

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

Pure, Simple, Quiet Beauty

God designs that the scenes of nature should influence the children of God to delight in the pure, simple, quiet beauty with which our Father adorns our earthly home. Jesus tells us that the mightiest king that ever swayed a specter could not compare in gorgeous array to the simple flowers that God has clothed with loveliness (Manuscript Releases, vol. 5, p. 20).



Prayer Requests

This month one of our greatest concerns for prayer is Hans Stump, who continues to seek medical consultation for the dangerously large neurofibroma growing within his chest which is, among other things, impeding his speech and which has the potential for continual growth. We earnestly entreat an interest in your prayers for him and his family.

Several brothers and sisters have come to our attention who are in need of prayer for their physical health, including Sister Cheryl Bonner in Ohio who is recovering from surgery. Please keep them, as well as others we are concerned about, in prayer that they will do well physically and, most importantly, spiritually.

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Spiritual Gifts in the Light of the Book of Revelation

By Allen Stump

One of the most important themes in the Bible is the impartation of the Spirit of God and of the gifts of the Spirit to the individual believer, as well as their importance to us and their relevance to last day events. We will begin our journey with 2 Peter 1:21 where the Apostle Peter states: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The expression *moved* means that the prophets were inspired to speak. They were impressed, urged on, and impelled to speak by the Holy Spirit of God.

God has had men and women who have spoken for him in all ages, and these people are called prophets. Peter says in Acts 1:16: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus." Peter is making a reference to Psalm 41, saying that the Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David. When David was thus speaking, it was the Holy Spirit speaking through David's prophesying.

David also noted concerning inspiration: "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue (2 Samuel 23:2)." As the Spirit of God would come upon the prophets, they would then speak God's words.

At the last supper, Jesus spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you (John 16:12-14)." Jesus said the Spirit of God would reveal him and the things which were at that time a mystery the Holy Spirit would later explain to them. In John 14:16 Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Beloved, that is a wonderful promise. As Adventists, we know that the Bible clearly teaches in many places the concept of the doctrine of the investigative judgment, even though the term itself is not in the Bible, and one of the aspects of the investigative judgment is that there will be a time when probation for all of humanity closes. Everyone will have made a decision to continue to live a holy or a wicked life. Every case will have been decided and everyone will be sealed for eternity, either to be saved or to be lost.

There will soon come a time when Jesus will make the declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still (Revelation 22:11)." At that time the mediation of Christ

will be complete. Forgiveness of sin will be forever finished. Only those whose have the pure white robe of Christ's righteousness will be ready for the coming of Jesus. The victorious will be those who have followed the counsel of Jesus to "strive to enter at the straight gate (Luke 13:24)." The servant of the Lord described it this way:

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent efforts, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away sin, among God's people on earth (*The Review and Herald*, January 17, 1907).

Though we will not have a mediator, the good news is that we will not need a mediator at that time, for our sins will have been taken care of and we will have ceased from sinning. If this has not been accomplished, we will not go to heaven with Jesus. The promise is that even though probation for humanity has closed and the work of Christ *as our Mediator* has finished, the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, will abide with us forever, including during the time of trouble. It is a wonderful promise to have and to hold that we will not go through the time of trouble alone.

The Bible was written over a period of about 1,600 years, from approximately 1500 BC when Moses wrote Job to around the end of the first century when the epistle of 1 John was written. During these 1,600 years the Scriptures were written, but the Holy Spirit is to abide with God's people *forever*. God's guidance and care will not simply be through the written word of Scripture, but also through the special guidance and direction he has given his church through his Holy Spirit. Although it is true that Jesus said "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63)," the leading of the Holy Spirit will never supersede, take the place of, or go contrary to the written Word of God. The work of the Holy Spirit will help his church know how to understand Scripture and how to apply Scripture to their experience. Let us now look at Ephesians 4:4-8:

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.

In verses 11 through 13 we read about these gifts and their object:

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.

Five different gifts are mentioned in verse 11, but they come in four different packages. God “gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors,” but then it does not say “and some teachers.” The word *some* is left out because in the Greek, as well as in the English, the grammatical structure requires pastors and teachers to go together. It is true at times God has called men to fulfill more than one office, or have more than one gift, at a time. The Apostle Paul was obviously an evangelist, as well as a teacher. In some respects we may not think of him as a pastor, but he did raise up congregations and then shepherd them until it was time for him to move on. Part of the purpose of these gifts is made clearer by leaving out the first comma in verse 12 that the King James Version contains. The clause is really designed to be read as describing a unified purpose: for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. We have these gifts so the saints can be perfected for their work of the ministry and that the body of Christ might be edified, built up, strengthened, and equipped. God has given these gifts to the body for that reason, till we all come unto a perfect man. The part about the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, which is important, is parenthetical to the main thought of coming unto the perfect man. The great goal is not unity, it is perfection, and perfection comes by unity in the *faith*. We can have a false unity. We can have a unity where people come together because they want to be agreeable but that is not Biblical unity. Biblical unity is that we come together in one mind and one faith. As we all approach the one true God and as we come into harmony with him, we shall then find ourselves in harmony with each other. “One Lord, one faith, one baptism (v. 5),” not many different faiths. That is not the kind of unity the Bible describes and it is not the kind of unity that will bring us to perfection.

Let us read the promise God makes in Isaiah 13:12: “I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” Do you think God wants perfection in his people? The Bible says he has given his Spirit to bestow these gifts so that his people can have perfection. The fine wedge of Ophir was the most pure gold the people knew of and God will make a man more pure than that.

God will not only purify an individual this way but he will also purify a whole nation. Isaiah 26:2 speaks of this righteous nation: “Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.” There are twelve gates of pearl to that city and God will have a righteous nation that keeps his commandments, not just a few people here and there, entering in through those gates. God has thousands who are keeping his commandments even today, but in the end he will have a group of people the Bible describes as the 144,000 who will keep his commandments perfectly in his sight. They will be a people without fault and without guile. They will have been brought to perfection, at least in part, by the gifts of the Spirit. Adventists speak of reaching the four corners of the world with missionaries and that needs to be done, but that will be in vain without the work of character perfection within us. “When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69).” God will show that the sinless life of Christ was not a singular event. Having victory over sinful flesh is not to be something unique with Jesus. God will show that he will have a whole nation of people who will have that same victory over sinful flesh as they allow Christ to live in them and reproduce the miracle that began in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago.

The Gift of Apostleship

There are five different gifts. The first of these gifts in Ephesians 4:11 is that of being an apostle. The word apostle is translated from the Greek word *apostolos* which simply means one who is sent with authority or an ambassador. In Luke 6:13 we read: “And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.” He called them apostles. Now let us look at Luke 9:1: “Then he called his twelve disciples together [the apostles mentioned in Luke 6], and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.” He gave them two things—power and authority. The word power is the Greek word *dunamis* which means active and mighty power, and the word authority in Greek is *exousia* which is translated in many places as “power” but it means power in the sense of delegated authority. Jesus gave the apostles authority and he gave them power to be his representatives among the people. *Apostolos* is the word that Josephus, the Jewish historian, uses when speaking of the ambassadors the Jews sent as their representatives to Rome. You can read this in *Antiquities*, chapter 17, p. 11, para. 1. The New Testament uses this term to denote a very select group of people. There is only a handful of people outside of the twelve disciples that became apostles that are designated as apostles in the New Testament. The first twelve apostles are listed as: “Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor (Luke 6:14-16).”

In Acts chapter 1 we have the story of the election of Matthias to take the place of Judas. Concerning Matthias, Peter, the ever-ready spokesperson said: "That he may take part of this ministry and *apostleship*, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles (vs. 25, 26)." This is a faithful and accurate record of what they did. The Bible does not say that the Holy Spirit inspired them to do this, and we do not know that God selected Matthias. Ellen White has said: "I have no faith in casting lots. We have in the Bible a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in regard to all church duties. . . . I would say to the members of the church in _____, 'Read your Bibles with much prayer. Do not try to humble others, but humble yourselves before God, and deal gently with one another. To cast lots for the officers of the church is not in God's order. Let men of responsibility be called upon to select the officers of the church' (*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 328)." I would like to propose that they may have chosen someone to replace Judas prematurely and that God cast his lot upon Paul as Judas' replacement. The Bible is a faithful record of what happened, but it does not say that they were inspired to do this.

Paul claimed to be an apostle. He was an apostle born out of due time (1 Corinthians 15:8). Romans 1:1 says: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an *apostle*, separated unto the gospel of God." Acts 14:14 says: "Which when the *apostles*, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out." They rent their clothes because the people had begun to worship Barnabas and Paul as Greco-Roman gods. In this verse Barnabas is called an apostle. 1 Thessalonians 1:1, coupled with chapter 2 verse 6, tells us that Silas and Timothy were also apostles. Galatians 1:19 says that James the brother of the Lord was called an apostle.

Looking closely in a few more verses we discover others who were apostles. Second Corinthians 8:23 says: "Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers [*apostolos*] of the churches, and the glory of Christ." The word "messengers" is the same Greek word that is translated apostle elsewhere. Philippians 2:25 states: "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your messenger [*apostolos*], and he that ministered to my wants." The Greek word for "messenger" is *apostolos* and means an apostle. So, here we have, counting the original twelve apostles, nineteen men that are clearly called apostles. That is not very many.

Prophecy

In Ephesians 4:11 prophets are mentioned as the next gift. The Greek word for prophet is *prophetes* which means an inspired speaker or, as we noted earlier in our texts from Acts and Samuel, one who speaks for God and the one in whose

mouth God puts his Spirit and his words. The word *prophetes* literally means a worshipper who makes known.

The gift of prophecy is profusely mentioned in the New Testament and the Old Testament prophesied that this gift would be present during the times of the apostles and until the return of Jesus.

Malachi 4:5 states: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." This found a fulfillment in John the Baptist. Jesus said, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come (Matthew 11:13, 14)." We also know that this was only a partial fulfillment and that there is to be an additional fulfillment of this prophecy for "the great and dreadful day of the LORD" has not yet come.

The prophecy of Joel 2:28, 29 plainly speaks of God's Spirit being poured out upon all flesh at the end of time. Peter applied these verses to the events of Pentecost. This was the early rain experience, but there was also to be a latter rain experience (Joel 2:23).

All the writers of the New Testament had the gift of prophecy, as well as other people such as Zacharias (Luke 1:67), Simeon (Luke 2:25, 26), Anna (Luke 2:36), Agabus (Acts 11:28; 21:10), Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen (Acts 13:1), Judas, Silas (Acts 15:32), and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8, 9).

Evangelists

Evangelists are listed third in Ephesians 4:11. The word for evangelist is taken from a Greek expression upon which our term *gospel* is built. It simply means one who proclaims or gives the good news. In the middle of the word *evangelist* we have the word *angel*, which means messenger. Philip the evangelist was the same that we know of as Philip the deacon. He gave the good word of God to others. Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist in 2 Timothy 4:5.

Pastors and Teachers

The fourth and fifth gifts are pastors and teachers and they are together because a pastor has to be someone who can teach. There are people who teach who may not be pastors, but a pastor needs to be able to teach. The Greek word for pastor (*poimen*) simply means shepherd and it is translated as such in John 10:11: "I am the good shepherd." The Greek word for teacher simply means one who can teach; therefore, a pastor is a shepherd who must be able to teach.

This is a brief overview of these five gifts. What I have found very interesting is how these gifts are emphasized in the book of Revelation. Revelation is a book about last day events, so let us notice how these gifts are mentioned in the book of Revelation, which begins by saying:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John (Revelation 1:1).

Now, all the things mentioned obviously have not yet come to pass, but as we look at the different gifts that are mentioned in Ephesians 4 and then read about them in the book of Revelation, we may be able to understand the importance of some of them, especially as we come down to the end of time. Interestingly, the gift of pastors is not mentioned at all in the book of Revelation. That does not mean that there are not to be pastors in the last days because in Ephesians we read that God was going to give these gifts until everything was finally perfected. There are clearly places for ministers, for gospel workers, and for teachers, but they are not listed anywhere in the book of Revelation. Evangelists are not listed in the book of Revelation, but the concept of the evangelist clearly is. Right in the very beginning of the three angels' messages you have the three angels flying in the midst of heaven and they are evangelists, if you please. They are giving a message that is worldwide in proclamation.

Apostles are mentioned in Revelation 2:2: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." There will always be people who claim to have gifts and who claim to be called of God to do a certain work. Jesus commends the church at Ephesus because they tried some of the people who claimed to be apostles but were only liars. They tried them by comparing what they taught with the Word of God.

Revelation 18:20 speaks of the fall of Babylon: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." There are apostles that are to rejoice, as well as prophets, over the fall of Babylon and that God has avenged them.

In Revelation 21:14 we are told that the wall of the Holy City has twelve foundations which contain the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. While the book of Revelation only makes a few references to the concept of apostleship, it only implies evangelists, and it does not even mention pastors or teachers, it does place a heavy emphasis on the gift of prophecy.

Revelation 10 is a very important chapter to Seventh-day Adventist people because part of it describes the experience of the Advent people in 1844. Notice what verse 7 says: "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets," and we know that "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21)." Seventh-day Adventists believe that the expression *the mystery of God* refers to the giving of the message of the gospel and this verse says that God prophesied by his servants the prophets that this giving of the gospel would happen.

There is a prophecy in Revelation 11 that speaks of two prophets: "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice

over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth (v. 10)." In earlier verses we learn that these two prophets had been killed and their bodies had lain in the street. Then in verse 11 we read: "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them." Now, there is a difference of opinion about who these two prophets are and what they represent, but the point I am making is the fact that prophets are mentioned.

Revelation 18:24 is an interesting verse that concerns Babylon and end time events: "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Babylon has slain the prophets and the saints and will have to give an account for this. Also, as noted earlier, Revelation 18:20 speaks of apostles.

Revelation 12:17 states: "And the dragon [Satan—v. 9] was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Now, what does the word *wroth* mean? It means angry. The Greek word is still used in its basic form in the French language as *choler*, and it means fierce anger, the kind of anger in which one would pick up a chair and smash it over someone's head. Satan "went to make war with the remnant of her seed." Satan is enraged with the woman but in the end time what really enrages the dragon is the remnant. What does the Bible say about the remnant? It says they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:10 defines the testimony of Jesus. John had been shown many wonderful things by this angel, was quite awed by it, and fell at the angel's feet to worship him. Notice what the angel said unto him: "And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have *the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*"

Jesus makes his Word known to us today through the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy. This gift involves not only the things that have been written in the past as we read in the Bible, but it also involves the gift of being a prophet today. In Revelation 22:6 we read: "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." In verse 8 John started to fall down and worship the angel again and in verse 9 we read: "Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not." The ones who are the closest to God, who stand by his throne and bring us messages, are the ones who are the quickest to take no glory to themselves. They want all the glory to go to God. The angel, and I believe this angel was Gabriel, said not to worship him, "for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God (v. 9)." He said here and in Revelation 19:10 that the brethren of John are the prophets: "See thou do it not: I am

thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren.” The angel said he was of the brethren of John, and these brethren have the testimony of Jesus.

As Seventh-day Adventists we believe that God has especially manifested the gift of prophecy to us through many different means. The Spirit of Prophecy is not just a set of writings, but it is also the coming of the Holy Spirit upon human instrumentalities, endowing them with power and authority to speak for Jesus and to give his testimony. Even though we have a broad concept of how this gift works, and perhaps it should be broader in some respects, we also believe in a very specific application of this gift. God’s people thought they had a correct understanding of the prophecy of Daniel 8 in 1844, but they were sorely disappointed when they realized they had been mistaken. After their disappointment, God raised up a very special individual, Ellen Harmon, who later married James White and became Ellen G. White, and through her God manifested the testimony of Jesus in a very significant way. Through her ministry and her writings, the people of God in these last days have been greatly benefited. It is true that there are issues and there are things we do not understand concerning Ellen White and her writings that we may not fully understand this side of the second coming of Jesus, but one of the great characteristics that we see in God’s remnant people is that they do, indeed, have the testimony of Jesus. If Ellen White does not fit this description, then I do not think we have ever had anyone who could fit this description among us as a people.

Do I believe that Ellen White was a prophetess because she said that she had been given visions and because she said Jesus spoke to her? No, this is not sufficient of itself. There are many people who make such claims. Joseph Smith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) made many similar claims, but the *Pearl of Great Price*, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Book of Mormon* are not inspired by God, and simply because Joseph Smith said they were does not make it true. I believe that Ellen White was a prophetess of God because the evidence is there. If you look at the Bible evidence for a prophet or prophetess and you compare it with the life and the teachings of Ellen White and her experience, I believe that it is clearly seen that she was used of God as his messenger.

Now, was Ellen White impeccable? No, she herself said that “God alone is infallible (*The Review & Herald*, March 25, 1890).” The book of Revelation shows us the importance of the gift of prophecy and God has blessed his people with it in these last days. It is a gift that is to be with God’s people. It is true that God has given us everything we need in the Scripture. Sometimes people will say when they are studying a topic, “Well, we do not want to hear what Ellen White has to say about it. All we want to know is what the Bible says.” It is true that we should be able to understand all of our doctrines right from the Bible and I believe that we can, but this does not mean that we are to disregard gifts that God gives us.

Most people do not have any problem with someone working as an evangelist, and theoretically we could say that we do not need an evangelist in the strictest sense because we have the Bible and we can read the Bible for ourselves. In fact, if you read the writings of John you will find that he says we need not any man to teach us, for we have that unction within us (1 John 2:20, 27). God knew, however, that we would need the gift of evangelism because people would not use the Bible as they could. He knew that people would not be diligent in these last days and would need evangelists to share the truths of the Bible to awaken their souls that there is a heaven to win and a hell to shun, so he gave this gift to his church.

God knew that we would need pastors and shepherds to help us in our times of discouragement and in times of disunity to help us come together and work as a cohesive group. He knew that the church would need administrators to oversee the work and help it, so he gave us apostles. We do not begrudge these gifts today, but when it comes to the gift of prophecy we find Satan especially on guard against it. The Bible says in Revelation 12:17 that Satan would war against the remnant because they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. This tells us that Satan hates the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. He wars against the remnant that have these things, so we should expect to see, beloved, a great warring against this gift in these last days.

In the time of Elijah there was a great spiritual drought and God’s people worshipped Baal. Did Elijah really need to come on the scene? Was not everything the Israelites needed in the Torah and could not everything have been corrected by reading the Torah? Well, in a sense everything they needed was available, if they had taken time to have read it and if they had allowed the Spirit of God to impress it upon their hearts. Everything those people needed to deliver them from Baal worship was in the Torah, but it did not happen, so God sent them a prophet. I do not think any of us today would be so unwise to say that the children of Israel should have disregarded Elijah. We would all say it was a good thing that God sent Elijah.

Let us consider the prophet Jahaziel. We usually do not think of him because he is not often mentioned by name in the Bible, but we read about him in 2 Chronicles 20 in the story of Jehoshapat, King of Judah. The Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites had come against Judah and Jerusalem to make war against the children of God and to destroy them. Jehoshapat did not know how Israel would defend itself against this great company, but he knew the best thing he could do was to seek God. Jehoshapat humbled himself and prayed, and he brought the people together to fast and pray. In verse 12 we read part of Jehoshapat’s prayer: “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.” Beloved,

many times in our lives we will not know what to do. We will not know how to order our lives. We will not know where to go or what to do, but if we will put our eyes upon God, he will know. Notice how God chose to answer these people. He did not say read Deuteronomy 32:32 in the Torah. He did not say go back to an Old Testament Scripture. He sent them a prophet.

And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; And he said, Harken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you (2 Chronicles 20:13-17).

The Spirit of Prophecy came upon Jahaziel and he gave the testimony that Jesus had for these people at that time. Now, if they had not followed his testimony, what do you think would have happened? We can only conjecture, but I do not think, friends, that God would have worked a great miracle if they had not followed what the prophet had told them to do. The good news is that the leader believed the prophet and encouraged the people also to believe.

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high. And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. (2 Chronicles 20:18-22).

A catastrophic situation was at the doorstep knocking at Judah's door. The people appealed to God, saying "Our eyes are upon you." God sent them word through a prophet, and they obeyed the words of the prophet. God then brought a

great victory to them. Jehoshaphat said, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established," and then he said something interesting, "*Believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*" The word translated *believe* is the Hebrew word *aman* or *amen*. That word means to be built upon, to be established. He says, "You build upon and establish yourself in the prophets and you will prosper." Isaiah gives a prophecy of God's last-day remnant people:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the *remnant of his people*, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:11, 12).

Notice what he says about the remnant in verse 16: "And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." The Bible says that there is going to be highway for this remnant and this highway is going to be something like it was for the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt. Would you like to know what that highway was? Would you like to know what it was that God did for the children of Israel as he brought them out of Egypt that he is going to do for his remnant people in the end time? Well, the Bible tells us in Hosea 12:13: "And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved." How did God take the children of Israel out of Egypt? By a prophet. How did he preserve them? By a prophet. How is God going to lead out his remnant in the end? By a prophet. And how is he going to preserve them? By a prophet.

Beloved, both the Old and the New Testament speak of prophetic guidance to be restored to God's people to lead them through the final conflicts of this earth's history and we are living in a time when we need it now more than ever. We are living in a time when every wind of doctrine that can blow is blowing. There are many teachings that have an outward semblance of truth but when examined are like empty eggshells. They have something on the outside but nothing on the inside, and some of them are so strange and bizarre you wonder how anyone could accept them. It is like I was told once: "If you will get a drum, start beating it, and go down the street, after awhile *someone* will follow you." That is the way human nature is. Some people will follow anything that is going and coming, but brethren, it does not have to be so with us. If we will follow what God has given to us as a people, we will not be ensnared by any wind of false doctrine.


Ellen White mentions three teachings that will serve as anchors to hold God's people. One is the Sabbath, another is the state of the dead, and the third is the Spirit of Prophecy, the testimony of Jesus.

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).

The purpose of an anchor is to keep the boat from drifting. You place the boat where you want it to be and then let the anchor down. The anchor is usually heavy and it may have hooked ends on it to grab onto rock or debris so that it cannot be pulled away easily. The anchor keeps us from drifting, and beloved we do not want to be drifting about in a wild ocean of doctrine without chart or compass. We do have an anchor, and God has given to us as a people a chart and compass. In addition to the work of Ellen White in 1888, God saw that the church was starting to drift as if without chart or compass (*The Review & Herald*, July 24, 1888), and so "the Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91)." He gave us a map to show us where to go, but a map by itself is not very helpful. You also need a compass, but a compass also does not do much good without a map. You need both and God has given us not only a chart and a compass, but also an anchor through the ministry of the testimony of Jesus. Beloved, sometimes we disregard it openly and think that we are wiser than the testimony of Jesus, but we need to be very, very, very careful because we cannot disregard the testimony of Christ with impunity. We might think that times have changed and that we are more intelligent now, but that is not true. Compared to God, our intelligence is in the negative category and we need to remember that it is the Spirit of God through Christ that gives us this testimony.

Revelation 1:1 tells us how inspiration came to John. God gave it to Jesus, Jesus gave it to his angel and the angel gave it to the prophet to give to the people. Ultimately, all revelation, all wisdom, all understanding is from the Father himself and he has imparted this to his Son for us. First Corinthians 1 tells us that Christ is the wisdom of God for us: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and *the wisdom of God* (v. 24)," and then in verse 30 we read: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us *wisdom*, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." In Proverbs 8 Christ is mentioned under the symbol of wisdom, but even this wisdom was brought forth by the Father. The testimony of Jesus is of God, and when we disregard the testimony of Jesus, friends, we are not only disregarding Jesus, we are disregarding God, and that is a crime equal to treason. God cannot excuse it or forgive it if we do not repent of it. If we decide that we can carve our own path and do our own thing, then friends we are going to be lost. It is just that simple. We cannot disregard what God has given us. We are to believe in the Lord our God and be established. We are to believe his prophets and so shall we prosper.

God has given spiritual gifts to his church. We read about those gifts in Ephesians 4 and each one of the gifts is

important. None of them are to be disregarded and set aside, especially in these last days. According to the book of Revelation, we see that the gift of prophecy is a very important gift and that it is given to help God's people. The very fact that Satan wars so greatly against it speaks of its importance. Think about this: You may occasionally hear it said that we do not need ministers but it is not often said, and you do not often hear people say there is no need for apostles, evangelists, and teachers, but what about prophets and the gift of prophecy? You hear it said more often: "Oh, we don't need that." Or, "I don't need *that* prophet. I don't need *this* woman." Satan is behind this, friends. Satan knows how valuable the gift of prophecy is to us as a people; therefore, he is trying his best to get us off track from the very path and course that we need. He is trying to destroy us, but we cannot let that happen. I want to encourage each one to stay close to the Lord at this time and to allow his testimony to work in each of our lives. 

The Wondrous Love of God

By Daisy Albertson

Q: How can I know if God and his Son, Jesus, really love us?

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

Q: Who has everlasting life?

A: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36)."

Q: Who did Christ die for? How do we know that God loves us?

A: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)."

Q: Does God want us to die for our sins?

A: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)."

Q: What is sin and how can we know for a certainty that God forgives us our sins?

A: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4)."

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)."

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isaiah 1:18)."

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23)."

Script Introduction for New Video on EGW and the Godhead

(We are currently working on an in-depth video presentation on Ellen G. White and the Godhead for the Good News About God series. The following is an edited transcript of the introduction to the presentation. We hope to have DVDs ready by camp meeting but, as in all things, as the Lord wills. Editor)

Welcome to the eleventh video in the series, “The Good News About God.” This special series has been designed to help us to know who God is and to know him better, so that we might be the kind of people that he wants us to be, and to be in the place he wants us to be.

In this series we have two different editions. There is a non-Adventist version which deals with the different topics exclusively from the Bible, and there is an Adventist version which includes counsels and thoughts from the pen of Ellen G. White, as well as historical materials of the Advent Movement and statements from the writings of the Advent pioneers.

This particular presentation is produced only in an Adventist version. It is designed to look exclusively at the teachings of Ellen G. White, a very special servant of God. But who was Ellen White?

Adventists are probably all familiar, to a degree, with the life of Ellen Gould White. The older we are, the more we may have been exposed to her testimonies and instructions, as well as to her frailties and struggles. Likewise, the younger we are, the more we have to gain from a study of her life and works.

Adventists should feel greatly indebted to the wonderful gift of inspiration God bestowed upon her and for the counsel she gave under the inspiration of his Spirit. If we will read and study these testimonies and submit to the counsel God gives us through them, our lives will be changed in a wonderful and marvelous way. Through them, we are better molded into the image of the Saviour she loved so dearly.

It is true that God has used many other men and women who have lived lives of steadfast integrity to help his people maintain their walk with Christ. These workers have fulfilled their duties in large and small ways. They have helped their fellow men and women along the pathway of righteousness. The influence of such men and women of the past continues to affect our own lives as their words and actions inspire and constrain us to follow the straight and narrow path. We can read every day of the lives of giants such as Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Paul. Their staunch dedication to truth harkens down to us through the ages and it is a great treasure to be able to hold their inspired understandings of truth in our

hands today and then apply these truths in the decisions we make for holiness and for disinterested benevolence. Such great words as: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4),” “Come now and let us reason together (Isaiah 1:18),” “I have loved thee with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3),” and “The just shall live by faith (Romans 1:17)” reverberate in our hearts today in the same way as they must have spoken to the hearts of our spiritual ancestors.

In the life of Ellen White, however, because of our vast wealth of biographical knowledge of her, we have the opportunity to see, in a deeper and clearer way, how the grace of God as he worked through her, can transform and enable a life for dedication and devotion to him. In no other life of God’s giants have we been permitted to see so much of the day-by-day life of a true servant of God as we can see in the life of Ellen White.

At age fourteen she was baptized into the Methodist Church and at eighteen she married James Springer White. Soon after their marriage they read the tract of Joseph Bates *The Seventh-day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign* and became Sabbath-keepers. Sister White wrote forty books in her lifetime and today, with compilations, there are over one hundred titles available. She wrote more than 5,000 articles for church periodicals and more than 50,000 pages of manuscript, some of which we have access to today. She is the most translated woman writer in the entire history of literature and the most translated American author of either gender. *Steps to Christ*, for example, has been printed in more than 140 languages. She received nearly 2,000 visions and dreams during her lifetime, experiencing her first vision at age seventeen. Of what other servant of God can this be said? More importantly, however, is the content of her writings and of her visions and dreams. She was given counsel which provided for the sure and steady growth of the Advent Movement. Her teachings from God are varied and balanced and were given to prepare a people for the return of Jesus physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Some may have been exposed to her for so long that it is very possible she is taken for granted. Her monumental health message is often put on a back burner. The sweeping events of the last days were opened before her and she unflinchingly shared them with us, but, alas, few really take them to heart. With the inroads of worldliness some of the Advent people have been enticed away from their pilgrimage on the straight and narrow path to a journey on a broad and pleasant highway leading to a life that was unknown to our

sweet messenger of God. The knowledge of the true God, the importance of prayer, the great gift of salvation, our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, the vital necessity of total submission to God, the eight laws of health, healthful and modest dress, the Christian's responsibility for mental improvement, the exalted and sacred relationship of marriage, the need for the will to control emotions, and the high and holy mission of parenting are all watered-down subjects to most of us today. Watered-down because worldly philosophy has permeated them all, but this need not continue to be.

It is to strengthen our understanding of the gift of prophecy and to encourage our faith in the precious promises God has given us in the Scripture and through the ministry of Ellen White that we are sharing this background information on her. It is the hope and prayer of each one of us at Smyrna Gospel Ministries that the great blessing we have received and continue to receive from her words will live with vitality in your hearts and minds.

James and Ellen White devoted their lives to the establishment and strengthening of the Advent Movement. Snow did not stop them, swollen rivers did not deter them, and rain and sleet were accepted as their traveling companions. They traveled by foot, train, horse and buggy, and even by covered wagon to reach their destinations. Though often weary and sometimes ill, they continued to press on, knowing God was a continual source of strength in time of need.

Many witnessed Ellen White while in vision and saw how Elder White cared for her when she came out of vision. Sometimes she was too overwhelmed by what she saw to express it to those present at the time and Elder White would tenderly take her to a place of rest. She often arose early to write out what she had been given during the night. She never tired of speaking of the love of God for mankind, and she always encouraged men and women to deny self and follow him.

We are living in unsurpassed times that call for the most decided devotion to God and his cause, times that require each one of us to place both of our feet upon the rock of our salvation and turn from the allurements of the world. Brothers and sisters, we have great reason to rejoice. All that is needed for God to reproduce his lovely character in us through the Holy Spirit is within our grasp. God will use the great truths of the Bible and the words of counsel given through Ellen White to mold us if we allow him.

Some believe that, while supposedly under inspiration, Ellen White only reflected the thinking of others. These detractors cite her views on health reform as an example. We respond that she remained consistent with her messages over decades regardless of the changes the culture made around her.

There are those who voice concerns that it was her head injury when she was nine years old that caused her to have "fits" throughout her life and this damage to her brain was the reason she had visions and dreams. Instead of receiving

them from God, they are considered a figment of her own brain activity. To this we reply that her brain activity did not result in any *unrighteous* figments over the seventy-plus years that followed her injury, which is what we would expect to see in any person not under the control of the Holy Spirit.

To the many who are concerned that she copied her materials from other sources and therefore her writings cannot be relied upon to have been inspired by God, we are reminded of Willie White's presentation in Takoma Hall, the town meeting hall in Takoma Park, Maryland, where Seventh-day Adventist church meetings were then held. On December 17, 1905, Willie White stated: "I was reading Wylie's *History of Protestantism*, telling about the experience of the Roman armies coming against the Hungarians, and how a large body of persecutors would see a little body of Protestants and become frightened and beat a hasty retreat. As I read it to Mother she interrupted me and told a lot of things in the pages ahead, and told me many things not in the book at all. She said, 'I never read about it, but that scene has been presented to me over and over again. I have seen the papal armies, and sometimes before they had come in sight of the Protestants, the angels of God would give them a representation of large armies that would make them flee.' I said, 'Why did you not put it into your book?' She said, 'I did not know where to put it.'" It is true there are passages in her works that correspond to passages of other authors, but these passages were chosen by Ellen White because they carefully reflected what she had been shown and the thoughts contained therein are thoughts that consistently inspire us to a better standard of Christian experience and to a closer walk with our Saviour.

And to those who raise objections that editors and publishers have altered her work, we acknowledge that, to a degree, this has been true, but we have the "weight of evidence" that she has counseled us to consult whenever there *seems* to be a discrepancy in her statements. We will, however, show that even in such seeming discrepancies we can discern the truth in her statements.

Seventh-day Adventists believe the Bible to be the standard of all of their teachings and doctrines and believe that the Bible is first and primary. In fact, Ellen White stated in the most important book she ever wrote:

God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms (*The Great Controversy*, p. 595).

This presentation is dedicated to clearly and succinctly explore Ellen White's understanding of the Godhead. So, what did this dear servant of God believe about this subject?

Ellen White grew up in the Trinitarian Methodist Church, but she lived and ministered to a distinctly non-Trinitarian movement for over seven decades. There is a great deal of

controversy over some of her pronouncements. On one hand, she wrote:

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,”— not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person (*The Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895).

And on the other hand, on page 530 of *The Desire of Ages* is found the famous and often-quoted statement:


In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.

How do we explain this? Unlike some people, we cannot and will not discount her as speaking from both sides of her mouth, for as we shall see, friends, there is too much evidence to the contrary.

Some believe that her theology went through an evolutionary process: At first she was a Trinitarian as a young girl in the Methodist Church, then a non-Trinitarian due to the influence of her husband and friends like Uriah Smith and others, and then she finally broke from the shackles of non-Trinitarian bondage and became a Trinitarian (or as theologians would say, she became an Anathasian.)

Some have said we can explain the apparent contradictions because her writings have been tampered with, perhaps by well-meaning people.

This presentation will clearly answer these questions and many more, so you may wish to gather pen and paper to take notes as we document the teachings of this special servant of God as they relate to God our Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and their Holy Spirit.

So, let us begin our journey into the writings of Ellen G. White. 

The only safety now is to search for the truth as revealed in the word of God, as for hid treasure. 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 (Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 300).

Last Call for the West Virginia Camp Meeting

This will be the last call for the West Virginia camp meeting June 12-16. We wish to encourage all to attend. We have been counseled that these gatherings should not be neglected:


Let all who possibly can, attend these yearly gatherings. All should feel that God requires this of them. If they do not avail themselves of the privileges which He has provided for them to become strong in Him and in the power of His grace, they will grow weaker and weaker, and have less and less desire to consecrate all to Him. Come, brethren and sisters, to these sacred convocation meetings, to find Jesus. He will come up to the feast; He will be present, and will do for you that which you need most to have done (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 600).

The camp meeting is one of the most important agencies in our work. It is one of the most effective methods of arresting the attention of the people and reaching all classes with the gospel invitation (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 31).

Our theme will be “Total Preparation for the Lord’s Coming.” 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.

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 other items such as bedding, flashlights, food, toiletries, and insect repellent. Let our dress and deportment be such as becomes Christians.

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 hopeful that my son Hans will be able to be here. Those of you who are acquainted with Hans know that there is nobody who loves to see the brothers and sisters more than Hans. Plan on coming and we will see you soon! 

Youth's Corner – Advisement (Part 1)

This time our story is about the big word *advisement*. Flora is in this story, and so are Bess, John, and William. I won't be able to tell you about all four of them this time, but we will start with Flora. Flora is a little girl about six years old, and she was helping her mother prepare for Sabbath. It was Friday and Flora was trying to do all the little things she could do to help. One of the things she needed to do was to take her bath and wash her hair before Sabbath. She was in the bathtub doing this when she heard her mother say, "I need to drive to the store for a few items. Do you want to go with me, Flora, or do you want to stay home with Daddy?" Flora was not sure, so she said she did not think so, but in a few minutes when she heard her mother getting ready to go, she decided, "Yes, I want to go!" So, out of the tub she hopped, she hurriedly dressed, and was ready to go to the store with mother! But, she had not done one thing. Can you think what she had not done? She had not washed her hair. When she came into the living room, mother could tell this had not been done, and so she asked her, "Did you wash your hair for Sabbath, Flora?" And Flora said, "Oh, no. I did not want to take time because I knew you were in a hurry to get to the store. I did not want to slow you down, so I decided that it would be best if I just got out of the tub and dressed quickly." Then mother said, "Well Flora, it would have been better if you had asked my *advice* about what to do instead of deciding of your own. I know you were trying to help me by not slowing me down, but if you had asked my *advice*, I would have told you, "Let's quickly wash your hair now and then we can go to the store. You will have to go back to the bathroom and wash your hair before we can go to the store. By making decisions on your own without my *advisement*, you have actually slowed us both down." And that is just what Flora did. She returned to the bathroom and mother helped her wash her hair. So, Flora learned what advice is and that it is best to ask advice when you are not quite sure what to do, and even if you think you are sure about what to do, when you have been told to do something like Flora had been told, you need to get permission before you do otherwise.

Now, the next person in our story is Bess. Bess lived a few hundred years ago and her real name was Queen Elizabeth. She was known as Good Queen Bess, and in a lot of ways she was a very good queen. One day Sir John came to see Good Queen Bess. Sir John told Queen Bess about what he was doing with his ships. His ships were sailing across the ocean to a country far from England. When the ships arrived, his men would fill up his ships with people they had captured from the villages and bring the men, women, and children back across the ocean to be sold as slaves. When Queen Bess heard this, she said, "Oh! That is terrible! You should not do this to other people. You should not take them against their will and put them in your huge ship, lying them on their sides

pushed up tightly against each other so that as many people as possible could be brought back. It is a very awful thing you are doing, Sir John. It is wrong!"

Was Queen Bess right when she said that? Yes, she was very right. You never take anyone against his will and sell him. People belong to God, not to other people. Queen Bess was very upset about what she heard, but Sir John said, "I would like to *advise* you, and I will be right back." Then he left Queen Bess and went back to his office where he picked up his big accounting books. He carried the books back to Good Queen Bess and opened them. He showed them to Queen Bess and said, "See how much money I am making by selling people to other people as slaves? I am making a *huge* amount of money!"

Queen Bess looked at the books and she saw that Sir John *was* making a lot of money by capturing people and then selling them as slaves, and she started to think about his advice that she should do the same thing. England had many debts and had a large Navy to maintain. It *was* true that England needed money. Sir John advised Queen Bess to change her mind and she listened to his advice. When you seek advice, the advice you receive may not always be good advice. Sir John told her she needed to change her mind because a great deal of money could be made that would help England, and do you know what Queen Bess did? She changed her mind. In fact, she even gave Sir John one of her very big ships for him to use as a slave ship, a ship that would take people in chains against their will from their homes and sell them to other people. Not only were these slaves taken to the West Indies and sold, but Sir John even brought them here to America!

Queen Bess is known as being a good queen for England, but in this case she made a very bad decision. She was given very bad advice, and I am very sorry to say she made this decision because of the *money* she could make.

Flora did not seek advice about how to best use her time in getting ready for Sabbath, and her mother taught her that she *should* seek advice. At first Queen Bess thought slavery was horrible and that Sir John was doing a very bad thing, but after listening to his advice, she changed her mind and did not think it was such a bad thing after all.

The next person in our story is William; however, I will have to tell you about him next time, but William did something very important about the problem of slavery in England, just like President Abraham Lincoln did something very important about slavery in America.

Boys and girls, please remember that it is very good to seek advice when you are not sure what to do or before you do something differently from what you have been told, but you must seek advice from good people, and the best place to seek advice is from God and his Word. When you need to

make decisions, God will help you to make the right ones. If you are a young person like Flora, you need to seek advice from your parents and from other adults in your life, and you also need to pray, for this is one way to seek advice from God. If Queen Bess had sought God's advice about slavery by reading his Word and in prayer, maybe, just maybe, she would have made a different decision and would have saved many people from a very sorrowful life. ... *To be continued*

Onysha Holt

Question from a Youth

Eating in Restaurants on Sabbath

Question: What is wrong with eating at a restaurant on Sabbath if I use a credit card to pay for the meal since I will not be paying for the bill on Sabbath? Besides, it saves us the of work cooking and cleaning, thereby helping us to keep the Sabbath better. I don't see much difference between this and using a prepaid parkway pass on the Sabbath. What do you think?

Reply: Dear Friend, you have a good question and it is reasonable to think that many others may have wondered about this as well. Let me make it clear that what I think about any matter is not important. What is important is what the Word of God says. Before I go straight to your question, I think that we would be wise to consider the basic concept of the Sabbath. I would then like to reflect on the principle in general of eating at a restaurant on Sabbath and then consider the use of a credit card for payment. Finally, I will share some thoughts about using a prepaid pass on toll roads.

The Sabbath was instituted by God just after creation:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made (Genesis 2:1-3).

This resting of God had nothing to do with him being physically tired. This rest was a cessation of his work and labors. Rest and work are concepts not exactly like light and darkness, but they build off of each other in the same manner. Rather than trying to define darkness, we simply define it by the absence of light. Rest is something that is actually dependent upon work. God could rest because he was no longer working. During this time God could have special fellowship with man. In Exodus 31:17 we read: "On the seventh day he [God] rested, and was refreshed." The experience of resting from his labors and fellowshiping with man was refreshing to God. For this refreshing to take place, common activity must cease so that the fellowship between God and mankind may begin without interruption. God wants that refreshing experience of fellowship with

undivided attention from and to mankind to continue each week. This is true Sabbath-keeping. Interestingly, physical rest was not an issue in the beginning before sin entered into the world.

Now, how does maintaining our physical needs relate to the Sabbath? Let us notice what the commandment states:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it (Exodus 20:8-11).

We are to labor for the first six days of the week, but we are to rest with our Father and Christ on the seventh day. The wording of the commandment appears to be given to fathers and mothers and it not only prohibits them from working, but also their sons, daughters, all servants, and even animals. This should be a clue to the issue of eating at restaurants on Sabbath. While we might truly be spared the work of preparing food and cleaning up thereafter, we have shifted that burden to someone else. Doing so does not show we love our brothers as ourselves and violates the principle of the golden rule: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets (Matthew 7:12)." If we do not wish to be a cook, a cleaner, and a servant on the Sabbath, we should not wish others to do so for us.

This reminds me of something I read recently on a website concerning certain orthodox Jews' observance of the Sabbath. Some of the orthodox Jews allow the use of electricity during the Sabbath hours, but it must be turned on before the Sabbath. For example, bathroom night lights must be turned on before sundown. An air conditioner may not be turned on during the Sabbath, but if a Gentile were visiting in the home the Jewish person could suggest it was getting very hot, hoping that the Gentile would offer to turn on the air conditioner. If a Gentile turned it on without being asked to do so, the Jewish person incurred no guilt. I hope that we can easily see the hypocrisy in this and that it will help us to understand the whole matter better.

So now we see that, in principle, eating at a restaurant is not the thing to do on Sabbath, but what about eating? Are we to always fast on Sabbath? No, God does not expect this. The Sabbath commandment tells us that we have six days to do our work and that includes food preparation for the Sabbath. Cooking that which is not necessary is to be avoided on the Sabbath. "To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seeth (Exodus 16:23)." Food of a simple nature can be prepared and, when necessary, heated or warmed up. We have been counseled by God through Ellen White:

All needful preparation should be made beforehand. On Sabbath morning, if the weather is cool, let hot gruel, or something equally simple, be provided, and for dinner some kind of food may be warmed. Further than this, all cooking should be avoided as a violation of the Sabbath command (*The Gospel of Health*, April 1, 1898).

Now, there is another part of your question we need to consider and it really covers many applications. What about buying things using a credit card on the Sabbath since cash does not exchange hands? Money is actually a “medium of exchange.” The concept of money came about when bartering became impractical. Money can be gold dust, coins, tree bark, checks, credit cards or anything that is used as a “medium of exchange.” Actually money is only money because we believe it is so and accept it to be so. In Germany after World War II, the German Deutschmark was considered worthless because there was no legitimate government to back it up. A full wheelbarrow could not buy even the simplest of things. If we use a credit card, we are still making a

trade at that time in the name of the bank that it is drawn on. We then simply use another time to compensate the bank that the credit card is drawn from.

What about the issue of using a prepaid pass for driving on toll roads? Many of these passes are designed to be used an unlimited amount of times during the period it is paid for (usually quarterly or yearly). In this case an account is not charged each time the pass is used; instead, a computer simply checks to see if the pass is valid, and if it is the driver receives a “green light” to proceed. Since the pass can be purchased before Sabbath and no labor is needed to use it, then we believe that it should be viewed in a different light than the use of credit cards. Most toll roads that use prepaid electronic passes do need attendants to manage the gates. This is all done automatically without the need for workers, but if you feel that using such a prepaid pass violates your conscience, then by no means use one, for according to Romans 14:23 it is wrong to violate our consciences.

Pastor Allen

Thoughts on the Current Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (Quarterly)

By Allen Stump

Although we have not commented for several months on the quarterly study guides, this month there are some issues of interest or concern within the current lessons that we want to bring to the attention of our readers.

It is not our goal to find fault or criticize the *Study Guide* or its writers. Many of the thoughts in the current *Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* are very good and helpful and stress the Bible and its teachings. We have written this article, however, because we believe that there are a few places where an additional perspective will be of value to our readers.

Lesson 9, The Bible and Health – Seventh-day Adventists have been leaders in following a holistic approach to health and the care of people; therefore, it is not surprising to find a lesson in the quarterly devoted to the subject of the Bible and good health. The Bible has much excellent counsel on a holistic approach to health and, although Adventist founding member Captain Joseph Bates was quick to learn and teach temperance from the Bible, as a denomination it was the messages of instruction and encouragement that God sent by Ellen White that propelled us on the Bible pathway of good health.

While the topic for this study guide is the Word of God and the lessons are to be Bible centered, no mention is made in the standard student’s edition of the eight laws of health given by God through Ellen White. This is of concern to us, especially when we read in the student edition on the first page of lesson 9: “Although the foundational goals and

values of health from a biblical perspective are conveyed through God’s Word, the exact means of achieving these goals has come largely from *medical science*.” (Emphasis supplied.) In 1905 we were told: “Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 127).” The teacher’s edition, however, does mention these eight laws of health, and we hope that all teachers will realize that these principles brought out in the Spirit of Prophecy are also brought out in the Bible either directly or indirectly.

It is correct that true science agrees with the Bible, but we do not need “medical science” to teach us the methods of proper living. For the student who will search the Scriptures, the plan is already there. The right and wrong of “medical science” changes frequently. Even in my lifetime I have seen many changes of opinion in “medical science” about what is good for a person. For example, not long ago coconut oil was considered one of the unhealthiest oils one could eat, but today some believe that it is one of the finest oils to use, especially when used in frying foods. Some “health reformers” have advocated a diet devoid of any oil, but this is not according to the Bible. Oil was given to God’s people and he even supplied it for the widow of a prophet to sell to pay off debts. (See 2 Kings 4.) People in remote areas without certain *educational advantages*, as well as those in times past, have found the Bible to be all sufficient for helping them to have an understanding of how to live a healthy life style.

On what might be considered a technical matter, we wish to bring out a point from the student lesson on Monday, May 28, where we read: “So clear is the affinity in the New

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An Instructive Letter

We recently received this letter from Brother Wilbur Hargreaves, which he wrote after receiving a copy of the book *Defending the Godhead* by Vance Ferrell. Wilbur has waited patiently for a reply, but to date has not received one. He sent us a copy of his letter, thinking it would be of interest to our readers and we believe it will. The following letter has been slightly edited for clarification. Editor

December 21, 2006

Dear Brother Vance,

Thank you for a copy of your book *Defending the Godhead*. I have not read it completely yet, but wish to make some observations.

I decided to first reread what the Bible says on the term “Godhead.” I find that the apostle Paul is the only one who ever used the term. It is first introduced in Acts 17. Luke records what Paul said to the Athenians on Mars Hill. Reading carefully, I find that the words “God” and “Godhead” are used synonymously; and reading in context, I find that throughout these verses (verses 22-31) “God” is spoken of as “singular” 17 times, and it is very evident when reading verse 31, in the context of the preceding verses, that this God or Godhead, is none other than the Father! Surely a careful reading of these verses will establish this fact or conclusion.

I then read Romans chapter 1, where Paul uses the term the second time. Here, the first three verses clearly set forth the distinction between “God” and “His Son,” so that every time thereafter, when we read the word “God,” we know it is referring to “the Father.” This is the only way these verses can be read “in context.” (A text taken out of context becomes a pretext.) So when we come to verse 20 and read, “His eternal power and Godhead,” we can rightfully conclude that this verse, in harmony with the preceding verses, has reference to the Father alone. The verse says “His... Godhead.” “His” is singular and possessive – that which belongs to Him alone. And Paul make this so very clear in 1 Corinthians 11:3: “the head of Christ is God.” Does this not then show us precisely and conclusively that the Father is the Godhead? It surely does to the honest, unbiased mind of the reader.

Then I find in Colossians 2:9 the third and last time Paul uses this term. He wrote that Christ is “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Being consistent with the two previous texts, Paul is telling us in this verse that the Son is all the fullness of the Father bodily. This is essentially what Christ said to Philip in John 14:9: “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” Paul writes in Hebrews 1:3 that Jesus is “the express image of His Person.” We can see a consistency and harmony in the way Paul employs the term “Godhead” in these three texts. He consistently refers to a single Being – The Father.

Then I opened your book and read in the first paragraph on the back of the title page: “...the most profound Beings in the universe: the Godhead.” So, I see you beginning with a false premise (a plural Godhead) and then bringing a mass of Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy quotations to substantiate the premise. Note carefully:

“They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories (*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 32).”

You have asserted the theory that the Godhead is plural, composed of three Beings, instead of one Being – the Father; and then all the rest of the book is written to prove the theory correct. Did this concept become ingrained in your mind during your seminary training, and you’ve been holding it ever since? Note the contrast now between you and Ellen White below:

VF: “the most profound Beings [plural] in the universe: the Godhead.”

EW: “If such is the Being [singular] whom we adore,... we are worshiping the true God (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 174).”

Your entire book is predicated upon a false theory. You are defending a false concept of God, using the term “Godhead” in a false manner as an alternate label for the trinity concept of Rome. Jesus tells us that when we cherish a false idea of God, we are worshiping Baal, we are guilty of idolatry, and we have a philosophical idol in the mind. (See *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 173, 174.) Even Jesus Himself addressed His Father as “the only true God (John 17:3).” That makes God one Being – not two or three. We make Jesus a liar when we assert a false theory of the Godhead, do we not? May God have mercy upon us. We make Him to serve with our sins when we misrepresent Him to others in this way because we bear a false witness of Him.

The great Apostle Paul, who alone used this term “Godhead,” wrote in his epistle to the Corinthians that “there is but one God, the Father (1 Corinthians 8:6).” How could words be written any plainer?

Why are we so intent in trying to prove a three-Person Godhead, a Trinity, in the very face of such clear testimony in God’s Word? Are we not guilty of exalting our own human tradition, as did the Jews, above a plain “Thus saith the Lord.”?

Much of our misunderstandings as professed Seventh-day Adventists most likely originate from isolated Spirit of Prophecy statements taken out of context, like, for example – “third person of the Godhead (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671).” When understood correctly, in harmony with all else Ellen White wrote, it can surely mean only that the Spirit of God is a third manifestation of His person – the Father Himself. “God is a Spirit (John 4:24).” He Himself is the first manifestation; His Son, who is the Father’s express image, is the second manifestation; and His Spirit is the third

manifestation of His Person. The Spirit “proceedeth from the Father (John 15:26).”

“In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences to give health and life to the world (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 273).”

His Spirit is no more a person apart from His own Person, than our spirit is a person apart from us. We are made in His “likeness (Genesis 1:26).”

So, when we read “third person of the Godhead,” in the inspired writings of E. G. White, it must be properly understood that it is not a third separate Being – one of a divine triumvirate of Beings of co-equality, as is being put forth by Trinitarians. Christ, God’s Son, is a separate Being from the Father, as the New Testament so clearly teaches, but the Spirit is a third manifestation of the Father, an extension of Himself, as is clearly stated in the testimony above on p. 273 of volume 7 of *Testimonies for the Church*.

If the Spirit of Prophecy teaches a third separate Being as you are propounding, then it would be self-contradictory because Ellen White plainly states that Christ is “the only Being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels of purposes of God (*The Great Controversy*, p. 93).”

This important testimony of necessity excludes the Holy Spirit from being “a Being” – a third separate Being of the Godhead – for, if such were truly the case, as a coequal of a three-fold Godhead of Persons He could in no way be excluded! So, when one begins with a false premise, he bends everything, both in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy, to support that false premise.

This three-person Godhead, or trinity, or triune God is the false concept Satan is using to take the world captive in the grand ecumenical movement of these last days. He is claiming to be God and playing this three-part role of a false worship. This false concept of God is the basis of the counterfeit unity of Catholics, so-called Protestants, and nominal Seventh-day Adventists. Satan is determined to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Will you be deceived? Will I? May God forbid.

Sincerely, in brotherly love,

Wilbur Hargreaves

We would like to remind our readers that strict Trinitarianism does not make allowance for three “beings” in the Godhead but rather espouses three persons in one being. Tritheism is the belief that there are three persons in the Godhead and that each person is a different divine “Being.” On a practical level, tritheism was largely accepted by many Adventist when they first declared that they believed in the Trinity. In the last three to four decades, however, the theology of the church has clearly shifted towards an orthodox trinitarian belief. (See Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, pp. 121, 122, 142, and 150). Editor

Thoughts on the Quarterly continued from page 14

Testament that one of its principal words of healing (*soteria*) may be translated as either “healing” or “salvation.” The Greek word *soteria* is not a principal word for healing in the Bible. In the King James Version it is used once in the nine times we find the English word “healing” in the New Testament. *Soteria* is used forty-five times within forty-three verses. It is translated “salvation” forty times, “saved” twice, “saving” once, “deliver” once, and “health” one time (Acts 27:34 KJV). Using a word for healing one time and translating it as “health” hardly makes it a principal word for anything. While this may appear as a technical issue, we bring it up to encourage everyone to carefully study all things (including this newsletter) to be sure that the Word of God is being rightly divided. We cannot afford to allow others to spoon feed us on any material, for we are nearing the end and we must be ready! Faith comes by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Let us be willing to hold ministers and teachers accountable, not only for our own sakes, but for their sakes as well. “My brethren, be not many masters (διδασκαλος, teacher), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation (James 3:1).”

Lesson 10, The Bible and Happiness – Lesson 10 centers around the family unit and we believe that there is a great need among God’s people to better understand, and also better experience, God’s plan for how his people are to inter-relate. This section, however, has a few statements, perhaps due to terminology or semantics, that we feel should be more carefully crafted. So that there is no confusion, let us examine the statements which deal with the family unit and the expression “foundation.” In the lesson for Tuesday, June 5, we read: “He [God] made marriage the foundation of the family.” Marriage is very important and is important to the family structure; however, marriage is not the foundation of the family. God is the foundation. A foundation is that upon which all else rests. There are many families in which marriage is not involved; specifically a single mother or father who is raising children. There may be no marriage in this kind of family, yet with God as the foundation it will still grow and prosper under his blessings. This is not to say that God ever designed families to begin apart from marriage. We gratefully acknowledge God’s blueprint as superior to any plan ever devised by man, but we must always remember that marriage must have God as its foundation and also as its master builder and worker.

A statement from the teacher’s edition of the lesson is well worth considering: “Home is not a human institution where anything is permissible. It is a divine altar before which the entire family bows in worship to the Creator and in affirmation of love and service for each other. That altar is the sacred refuge where every family member can find true happiness (p. 121).”

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Conformity to the World

Mrs. E. G. White

Christians, whatever may be their field of labor, whatever part of the Lord's vineyard is assigned them, cannot be in conformity to the world. The world's ways are not God's ways. There must be no obliteration of the line of demarcation given us by Jesus Christ, to separate between Christians and the world, thus bringing down the truth to a common level, and dishonoring the God who at an infinite sacrifice sent his Son into the world. There must be no betrayal of holy trust on the part of any who profess to be children of God

There is no safety for the child of God unless he daily receives a new and fresh experience in looking unto Jesus. By beholding him day by day, he will reflect his image, and thus represent his divine attributes. His only safety lies in daily placing himself under the guidance of God's word, in daily bringing his course of action to the test inquiry, "Is this the way of the Lord?" A divine life will represent Jesus Christ, and will be antagonistic to the customs, practices, and standards of the world.

We need, as Christians, to keep Jesus ever before us, looking unto him, the "author and finisher of our faith." Every soul who is seeking to become a joint heir with Jesus Christ must consider that his special work during this testing period is to study the character of Christ, and conform to that character. He cannot do this in his own strength; but through the abundant grace given of God, daily improvement will be made.

Satan, on the one side, is striving to press you into his service; Christ, on the other, is seeking to win and draw you to himself. You cannot become victor over Satan's devices without fierce conflicts with inclination. Satan, striving for the mastery, is determined to conquer. Every faculty is to be strictly guarded and held loyal to God. This is the way of the Lord, to bring self under severe discipline, constantly keeping the eye fixed on Jesus. Through his grace, the striving one comes out of the conflict with temptation with clearer views, rejoicing in a new and elevated strength and power, because he makes the Lord "first, and last, and best in everything."

The religious life is simply abiding in Christ. To flash out brightly now and then under the praise of the world is not the religion of Jesus Christ. Science, so-called, human reason, and poetry, cannot pass as revelation, although it is Satan's plan that these things shall become first in human minds. Those souls that have not realized that the follower of Christ must subordinate every power that has been bestowed upon him to the will of God, will be drawn into the nets which Satan has carefully woven for their inexperienced feet. They cannot see that it is required of them to bring every thought into captivity to Christ. This restraint is to them a galling yoke. They are found, in the place of conformity to the

revealed will of God, opposed in heart and practice to his requirements.


Unless these souls are willing to become as clay in the hands of the potter, to be molded into such vessels as God can use, they will always show a deformity of character, will always bear the marks of a vessel unto dishonor. They will never receive the finishing touch of immortality. Such characters would, in their deficiency, mar heaven.

There is no safety for the child of God unless he daily receives a new and fresh experience in looking unto Jesus.

God requires the training of the mental faculties. They need to be so cultivated that we can, if necessary, set the truth before the most intelligent. The converting power of God upon heart and character is also needed every day. There must be self-discipline on the part of every one who claims to be a child of God; for it is in this way that the mind and will are brought into subjection to the mind and will of God. Decided discipline in the cause of the Lord will accomplish more than eloquence and the most brilliant talents. An ordinary mind, well trained, will accomplish more and higher work than the most educated mind and the greatest talents, without self-control.

Soundness in the faith means more than many discern. It means to correct every error that exists in our thoughts and actions, lest we corrupt the word of God.

There are needed for this time well-balanced minds, healthy, wholesome Christians; but many who profess Christ have a sickly experience. Separated and consecrated to Jesus Christ, the soul finds joy and peace. Christ does not leave us in our weakness and inefficiency, but, gathering us in the arms of his mercy, binds us to his great heart of infinite love.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Here is Christ's work; will you co-operate with him? "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (*The Watchman*, October 16, 1906)." 

In the student's edition, the lesson for Monday, June 4 has comments that are very confusing because of their calculated Trinitarian position. Notice the following paragraph:

After all, as Christians, think about what the Word has revealed to us: that we have a loving, caring God who loved us so much that He came down to earth, took on human flesh (*Rom. 8:3*), and in that flesh died for our sin (*Rom. 5:8*), and because of His death we have the promise of eternal life in a world made new (*Rev. 21:1*). We have the hope that this life isn't all that there is. Meanwhile, we have from Him many precious promises about Him being with us (*Matt. 28:20*), guiding us (*John 16:13*), helping us (*Heb. 4:16*), never leaving or forsaking us (*Heb. 13:5*), and so forth.

Due to the confusing nature of the intermixing of roles because of the Trinitarian mindset of the authors, this paragraph is actually very unclear. For example, the one who loved us so much is declared in John 3:16 to be the Father, but it was his Son, Jesus, who took upon himself human flesh and died for us. We think part of this paragraph could have been more accurately stated: "We have a loving, caring God who loved us so much that he sent his only begotten son who took upon himself human flesh (*Romans 8:3*) and in that flesh died for our sin (*Romans 5:8*) and because of Christ's death we have the promise of eternal life in a world made new (*Revelation 21:1*). We have the hope that this life isn't all there is. Meanwhile, we have many precious promises of Christ being with us (*Matthew 28:20*), helping us (*Hebrews 4:16*), never leaving or forsaking us (*Hebrews 13:5*), and guiding us by his Spirit (*John 16:13*)."

Lesson 11, Daily Wisdom – Lesson 11 speaks of wisdom in social places; wisdom in the work place; wisdom and stewardship; wisdom in leadership; and, according to the title of Sunday's lesson, "The Source of Wisdom." Conspicuously absent from Sunday's lesson are any references to Proverbs 8 or 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30. The Bible is mentioned as the source of wisdom and this is true in one sense. It is in the Bible that we find counsel and direction and we would not wish to diminish this in any way, but, of course, the source of the Bible is God and all his wisdom for us comes through Jesus Christ. "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30)." Jesus is called the "wisdom of God" and he "is made unto us wisdom" by God. In Proverbs 8, Christ is spoken of under the symbol of wisdom and there the Bible plainly declares that he was brought forth by God. "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth (*כּוּוּל*-*chuwl*); when there

were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth (*chuwl*) (Proverbs 8:22-25)."

The Hebrew word translated "brought forth" is *chuwl*. It is in the pulal form which means to be born, begotten, or brought forth. *Chuwl* is also used in the pulal form in Job 15:7 and Psalm 51:5 and both of these verses speak of something being brought into life. Many commentaries declare these verses to be allegorical, but this would say that there was a time when God did not have wisdom and he somehow brought it forth. This is extremely foolish when carefully considered. The wisdom spoken of in Proverbs 8 has caused an enigma in Adventism because on page 34 of *Patriarchs and Prophets* Ellen White directly applies these verses to Jesus Christ. Yet this interpretation does not fit into a Trinitarian theology in which the Son has an absolutely eternal existence in the past. We must be willing, however, to lay aside all of our presuppositions and ideas before we open the Bible. While there are Ellen White statements that declare Christ to be eternal from all time, in Proverbs 8 Christ is declared to be brought forth before all things and that would include time.

Micah 5:2 is often quoted to prove the absolute eternal pre-existence of Jesus Christ. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." While this verse seems to be saying that the goings forth of Christ have been from everlasting or eternity, what is overlooked is the expression, "goings forth" which can be translated "origin," as it is in the RSV. Of interest is what E. J. Waggoner said about Micah 5:2 and the concept that Jesus was begotten in the ages of eternity past:

The Word was "in the beginning." The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten; but we know that he was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created. Just before His crucifixion He prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." John 17:5. And more than seven hundred years before His first advent, His coming was thus foretold by the word of inspiration: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Micah 5:2, margin. We know that Christ "proceeded forth and came from God" (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man (*Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 9, 10).

Waggoner quotes Micah 5:2 and interprets it to mean that Christ was brought forth "so far back in the ages of eternity

as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man.” The Hebrew word translated “eternity” or “everlasting” is עולם (*owlam*). *Owlam* is defined as a “vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity (Strong’s #5769).” This word is used in such places as 1 Samuel 1:22, where we read that Samuel was to “appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.” The phrase “for ever” comes from *owlam* and Adventists have been quick to point out that this means only as long as he lived. Another usage of *owlam* is found in Jonah 2:6 where Jonah describes his experience in the fish: “I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever [*owlam*]: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.” This was only a three-day period. *Owlam*’s usages vary and must not violate the weight of evidence from other Scriptures. The myth that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity is not supported by Micah 5:2; rather, we find that he is the only begotten Son of God through whom all the wisdom of God comes to us.

Lesson 12, Growing Through the Word – Lesson 12 concerns spiritual growth and the lesson begins with our conversion. The Bible says that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). God’s grace accounts to us the perfect righteousness of Christ with faith being the medium through which we receive grace. “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth (Mark 9:23).” The Greek word for “believe” in this verse is *pisteuo*; it is the verb form of the Greek word *pistis* which we translate “faith.” *Pisteuo* means, simply, to have faith. Christians do not say that we “faith (*pistis*) the promises of God,” but rather that we “believe (*pisteuo*) the promises of God.” Faith is the noun form and believe is the verb form.


Most of this lesson is straight forward about growing in faith, love, Christ, and the spirit. In Tuesday’s lesson, 1 John 3:16 is quoted from the NIV: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.” The sacrifice of Jesus should never be downplayed or diminished. It was a tremendous demonstration of love. 1 John 3:16 could have been coupled with John 3:16, where the great love of the Father is declared in giving his only begotten Son for man’s redemption. These two demonstrations make the ultimately strong case for the demonstration of love. The experience of Isaac, who represents Christ, in being willing to allow his father to sacrifice him on Mount Moriah demonstrates great love that we marvel at. The focus of the story in Genesis 22, however, is the love of Abraham, who represents the Father in being willing to give up his only begotten son for our redemption; and this story is the greatest illustration in the Old Testament of the love of God. The principle of Scripture is that “love begets love (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 519).” “We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4:19),” and the great manifestation of that love is shown at Calvary! In fact, this is what John holds out to the believer as the great driving force of growth in his life:

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

Ellen White masterfully wrote the following, and as you read you will see that even inspiration at times searches for words that are worthy of God’s matchless love and goodness:

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. Yet as we study the Bible and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more. And it will be ours to realize the blessing which Paul desired for the Ephesian church when he prayed ‘that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 740).’

John writes, “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 (1 John 4:16).” All of our righteousness is in him as we know, believe, and dwell in the love of God.

It is our prayer that as you continue to study day by day, not only the Sabbath School lesson but also the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy writings and your other devotional materials, you will be a real seeker of truth, a faithful Berean, and that you will dedicate yourself to do the will of God as he reveals his truth to you. 

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

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“Prayer Request” continued from page 1

There is a growing interest among some of the people in this movement to restore the truth about God in the Advent Movement and to better understand how we can work in a more harmonious way with gospel order. We sincerely ask our Father, and we ask that you also pray, that all of God’s people will have wisdom to know the proper pathway for us to take at this time, as well as have the desire and courage to follow that pathway.



Hans Stump

Also, we ask you to seek God in prayer for his blessing on our upcoming camp meeting. We are very excited that soon we can be worshipping together, and we pray that you not only will have a safe journey, but that you will also receive a rich blessing during your stay with us.

Also, please continue to pray for God’s work, for the fields are white and ready for harvest. Pray for more workers to come to the harvest. Also, we are trying to quickly finish the Ellen White video and we need the encouragement of prayer that all will go well.

Please pray for Benson and Florence in Kenya. The water tank for their orphanage recently collapsed and must be replaced. This is in addition to the needs they already have.

Two young people who are, and have been, near and dear to us at Smyrna Gospel Ministries, Danielle Sutton and Verity Holt, are planning marriages soon, and we ask that you remember them in prayer as they take these very important steps of establishing their family units under God.

Onycha Holt

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