

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

THE TEST OF LOYALTY

by Allen Stump

I have been reading a book entitled *Endurance*. It is the story of the failed attempt of Sir Ernest Shackleton to cross Antarctica for the first time. He attempted this feat in 1914, and his expedition did not even get to land fall before they became caught in ice. To give you an idea of just how difficult that kind of exploration was, it was not until over forty years later that anyone else even tried to do it again; so, it was quite an undertaking.

I want you to tell you about a man in his party whose name was Frank Wild. He was Shackleton's second-in-command. He had been with Shackleton on previous adventures. What I admire most about Wild is the loyalty he displayed toward Shackleton. It is said that Wild was hunting big game in Africa when he learned Shackleton was organizing another adventure and Wild immediately left Africa and reported to Shackleton. Shackleton said, "Why, I hadn't even called you yet," and Wild said, "Yes, but I knew you would need me, boss, so I am here." Maybe part of the loyalty that Wild had for Shackleton came about on one adventure with Shackleton. They were trying to reach the South Pole before Roald Amundsen reached the Pole. Shackleton's party came within approximately ninety miles of the South Pole and then realized they would not be able to reach it because their food supplies were too low. Physically they knew they could make the Pole, but Shackleton realized either he, some, or all of the men would starve to death before they could get back to where food had been cached. Shackleton made the decision that the men came first. The expedition had to come secondary to the men. This was a hallmark of Shackleton. He was not a great sailor. There were a lot of things that he really was not good at per se, but he was a tremendous leader of men. He always knew how to put his men first under any situation.

As noted, during Shackleton's first polar attempt they almost starved to death trying to return. When you are very hungry and you are expending many calories a day, food is vital and nothing else really matters. In fact, when they were getting ready to travel across the ice floe after the ship *Endurance* had been crushed by ice on the Trans-Antarctica expedition. Shackleton told his men they could only take that which was absolutely essential. He reached

Prayer Requests:

We are very thankful to report that Zechariah Beachy is healthy, happy, and home again following his recent hospitalization. The Beachy family thanks each one of you for your prayers and concern.

As we go to press please prayers for Hans Stump and his family. Hans has been in the hospital with what has been discovered to be a very large tumor causing a blood clot, will have had surgery by the time this is published

Also please continue to keep Steve Sutton in your prayers as he is still recuperating from his liver transplant. Steve and his family also recently suffered the loss of their house from a fire.

We recently heard from Helen in Australia and she has requested prayer for her husband David, who has been diagnosed with cancer and

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down in his pocket where he had some gold coins and he dropped them into the snow, saying, "This is worthless to us now." When you are on a trip like that food is vital. They could only take food and that which was essential for survival. On the way back from the failed attempt to reach the South Pole, when they were almost starving to death, Shackleton at one point gave his only biscuit of the day to Wild. Wild did not want to take it, but Shackleton insisted and ordered that he take it, knowing that Wild needed it. Wild later said, "You don't know what that means to have someone in the face of starvation give you their only food." It must have endeared him to Shackleton as a leader.

Now, beloved, we are living in the last days when we are going to be tested and our loyalty has to be proved. I believe that the only way that we are going to be loyal is if we understand that we have a great Leader and if we understand the love that our Leader has for us. Shackleton had a love for his men and he realized that those men came first and nothing else was as important. In our lives we have a Leader who has given his all for us and he realizes that in our situation there is nothing else as important as we are and rescuing us. When we see that kind of love, friends, it will endear us to our Leader, as Shackleton's men were endeared to him because we see that there is no sacrifice that Jesus is not willing to make in our behalf. When Shackleton's party left the doomed *Endurance* they did not have enough reindeer fur sleeping bags but were about five or six sleeping bags short. They had inferior bags or blankets that they could use, so Shackleton decided that they would draw straws to see who would get which bag. Shackleton, Wild, and all the officers drew the blankets. Of course, Shackleton rigged it to be so. That kind of sacrifice speaks to the hearts of people.

Let us open our Bibles to Ephesians 4 and read verses 1 through 15:

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect

man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

Paul says we should no longer be children tossed to and fro. The Apostle Paul, writing in Hebrews, speaks about how children partake of the milk but that they should become weaned from the milk to the meat of God's Word (Hebrews 5:12-14). God has given the church gifts to help us to be established in the present truth, to bring us into perfection. "The subjects of the Sabbath, the nature of man, and the testimony of Jesus are the great and important truths to be understood; these will prove as an anchor to hold God's people in these perilous times (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 300)." God has given us these truths because he does not wish us to be blown about with every wind of doctrine. Long ago our prophetess wrote:

Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken and only those things that cannot be shaken will remain. Satan is making the most desperate efforts to induce souls to range under his banner, and all who yield to his deceptions will wage war against the servants of Prince Immanuel. Watchfulness and prayer must be our safeguards in these days of peril (*The Review & Herald*, November 6, 1883).

For over one hundred years Satan has been making desperate efforts to wage war against our souls.

I have been shown that Satan has not been stupid and careless these many years, since his fall, but has been learning. He has grown more artful. His plans are laid deeper, and are more covered with a religious garment to hide their deformity. The power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is ten-fold greater than it was in the days of the apostles. His power has increased, and it will increase, until it is taken away. His wrath and hate grow stronger as his time to work draws near its close (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 277).

Beloved, we need to know more about the issue involved in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. It is a battlefield primarily over the law of God. Satan says that the law of God cannot be kept and he is desirous to see that we do not keep God's law. It does not matter if it is by hook or crook, by trap or swindle, or by just outright defiance and disobedience, it is his goal and object to cause us to disobey.

Righteousness by faith is a well-discussed subject and everyone agrees to this at least outwardly. Righteousness, however, is right-doing, and while our right-doing must come through the faith of Christ, Satan desires to lead us to transgress God's law and to bring dishonor upon him and upon Christ. In the end we are told that those who yield to

Satan's deceptions will not only follow him but they will actually wage war against the servants of Prince Immanuel. We might not imagine that we could ever do that but if we have allowed our guard to come down step-by-step to where Satan has control of us, we will finally follow his orders.

I have watched a particular anti-Ellen White video on more than one occasion. I have had to critique it and one time discuss it with a large group of Lutherans. This video was made with the help of a lot of people who used to be Seventh-day Adventists, some of whom were former ministers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I heard these people talk about the "freedom" and the "liberty" that they now had. They had the liberty to keep Sunday and to break the Sabbath. Women in the video were decked out like Jezebels with make-up and jewelry and said how *free* they now were. In their minds, they had been set free because they had learned "truth." Friends, we can speak of freedom, we can speak of joy, we can speak of rapture, but speaking does not make it so. How do we really know that we are in God's will? By his Word, and that is real freedom.

Satan knows that God's special test of loyalty is the seventh-day Sabbath. He knows that the Sabbath is a sign of God's creative ability (Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11). He also knows equally well that the Sabbath is the sign of recreation/redemption as well. In Ezekiel 20:20 we read that he has given us the Sabbath that we might know that he is the Lord that sanctifies us. This is vital for us to understand. Since the Sabbath is a special point of loyalty to God then we must know that Satan is going to work doubly hard to try to cause us in some way to disregard the Sabbath, to cast it aside, or to treat it lightly. He has been warring against God's law since his fall.

Satan was working with diligence in the days of Christ. In John 9 we read the story of the blind man that Jesus had healed and the account tells us that Jesus did this on the Sabbath day. In verses 14-16 we read: "And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day." I remind you that it can be clearly, historically documented that the cycle of seven days that we have today is the same cycle of seven days that was in effect in the time of Christ. The Sabbath that these Jewish people were speaking about, the Sabbath day that Jesus healed this man on, was the same seventh-day Sabbath that we have today.

The Jews many times accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath but it was never over which day he was keeping as the Sabbath. If he was keeping a Sabbath day differently than they had been keeping, I assure you they would have very strongly condemned him and would have worked very hard against him.

To prepare the way for the work which he designed to accomplish, Satan had led the Jews, before the advent of Christ, to load down the Sabbath with the most rigorous exactions, making its observance a burden (*The Great Controversy*, p. 52).

Again, please note that although Christ was accused of breaking the Sabbath, it was never because of the day that he kept, and no evidence exists that the Sabbath day then is a different day than the Sabbath day we have today. Satan was working through those Jewish people then and he works through people today. Recently I was reading a study prepared on Hebrews 4 about entering into God's rest. The author was a Sunday-keeper and one of the main points of his sermon was that although the seventh-day Sabbath was the Sabbath that was originally ordained of God, Christians today are under no obligation whatsoever to keep the Sabbath or any of the rest of the law of God. There is a group of people that this thinking appeals to. I cannot question their sincerity. I cannot say that this minister does not have good interests or intentions for the people because I do not know him and I do not know his heart. Only God can read the heart, but I do know who is behind such things, and the Word of God declares his heart and intention to be only wickedness.

Paul, writing in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 says, "Let no man deceive you by any means." This is good counsel for all of us. Nobody wants to be deceived. Nobody starts out with the plan to be deceived. It is the exact opposite. We all decide we will not be deceived. We all have the intention to not be deceived, but are we really earnest about this? Are we praying about it? Are we searching so that no man will deceive us?

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10).

We believe that these verses have an application to the Papacy, that the pope is the man of sin, the son of perdition, and the mystery of iniquity. It is really Satan who is behind all of this manifestation of lawlessness. The word *wicked* in

verse 8 is from the Greek word *ανωμας* (*anomos*) which means the opposite of law, total lawlessness. Thayer in his lexicon says concerning this verse: “He in whom all iniquity has as it were fixed its abode.” Satan is the father of all evil. These verses in Thessalonians parallel the part of Daniel 7 that speak of the little horn power that would think to change times and laws. Concerning Daniel 7:25 and the Sabbath, Ellen White says in *Early Writings*:

In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. I saw the ten commandments written on them with the finger of God. On one table were four, and on the other six. The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all; for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God’s holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the Sabbath commandment was not nailed to the cross. If it was, the other nine commandments were; and we are at liberty to break them all, as well as to break the fourth. I saw that God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes. But the pope had changed it from the seventh to the first day of the week; for he was to change times and laws (*Early Writings*, pp. 32, 33).

Ellen White applies that verse to the pope, saying he had changed the law of God “from the seventh to the first day of the week,” for he was to change times and laws. In that same testimony on p. 32 she speaks about seeing the ark in heaven and the Ten Commandments with a halo about the fourth commandment. That halo has not ceased to exist; it is still there.

Some of you have heard of the Lutheran historian, Augustus Neander, and Neander made this statement: “The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday (Augustus Neander, *The History of the Christian Religion and Church*, p. 186).” Neander understood the Papacy had attempted to change the day.

Does false worship, even if it is in sincerity, please God? Let us see what Jesus said. “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:7-9).” He called the religious leaders of his day hypocrites. The Greek word for hypocrite means actor. If we believe in a Godhead that role-plays, then we believe our God is a hypocrite. The Trinitarian doctrine says there really is not a Father or a Son but that they are simply acting as a father and a son so that we can understand them better.

Jesus says it is vain to worship him according to the commandments of men. If there was ever anyone who was ever sincere, it was the Apostle Paul. Before he became Paul,

when he was known as Saul of Tarsus, he was very sincere in persecuting the Christians and because of his sincerity, God could reveal truth to him that he would accept, but God could not have taken Saul into heaven in the condition and state that he was in when he was persecuting the Christians. He could not have allowed him into the kingdom at that point. His character did not have a fitness nor a title for heaven.

We have certain foundational truths and if we move those truths it is destined that we will also move other truths eventually. However you slice or dice, it is going to happen. It has to happen. I have a foundation to my house. If you take a sledge hammer and start taking block after block out, somewhere and at sometime the house will fall. It has to fall. Houses do not float and we do not float in our Christian experience either.

One of the great purposes of the Advent movement was worship reform because God could no longer speak to and through the fallen churches, nor could he reveal himself to them. They had rejected the truth about who he was and many other issues. We see the importance of knowing who God is and we logically ask people the question, “Does it make sense that God would raise up a movement in error concerning fundamental issues such as who God is or how we are to worship him?” And the answer is that it does not make sense that he would. Sometimes those who advocate a removal of the landmarks will try to skirt the question and say, “Well, he was bringing them along a little at a time because they were stiff-necked, hard-hearted, and they had been in Babylon so long they could only receive so much light at that time.” The documentation, however, is very clear that this is not the case, but that God very quickly led those people to the truth about who he was and how to worship him.

Where in the history of this movement was the restoration of the Sabbath brought in, if indeed the concept of a lunar-based Sabbath is the truth? What we will have to admit is that God started this movement up in truth and then allowed it to continue even into apostasy before he brought in the truth about the commandment that has a halo about it. I do not think that that is a reasonable or sensible argument.

In *Patriarchs and Prophets* we find a statement that was written over one hundred years ago and is even more appropriate today:

There is cause for alarm in the condition of the religious world today. God’s mercy has been trifled with. The multitudes make void the law of Jehovah, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:9. Infidelity prevails in many of the churches in our land; not infidelity in its broadest sense—an open denial of the Bible—but an infidelity that is robed in the garb of Christianity, while it is undermining faith in the Bible as a revelation from God (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 166) .

You see, friends, not every deception comes to us as plain infidelity. Sometimes it is wrapped in a garb of Christianity

and it is made to look good. God prophesied through Isaiah that there would be a restoration of the Sabbath among his people. Satan well knows of this restoration and before the final movements he will seek to negate this restoration with his own false restoration, but notice one of the important earmarks of the true restoration:

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up *the foundations of many generations*; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it (Isaiah 58:12-14).

Notice verse 12 particularly: “Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations.” In Revelation 12 you find a picture of the church as a woman and the woman goes in hiding for a times, a time, and the dividing of time or during the time we call the papal dark ages. We also know that during all that time there are clear, historical documented records of people who were keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. (See J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*.)

You can observe Sabbath-keeping from Genesis to Revelation in the history recorded by Scripture, and you can find history recording people keeping the Sabbath from the time of Christ until today. These people were restorers of the foundations of *many generations* that Isaiah is speaking of here, not just a few generations, not just something that occurred in the ancient past and was not restored until the final generation. There has been a witness, friends. God has not been without a witness on this earth, but some would have us believe that this witness was lost and was not understood for many generations.

God’s remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 678).

God does not leave us in confusion on these matters. He gives us a way whereby we can know where we are standing with him. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness (Romans 6:16)?” Beloved, sincerity is not enough. It is

sweet and it is good and if it is true sincerity then God will use it to help us know the truth and set us free. This text plainly declares that there are two paths. There is the path of sin which leads to death and the path of obedience which leads to righteousness, and who our master will be depends on whom we serve. Now, the Advent people have declared for over one hundred years that when Sunday observance will be enforced by civil authorities, then those who give in will have accepted the mark of the beast. We have known for over a hundred years what this issue is going to be over, and we need not be confused by it today. It is true that many Christians of past generations observed Sunday supposing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath and there are now Christians in many churches, including the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before him, but when the issues are made clear, we have to follow truth and if we do not step out then we will be worshipping the beast and its image and ultimately we will be worshipping the dragon. Those who at that point reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of his authority and honor instead that which Rome has chosen as a token of her supremacy will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome or the mark of the beast.

Now the call is still being made that Elijah made on Mount Carmel: “If the Lord be God then follow him (1 Kings 17:21),” and there are two special characteristics of God’s people mentioned in Revelation 14.

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and [keep—the verb is supplied for both parts] the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12).

God wants a people who will keep his commandments, and in *The Great Controversy* on page 605 we read, and please listen carefully:

The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God’s law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.

There is no allowance for indecision. It really is going to come down to truth or error, and the Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty for all of Christianity. This does not mean that other truths are not important. We rightfully believe that the truth about God is important. The Sabbath is the test of loyalty. It is a testing truth that reveals our obedience and loyalty

to God. What will it take to stand firm during the times ahead? The love of God! The only way we are going to have the love of God is to know him and his love in giving his Son for us. If we are going to be among that faithful group, friends, we will not be able to cherish false views about God. It is the truth about God that will give us the ability to be anchored to the Sabbath and to be loyal to God and our loyalty will be shown by observing the Sabbath. The Sabbath will reveal if we are fully loyal to God and if we love him more than anything or anyone else.

In Revelation chapter 7 we read about a special group of people:

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel (Revelation 7:1-4).

In *The Great Controversy* we read: “The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God (p. 640).” As we are sealed, friends, we are settled into the truth in such a way that we will never be moved.

Notice the spiritual condition of the people who are sealed. In Revelation 14:1 we read: “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” Then in verses 4 and 5 we read: “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins [they have a pure faith]. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” That is the testimony of Inspiration. It is not my idea of who they are. Sometimes we meet preachers, leaders, or lay people and we are impressed and think they have a good Christian experience, but of course we only see partially. There may not be everything inside that appears outwardly. The Bible says the 144,000, though, are without fault and that is exactly what it means. These people give the three angels’ messages and these messages links the gospel to creation and the seventh-day Sabbath.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and

worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Revelation 14:6, 7).

I mentioned earlier that one of the great purposes of the Advent movement was worship reform. I like to share this especially when I am talking to people from the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement because they are very positive about reform. I appreciate reform and the greatest and most primary reform we need is worship reform. The trinity god was professed by Christianity when the Advent movement was founded. Professed Christians were worshipping the trinity on the day of the trinity, the sun day. God raised up a movement to free his people of those Babylonian errors and to lead them back to the truth about who he was and to worship him as he commanded his worship to be.

Ellen White wrote: “The light we have received upon the third angel’s message is the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 17).”

This is not simply a matter that Ellen White did not understand all the truth and that she was in ignorance. Either Ellen White was plainly wrong or the lunar-based sabbath is wrong. It is not compatible to say that Ellen White did not have all the truth and that truth was progressive for her, for *if* truth was progressively revealed to her, than all of her earlier statements have to fit into the later picture of truth as proposed by lunar sabbath advocates.

Proponents of the lunar-based sabbath say, “Well, we had some of the truth during Ellen White’s time, but we are learning more truth,” and, of course, Ellen White does say we will continue to learn truth throughout eternity, but there are also statements that say very plainly that the truth that we have had on the Sabbath is the truth and it is right. In the above testimony from *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, Ellen White says the mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be and she says we have the true light on the third angel’s message. We know that the third angel’s message involves the issue of Sunday-Saturday worship. This testimony was written well over one hundred years ago.

According to Revelation 13:7-17 and onward, the people who remain loyal to God and who keep his Sabbath will be greatly persecuted. These verses speak about a persecuting power that makes war against God’s people. This is paralleled in Revelation 17 (and other places).

As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument eighteen hundred years ago was brought against Christ by the “rul-

ers of the people.” “It is expedient for us,” said the wily Caiaphas, “that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” John 11:50. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 615, 616).

This will bring not only the Sabbath-keepers but the whole world into a time of trouble such as there has never been. Daniel 12:1 says, “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: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God’s long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old (*The Great Controversy*, p. 614).

How should we react when we see such things happening about us and when we see winds of doctrine blowing? Notice how Jesus said his disciples were to treat other people when he sent them out:

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved (Matthew 10:16-22).

Now, you might say, “I will never do that,” and prior to this time probably everyone of these children, the parents, and the brothers and sisters have all said, “I will never do that.” But, it is going to be done by all who have not submitted to Christ and come under the influence of his Spirit.

Our work will soon be closed up, and soon the time of trouble, such as never was, will come upon us, of which we have but little idea (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 240).

Sometimes it is said that the threat is greater than the execution and many times it is, but not in the time of trouble. No matter what we anticipate it is going to be worse, but God is going to have a people who will vindicate him and he will also vindicate them. God says that he will honor those who honor him (1 Samuel 2:30). In Revelation 18 we read that a destruction is coming upon those who will not heed God’s call. “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues (Revelation 18:4).” You see, friends, we have to come out of Babylon and if we do not come out, we will receive of the plagues. “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her (Revelation 18:8).” God is going to vindicate his character; he is going to show that the wicked are wicked and the righteous are righteous. There will not be any doubt. At the end of the millennium when the wicked are resurrected to receive their final judgment every knee will bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. (See Philippians 2:10, 11.)

The experience of God’s people during this time is written down for us in the Bible:

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. 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 (Psalm 91:1-11).

He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from

hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure (Isaiah 33:15, 16).

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water (Isaiah 41:17, 18).

Many people in concentration camps during World War II literally starved to death. Did they not have the promise that their bread and water would be sure? This is sometimes a challenging thought and it is true that even today people starve to death and sometimes it is for righteousness' sake. I believe that some of us may be called to starve to death. So, how do we relate this possibility to what God has promised? We know God is our refuge and strength and that if he chooses to allow us to die, by whatever means, then it is his will and we will find even pleasure in doing his will in this respect. There does come a time, friends, when probation ceases and the plagues begin to fall. At that time, the bread and water will be sure for everyone who is a Christian. God will preserve his people. There will be no sense in letting them die at that point. The final martyrs have died and the final witness is over. God will not be honored by the death of his saints now. God will preserve his people at that time, and if he has to open up a river out rocks to water his people, he will just as he did for Israel. "He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers (Psalm 78:16)." God rained bread down from heaven to feed the two and a half million Israelites, and he can surely feed 144,000.

We know that God's people are going to go through trouble, but the greatest trouble they will experience is described in Jeremiah 30:7-10. It is the time of Jacob's trouble. You see, if you are God's child, not having food and not having water will not be the worst problem. It is spiritual anguish that will concern us the most. Are our sins forgiven? Have our sins been covered by the blood of Christ? That is the issue that we each need to know about.


In Revelation 15 we read about those people who will at last be faithful. I want to make note of a characteristic of them: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God (Revelation 15:2)." What is the great characteristic of these people? They have obtained the victory. Here is a group of people who, because of their love for Christ and their faith in him, were willing to die if necessary. Some will and are dying today and many have died in the past. The 144,000 will be a group of people who will be translated without seeing death. The Bible says that they will have gotten the victory over the beast, his image, his mark, his name, and his

number; and they will stand faultless before the throne of glory. We have the opportunity to honor Christ in a way that no generation has ever honored him. Friends, if there was ever a time that we needed to understand what the faith of Jesus is and if there was ever a time that we needed to understand what it means to keep the commandments of God, it is today.

Satan has been at war against the law of God since his fall. He has and is using many different means to trap God's cherished people into disobedience. Today we see Satan attempting to undermine the pillars of our faith. He has been at it a long time and he often changes his approach to meet the current needs and varied circumstances of God's people. But friends, if we stay with the plain Word of God, if we allow the Testimonies to speak to us, and if we allow the great principle of self-denial that Jesus outlined in Luke 18:22 to be in our lives, then we can and shall know that we are safe. We will be sealed and made sure and ready for the kingdom of God in spite of the world falling apart around us.

Brethren I beg you to consider the plea in Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Today, friends, we need the faith that was once delivered to the saints. God is so wise to know the plan from beginning to end, to know what will happen every step along the way, and to know how to meet every crisis and every emergency among his people.

Sometimes our thoughts have been misguided, and sometimes we have had a zeal without knowledge, a zeal of ignorance. We need to listen to our heavenly Father today more than ever before. We should not accept what anyone says but look at what God's Word says and the counsel of the Testimonies. This will be an anchor to hold us so that we will not be moved off the solid foundation God have given us. If we move one pin of one pillar, it is much easier to move another pin and then another one, and before long everything resembling Adventism and God's message for these last days will be gone.

The Bible foretells a great revival at the end of time and a people who will be the restorers of the breach. God did indeed raise up a group of people in the 1844 movement to do this very work. God will carry these people through to the end, and we can each be part of that people. "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history (*Life Sketches*, p. 196)." We can each stay securely anchored to God even though Satan is like a roaring lion. Satan understands the holiness of God's law, for he has been in heaven, and the Sabbath is a special point of that law that he is bringing into controversy. He will do all he can to move us to the right or to the left of where we need to be. May we be anchored steadfast in the immovable Word of God. 

Letters

Reprinted here are portions of letters we have received that are of a general nature, along with our responses, which we hope will be of interest to our readers.

Old Paths

Thank you so much for the March issue of *Old Paths*. As usual, you wrote some very uplifting, truth-filled articles, especially “What Does ‘Only Begotten’ Mean?” It is an excellent article which clearly points out the errors in the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus*. The latter was found, as you know, by the German Von Tischendorf in a convent near Mount Sinai. You also showed the superiority of the *Textus Receptus* which, however, is not perfect. For example, it does have the gloss in Matthew 28:19 that is found in almost all Bibles including the King James and the New King James version. By the way, the first letter “t” should be dropped from the expression *theos* found on page 3 of your article. The Greek letter “th” is the theta which is the first letter of the Greek word for God or god, *theos*.

I also like the article about “God’s Irresistible Love.” It seems we are often preoccupied by orthodox beliefs and doctrines that we do not spend enough time on God’s love which should be foremost in all sermons and conversations.

Thanks for showing the difference between the *Textus Receptus* version of John 1:18 and the one in the Catholic Westcott-Hort in the *Codex Vaticanus*. There is a huge difference indeed. Bart Ehrman mentioned in his book *Misquoting Jesus* that the first 18 verses of the book of John were not really written by the apostle John. These verses are highly poetic and have a complex grammar and different vocabulary not found in the rest of the Gospel of John. Do you think Ehrman and many other scholars are right? I especially think of the first verse of John 1, “...and the Word was God.” Does this not mean that Jesus is also fully God? I note that Jesus always calls Himself the Son of Man or the Son of God, mostly the Son of Man. It seems that a pro-Trinitarian scribe added some verses here at the beginning of John chapter 1. I hope you have the time to answer my question. Thanks for taking the time. May the good Lord bless you richly.

Reply: *Concerning the capital T in Theos, I knew much better and do not know how it got in there. When I first learned the Greek alphabet I learned it in the original upper case, so I knew better, but thank you for bringing the error to our attention!*

Concerning some of the problems with the Textus Receptus: I am sure that there are issues with all manuscripts. I am thankful that there seem to be far fewer issues with the Textus Receptus when compared to the Codex Vaticanus or Codex Sinaiticus. Some verses that are notable are in John 1, Matthew 28:19, 1 John 5:7, and Mark 16. I have had to consider these matters in light of the writings of Ellen White. She

seemed at liberty to quote all these passages, some more and some less, except 1 John 5:7, which I fail to find ever in her published works. I think it best to accept these verses with a reasonable explanation and then go on. Why do I feel this way if it is not necessary? Many people are still prejudiced towards Seventh-day Adventists and Ellen White. If we begin to do something that has the appearance of picking apart the Bible, even in small ways, it may do more harm than good in the long run. Of course, we can stand for what we think is the most correct position, but we may win a battle only to lose a war! Therefore, I have decided that even though I can share about manuscript problems with others, I still wish to be able to explain the difficult texts from within its translation and I have found God to supply an answer.

Now, concerning the first part of John being in a different style: I have written many different things and some are clearly written in a style different from other styles. If God wishes for a certain style to flow through a certain part of my writings and a different style in other parts, he is well able to inspire such a flow, and if God wished for such a style to come through in John’s writings, he is not short of being able to inspire such writing!

The fullness of Christ’s divinity does not depend upon John chapter 1 only. Many other Scriptures plainly declare Christ to have the divine nature.

Thanks for April’s *Old Paths*. You really poured out your soul regarding the Sabbath. It is not only truth but it made me want to honor the Sabbath more fully.

Reply: *Thanks. I was greatly blessed in my preparation of the article. May the Lord richly bless you.*

I received my issue of *Old Paths* today. Your article on the lunar sabbath is quite something. I’m so thankful I received the tape so going through the article should be a little easier for me.

Reply: *We have a two audio disc message on the Lunar Sabbath that much of the April edition of Old Paths is based upon. The suggested donation for the two disc set is \$5.00.*

The Foundation of Our Faith

Do you still have *The Foundation of Our Faith*? I wish to receive a copy. Do you have any other books available for sale similar to the above? I am doing early SDA Denominational research. Also interested in Wm. Miller books etc. Please reply.

Reply: *We now are blessed to have a good supply of The Foundation of Our Faith book. We prefer you send a check or money order, but you can use also order through our website using Visa through PayPal if you wish. The direct link is: <http://www.smyrna.org/OrderMaterials.htm>. We also have the book What did they Believe?, which has many quotations from the Adventist Pioneers on the truth about God.*

The latest edition of *The Foundation of Our Faith* is the best ever!

Reply: *We worked very hard to revise and update it, and since its publication we have found a few minor imperfections. However, we are thankful that many have already come to the same conclusion as you have and are being greatly blessed by the book..*

I am reading *The Foundation of Our Faith* right now. I just have a question. So far you are saying that the Holy Ghost is not a literal person. What do you mean by saying, "We ask the reader to retain an open mind and an earnest desire to have the Holy Spirit's guidance." (p. 81). Holy Spirit's guidance?

Reply: *I am very glad that you are reading The Foundation of Our Faith. I am not sure what part you have read to state that I said that the "Holy Ghost is not a literal person." What I have tried to convey is the Bible teaching that the Holy Spirit is not a separate person APART from God, but is the Spirit of God himself. If you continue to read or reread especially pages 203, 204 (6th edition) I think that it will become clear. The Bible says that man has a spirit. I have a spirit and you have a spirit. We would not say that the spirit of man was not human. Our spirit is not a divine spirit, but neither is it a spirit like an animal such as an ape or dog has. It is a human spirit, and, in fact, our spirit is our person of who we really are internally, that component of man that is not body. Unlike God, our spirit cannot live or be conscience without our body. Our spirit is our person and so I believe that the Father's Spirit is his very presence without the need of a body. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father. It is holy because God is holy.*

Camp Meeting

Allen, if you would, could you please e-mail me the dates of the next Smyrna camp meeting. I will appreciate it. Thank you.

Reply: As noted on page 13, the camp meeting will be June 12-16 and we surely hope that all who can possibly attend will attend.

I read over the page on the upcoming camp meeting. And I noticed that it said there is to be a soup and sandwich luncheon on Sabbath. What happened to the haystacks?

Reply: Ask the ladies of the church. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and after seeing how well the soup and sandwich idea worked at the Florida camp meeting this year, our sisters wished to try this!

Internet-Related

I was led to your website via the *Present Truth* website, which I had found for the first time a few days ago. Reading the material on the *Present Truth* and on the *Smyrna Gospel Ministries* websites, I am so happy to finally find someone who believes much of what I believe, but I do have a question. I looked into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the

past but never desired to join for various reasons, one of which being their belief in the trinity. Judging by some of the tracts on your site, it seems you have or have had an affiliation with the Seventh-day Adventist Church at some point. Is this true? If so, besides the trinity, what other reasons have caused you to separate from the Seventh-day Adventist Church? What areas do you have in common with the Seventh-day Adventists and where do you differ? Thanks for your answers and for your wonderful internet ministry.

Reply: *I consider myself a Seventh-day Adventist, according to their older beliefs and practices but not a part of the corporate church in apostasy. You may not be aware that Seventh-day Adventists were not Trinitarian for the first ¾ century as a people, but with the start of a new generation that wanted to have a king like the other churches and desired to be like the other churches, they accepted the Trinitarian teaching.*

At Smyrna Gospel Ministries we have no formal statement of faith except the Bible; however, we do closely follow the principles of faith that the early Adventists believed and published in 1872.


Besides changes on the doctrine of God, the mainline Seventh-day Adventist Church today teaches a different view of Christ and his sanctuary ministry. There are also many liberal trends accepted by the main church in worship, dress, and Christian deportment that we cannot follow today. I hope that this gives a brief, but sufficient, answer to your thoughts.

Hello! I was very amazed that you got snow last Sabbath. Snow in April is not all that usual now, is it? I don't think I ever got to see redbuds weighted down with snow before. Fortunate indeed that some people came Friday night for communion service. It must have been a very precious time.

I really did enjoy the pictures. The one of Red with Ashleigh is very cute, and I was amazed with the snow photos. They are just incredible. Thank you for including some of the redbuds. :-)

Reply: *For news and events happening at Smyrna please see the news section on our website.*

Today for the first time I downloaded Skype and was able to hear your service. When you got to the part if anyone wanted to say something I couldn't find a button or something to speak, I just don't know how the thing works. Well anyway I just wanted to suggest that I prefer to see a live video instead of just listening. Maybe next time I will figure it out. Blessings to everyone! And a warm hello to everyone!

Reply: *I was very glad that you got to listen to our service this last week. I am sorry that you had some trouble with things but pray that they will be worked out soon. If you wish to have your mic unmuted, you may request this by pushing on the Skype keypad number "1" twice. To access the keypad, be sure to click the "Call Phones" tab at the near the top of the Skype window.* 

Current Events....

Recent events in the world and in the United States have been of special note, and even though they are well-known they deserve comment.

Virginia Tech Massacre

On April 16, the day after the National Rifle Association finished its 136th annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, Seung-Hui Cho killed thirty-two people at Virginia Tech University campus located in Blacksburg, Virginia before taking his own life. This killing spree has renewed the debate over gun control within the United States. With this sad event, the minds of many people are wondering why people have so free access to guns and ammunition in this country. While the second amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees the right to bear arms, many feel this is out of date or not properly applied today.

While we certainly are appalled by violence and murder, it is a truth that when nations have been historically disarmed in the past, they have been victims of totalitarian governments. The day of the shooting I was talking to a person in our local community about the massacre and this person noted that while visiting family members in Germany recently, they learned that there is strict gun control there and they felt it should be that way here. I am reminded, however, that Germany had strict gun control under Adolf Hitler and this prevented the masses from any grassroots movement to unseat Hitler.

This incident brought home to my mind the real fear that runs under the current of most Americans. If this event at Virginia Tech brought us to such a fever pitch of concern, how would this country handle something of this magnitude each day? Sound impossible? In Iraq almost every day there are car bombs that kill and wound scores and sometimes there are multiple bombs. Almost as frequently are assassinations and kidnappings. What if this were to happen in the United States? We would see a quick change spurred on by the populace. The fever that 9-11 produced, and more, would be brought back to stay. We would hear again, as Hillary Clinton said on September 11, that we might have to give up personal freedoms in exchange for safety.

I have not heard any conspiracy theories yet that Cho was used of the government to incite protest and strife, but it should be clear when we reflect on this matter and on other issues of current events we will mention that the stage is really no longer being set, it is already set and ready, just waiting for God to say his people are sealed and it is closing time.

Don Imus

Don Imus, king of the shock disc jockey talk shows and host of "Imus in the Morning," was fired from his nationwide radio show this month for making racist and sexually-negative comments about the Rutgers University women's

basketball players. Imus referred to the lady players using very inappropriate language. This prompted civil rights groups to demand his firing. Please make no mistake in what I will say. Imus was very wrong to say what he said. It was not the first time he had fired away at women and blacks. But then again, he had fired away at whites and men and everyone and everything else in-between also. But this time Imus pushed one button too many. Ironically, the rap music industry in the United States, dominated by black males, has been using these same inappropriate words toward women and black women for years without not much more than a whimper of protest, but when Imus was targeted, the swiftness of the corporate reaction shows the power of today's new media joined with the power of race.

Did he have the freedom in the United States to say these things? At the time, yes. Our first amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees the right of free speech and free press. But today we live in an age of "hate crimes" when if the media chooses to target a person, they are fair game and the media has their second amendment rights to fire away! It was protested that Imus hurt the feelings of these fine women and I am sure that he did. I have a daughter who is a fine, beautiful, young woman. She was once accused of being a woman of very bad character. I know the hurt it caused her and the pain that I suffered with her. And unlike the case in point where the accusations came from a lunatic-fringe person and we can consider the source, her accuser was considered a noble Christian. I must admit that I shifted gears into "dad-mode" pretty quickly so I well can relate to this matter. But now the question: Even though it is wrong to say these kinds of things, where is such protest headed when "hurting someone's feelings" is becoming criminal? What will soon happen when someone calls the papal church the beast power or a harlot? Will this then be considered a hate crime? You bet it will! Be ready!

Supreme Court Rules on Abortion

The United States Supreme Court Ruled this week to uphold a ban on "partial-birth abortions." In a close 5-4 decision, all the Catholic justices (including Bush's two appointees) voted in the majority. In this procedure the physician partly extracts the fetus before collapsing its skull by inserting a sharp instrument and sucking out the brains, killing it before removing it. As horrible as this sound, far more commonly the doctor would dismember the fetus in the uterus before removing it! If a baby were fully born first, this would be considered murder. Now it might appear as a "no brainer" to uphold a law against such a procedure but the fact is that this procedure had been legal and accepted by liberals such as the Clintons. While we fully condemn this procedure, we see a certain hand-writing on the wall concerning it. Conservative

Evangelicals have for a long time been seeking to overturn all the abortion laws in the United States. We can fully agree that abortion is wrong, but, like the cases above, it will be a springboard for Evangelicals to use as a political power base to achieve more than abortion but more points, including a national day of rest. Watch this one closely.

Papal Document

It was recently announced that, perhaps by the time this is published, Pope Benedict is expected to release a document that would provide for the more widespread practice of the traditional Tridentine Latin Mass. This was almost shelved with the reforms of the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. According to latinmass.org the Tridentine Latin Mass is: "... the Mass used in the Catholic Church for almost 1500 years, until the introduction of the Mass of Pope Paul VI following the Second Vatican Council (<http://www.latinmass.org/faq.html>).” This website also notes:

... it was codified by the Council of Trent in the 16th century. But the Mass itself is far older than that. The Canon, or central part, of the Mass dates back to the time of St Gregory in the sixth century.

In 1570, Pope St Pius V - in his Papal Bull *Quo Primum* - said that priests could use the Tridentine rite forever, “without scruple of conscience or fear of penalty (*Ibid.*).”

The Tridentine Latin Mass is said in Latin and the liturgy is uniform regardless of where one goes. An article on the *Time* magazine website had these comments:

... the pontiff will allow any priest to say the mass according to the old Tridentine rite (which is delivered in Latin with the priest facing the altar, his back to the congregation), rather than have to seek approval from the local bishop as is now required.

A significant part of any Pope’s job is to manage questions of doctrine and discipline. Benedict’s “no wiggle room” approach is increasingly seen in the context of his great battle to defend Catholicism on its historical home turf of Europe, where he sees a kind of cult of secularism. The Pope’s response is not simply to reaffirm the Christian values of the old continent, a goal also expressed by the continent’s more liberal leaders and theologians like Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and Cardinal Godfried Daneels. In addition, Benedict professes a very specific kind of Christianity, one based not only on the teachings of Jesus, but on abiding by the letter of ancient Catholic Church traditions as the only effective bulwark against rampant relativism.

In fact, the one major disciplinary about-face expected is this coming document on the Latin Mass, a concession to the ultra-conservatives, who have been living and praying on the fringe of the Church since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council brought in mass

in the vernacular. Said one Rome-based priest: “Opening up the Latin rite to anyone would amount to the Church turning back the reforms of Vatican II (<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1610227,00.html>, accessed April 22, 2007).”

This is clearly a push of Benedict towards the old ways and although his papacy got off to a shaky start, he is still looked to as the leader of a billion Catholics and a force to be reckoned with. With this return to the Council of Trent we can look for other more sweeping changes soon to take place as we near the second coming of Jesus Christ. ✍



“Ask the Pastor” continued from page 15

I cannot imagine my Lord, who wore a crown of thorns for me, approving my use of a piece of gold to say, in effect, “I am a virtuous person who is not available for you.”

God wants all to retain a meek and quiet spirit. Furthermore, even if you are sure that a wedding band alone would not displease God, are *you* strong enough to not be further influenced by wearing it? How can we knowingly take a step in a direction that may cause us to slip and slide down a wrong path and possibly take others with us? Others may be willing to put their precious children in jeopardy, for they may not see it as a jeopardy, but I plead with you to give your influence on children great consideration. Even if they are not your children, you will still have an effect. I remember what Jesus said in Matthew 18:4-6: “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

I know you have been faithful to your husband and he has no reason to doubt your love. Being secure with his godly wife is very important to a man. He likes to think that she belongs to him and that he belongs to her, and he takes great pleasure and security in knowing so. May God bless you both very much. ✍



Obituary Notice: Brother Lew McGee

We are saddened to announce the passing of another friend and co-laborer together with God. Last month, Lewis (Lew) McGee fell asleep in Jesus after a long battle with cancer. We had known Lew for many years and know that he trusted in Jesus and looked forward to the day when all sickness and pain would be over and when friends will be reunited, never to part again. Lew is survived by two sons, David and Terry. It is our prayer that they that are alive will remain faithful to join in that great family reunion. ✍

WV Camp Meeting June 12-16

Smyrna Gospel Ministries would like to invite all who are interested in preparing for the return of the Lord to attend camp meeting this June 12-16 at the Smyrna Sabbath Chapel in West Virginia. As always, we eagerly look forward to this special time of study, prayer, and fellowship, and we are very anxious to see all of you once again. We are also very desirous to meet new friends and family. Please do not let anything prevent your attendance this June because time is short and more than ever we need to draw closer to one another and closer to our Redeemer. Our theme will be “Total Preparation for the Lord’s Coming.”

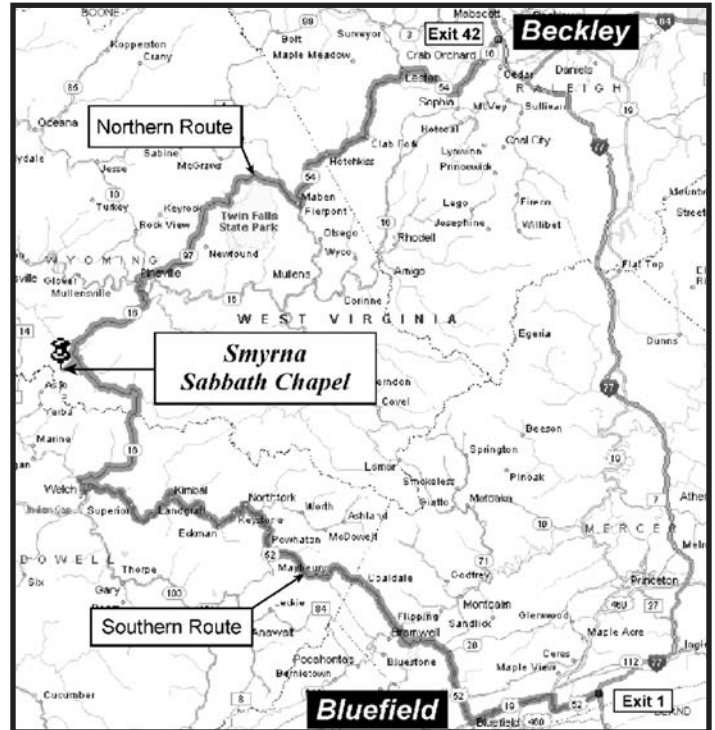
While we acknowledge meetings are the main focus of camp meeting, we also realize it can be difficult to find time for personal time with God and with one another when the camp meeting schedule is very full, so we have scheduled free time in the afternoon and between sessions for this. Some of the speakers will be Lynnford Beachy, Don Cox, Ed Cyrus, Ann Ford, Dennis Robertson, David Sims, and Willis Smith. We are also planning sessions on natural health treatments, and Sisters Arlene Bailey and Onycha Holt are planning a food preparation seminar. In addition, there will be plenty of special music and a time for testimonies.

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

Camping is free to all, but each camper will be responsible for his or her own meals, except on Sabbath when soup and sandwiches will be served at midday. Kitchen facilities will not be available, but camp stoves can be used in the camping area and ice for ice chests can be obtained one mile away.

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

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



Directions:

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

Traveling from the South, Southeast, or Southwest: From Wytheville, VA, traveling I-77 north, take exit #1 upon entering West Virginia, immediately after exiting East River Mountain Tunnel. Follow Route 52 north to Welch 38.7 miles. At Welch follow signs for Route 16 North. Once leaving town, you will travel 9 miles. You will pass a Citgo gas station on the right. We are about ¼ of a mile past the Citgo station. Watch for the Smyrna sign on the right side of the road. Turn left at the sign and go 7/10 miles. (These mileages are approximates and not exact values.) *Beware traveling through the towns of Northfork, Keystone, and Kimball, they are well-known speed-traps!*

Onycha Holt

Internet Broadcasts

We want to remind our readers that we are broadcasting our regularly-scheduled Sabbath worship service at 11:00 a.m. (EST) each Sabbath morning and our midweek prayer meeting on Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. (EST).

These broadcasts can be accessed on the Internet via Skype, a communication program, or by simply listening over the telephone. To access Smyrna Chapel services by the Internet, you need to have Skype installed on your computer. Downloading Skype is free and easy at www.skype.com. Skype allows communication on levels from chat to audio/video conversations. You may directly access our Skypecast and/or be involved in a chat session by going to our home webpage and following the simple directions. If you are currently running Skype on your computer, you may enter +990008275126052 on your Skype call window to access our broadcast.

In addition to being able to access the services directly from the Internet, you can also listen to the broadcast through the telephone by dialing 1-605-475-8590 (*new number*) and when prompted enter room number 5126052. In Germany you dial 01805007620, and from the UK you dial 08701191313 and then enter the above-listed room number. Long distance charges do apply, but if you live within the United States and have free evening and weekend calling on a cell phone or a plan such as Verizon's Freedom Plan on a land-line phone, you may listen without cost.

How to Listen to Prior Services

You may listen to prior services that have been recorded by using Skype or by calling on the telephone. The numbers are different, however, so please note them. To use Skype, you enter +990008271111 on your Skype call window to access the recording section and when prompted enter room number 5126052. After reaching our recordings, you will be given the option of listening to the most current recording by entering "0#" (zero and then the pound [#] symbol) on your Skype call window.

You may also listen to the recordings by telephone by dialing 1-605-475-8599 and when prompted enter room number 5126052. After reaching our recordings this way, you will again be given the option of listening to the most current recording by entering "0#" (zero and then pound [#] symbol) on your keypad.

You May Participate

When you are in a conference and wish to speak during the open part of the service, press "11" (that is, the numeral one twice) on your telephone keypad or Skype call window. This action will be followed by a message that says, "The moderator sees your raised hand." Your line will be unmuted by the action of the moderator when your turn has come and you will receive the message, "You may now speak." A message is not played when the line is muted again by the moderator.



Youth's Corner

The Hand that Never Lets Go

The sun shone brilliantly on the dazzling snow of one of the highest mountains of the Alps, as a traveler followed his guide along the narrow path. The Englishman reveled in the scenes of beauty through which he passed. He had confidence in his guide, and followed fearlessly in his footsteps, though the track was entirely new to him. Suddenly he hesitated; for the bold mountaineer stepped across a narrow but very deep chasm, and then, holding out his hand, asked the Englishman to take it, and step across. Still the traveler hesitated, but the guide encouraged him to obey, saying, reassuringly. "Take my hand; that hand never lets go."

Dear young friends, One greater than any human guide calls upon you to follow him over the heights of patience and self-sacrifice. The path is not an easy one. Christ says, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." In order to follow this path, we must lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us. Directly at the entrance of the path lies the cross of self-denial. This we must lift if we would follow the Saviour. We must rid ourselves of pride and selfishness. While weighed down by them, we can not scale the heights over which Christ bids us follow him.

All the way along, Satan has prepared pitfalls for the feet of the unwary. But following our Guide, we may walk with perfect security; for the path is consecrated by his footsteps. It may be steep and rugged, but he has traveled it; his feet have pressed down the thorns to make the way easier for us. Every burden we are called upon to bear, he himself has borne. Personal contact with him brings light and hope and power. Of those who follow him, he says, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "I the Lord . . . will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." More precious in the Saviour's sight than the whole world is the soul who gives himself to Jesus. Christ would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one soul might be saved in his kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom he has died. Unless his children choose to leave him, he will hold them fast.

Christ's true disciples follow him through sore conflicts, enduring self-denial and experiencing bitter disappointment; but this teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they are led to look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of his glory. In holy vision the prophet saw the triumph of the people of God. He says: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory . . . stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (*Ellen G. White — The Youth's Instructor, May 1, 1902*)



Ask the Pastor

The Wedding Band

Question: I have started working and the topic has come up about wedding bands. I do not currently wear one and it bothers my husband that the people I meet everyday might not know that I am married. I like to tell people I work with that I am married, but I certainly don't get to tell everybody. He often says to me that people likely think I am single because I don't wear a ring. It seems to bother him so much that once I suggested that I could wear a wedding band just to work for him.

Well, the topic came up on the weekend because a friend of mine has had problems with people not believing that she and her husband are really married, and she concluded that it was because she wasn't wearing a ring. She told me that she took her ring off twelve years ago but that she has recently put it back on. Talking with her had me thinking more seriously about the issue than I ever have before. I know my husband would be happy if I wore one, and I wonder if it is actually "wrong." I'm also worried that this could be a stumbling block to others.

Reply: You have asked me a question that I believe is important and desires careful consideration. I would first like to share a thought of Ellen White's from the book *Our Health Message*. She did not write this book, but there is a section of counsel that she did write in 1897 that is published in the appendix.

There are those who will never return to their first love. They will never cease to make an idol of self. With all the light of the Word of God shining on their pathway, they will not obey His directions. They will follow their own tastes, and do as they please. These sisters give a wrong example to the youth, and to those who have newly come to the faith, for they see little difference between their apparel and that of the worldling.

To those who are making self their idol nothing in the line of human tests should be presented, for it would only give them an excuse for making the final plunge into apostasy. Such do not know whom they are serving. Knowledge and power belong to God (pp. 443, 444).

There is a principle here that is important. Unless the heart is converted, issues of health and dress reform will avail nothing. When we press them before those not converted we do more harm than good. I believe that you are converted and love the Lord so I will speak as clearly as I can to you. Peter says concerning Christians wives:

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who

trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands (1 Peter 3:3-5).

Paul also mentions, writing to Timothy:

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array (1 Timothy 2:9).

The Bible also portrays God's Church as a pure woman (2 Corinthians 11:2) and Babylon as a woman decked out with gold and jewels (Revelation 17:4).

From these texts we can see that jewelry is not acceptable as outward adornment. The question we might ask is: "Can we really say that a wedding band is considered to be different than jewelry?" Some say "Yes," for they believe it to be functional, and some say "No." A wedding band may say to some "I am married," but that reminds me of the fact that some married men look for women wearing wedding bands since they know the woman will not feel at liberty to say something about him to others if things go sour since the woman is at risk also. If people do not wish to acknowledge a meek and quiet spirit and also a plain statement that you belong to another, I doubt a wedding band will make much of a difference.

A while back I had a very disappointing experience that I will change some details to protect those involved, but I will retain the principles that are involved. A young woman was wearing an item of clothing that is questionable for Christians to wear. This was observed by a young girl who is being raised in a Christian home endeavoring to teach her true Bible Christianity. Later that day I was heartbroken as I saw this young girl obtain a stray item and try to mimic what she had seen earlier. I was further pained as the parent needed to ask this girl to remove it and instruct her that we do not dress in certain ways regardless of what others do. This was not a wedding band, but the principle of being an influence surely applies, and, though I have not personally seen it, I have known of others who have had a similar experience with even simple wedding bands being an attraction to children. You may think you would only wear a wedding band to work, but even if it is only the workers you who see this, can you afford that influence? What if one of the workers you associate with becomes interested in the message and you begin to give studies. You come to Christian modesty and apparel and they almost can see it, but then they remember that you wear a wedding band at work and they cannot see the difference between your band and theirs. Then they cannot see much difference between the wedding band and the engagement ring. And since they have the rings, the ear rings really do not make a difference and so on. Is a little inconvenience on your part of explaining that you are married worth the chance of a soul being lost? I cannot answer for you, but I can for myself.

Continued on page 12, column 2

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New Video

Ellen G. White and the Godhead

Over six years ago we envisioned a video series that would cover the truth about God in detail. We have produced a non-Adventist version that uses the Bible in the presentations and an Adventist version that also includes the writings of Ellen White.

The way has been slow at times and the last release we were able to share was almost two years ago with the production of the video “The Omega of Deadly Heresies.”

We are very pleased to announce that the recording for next video, “Ellen G. White and the Godhead,” has been finished and we hope to have it edited and ready for distribution by camp meeting, if not before. This video is extremely well-documented and will provide much help to those who question the reliability of Ellen White and who want to know her true position on God. This presentation has been the most planned and carefully thought through video in the series to date. We will have more details next month.

The next video in the series will be on the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers and their belief on the Godhead. 

“Prayer Requests” from page 1

is opting for treatment following natural remedies instead of surgery and medication. Their son also has cancer, so let us remember the whole family in prayer that God will be very close to each one as they go through this trying time together.

Another prayer request comes from a sister who has lost her job due to the department in which she had worked having shut down. She requests prayer for this situation and also that she will focus her attention on spiritual matters.

Onycha Holt

Old Paths is a free monthly newsletter/study-paper published by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801-9606 U. S. A. The paper is dedicated to the propagation and restoration of the principles of truth that God gave to the early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. *Duplication is not only permitted, but strongly encouraged.* This issue, with other gospel literature we publish, can be found at our web sites. The urls are: <http://www.smyrna.org> and <http://www.presenttruth.info>. Phone: (304) 732-9204. Fax: (304) 732-7322.

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