my plane took off for the United States, my body was leaving Africa, but much of my spirit remained. Please pray for these dear brethren that the Lord may guide them into all truth. They are some of the most teachable people I have ever meet, who are willing to learn without being gullible. I am sure that they shall be a part of Christ's jewels when He returns. 

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Web Site Update

Next time you log onto www.smyrna.org you will see that it has recently been given a face-lift and it continues to be a work in progress. We have added audio sermons and intend to add more audio and video materials as soon as possible. Also, the *Old*



Paths archive now includes the article titles. We invite you to log on to watch our work in progress and we also hope you will share our website address with your Adventist friends. We expect the

changes to increase our visibility on Google and other search engines, thus giving increased exposure to these precious truths.



Pioneer Book Update

An updated version of Lynnford Beachy's book, *What Did the Pioneers Believe?* is available for a suggested donation of \$3.50. Four pages have been added which contain quotations from Ellen White on the Godhead, and we feel they will be beneficial to you.

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Editor Allen Stump—editor@smyrna.org
 Assistant to the Editor Onycha Holt—onycha@smyrna.org