

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



St. Paul in Prison by Rembrandt

Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper (2 Chronicles 20:20).

Prayer Requests

This month we especially ask that you lift up Pastor Allen Stump in prayer, as he will be in Europe the entire month of August, visiting many new contacts in several countries as well as spending time with precious friends. While in Rome, he plans to visit the Vatican and will attempt to obtain documentation on the Catholic doctrines of the trinity, Sunday worship, and other items of interest.

Every week we at Smyrna uplift four different countries of the world in prayer, asking God to pour out his Spirit in a mighty way on the people residing in these countries, claiming the promise of Revelation 14:6 for the everlasting gospel to go to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." This month the twenty countries, in groups of four, are: August 2: Albania, Belgium,

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Why Does God Use Prophets?

By Elvis Alberto

(The following study is a presentation given at the 2008 West Virginia Camp Meeting. It is based on Chapter 7 of M. L. Andreasen's book, The Sanctuary Service. Editor)

We read that “thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary (Psalm 77:13),” but Jeremiah also wants to warn us about the way of the Lord. “Thus saith the LORD, 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).” If we want to find rest for our souls, we have to stand and see, ask God for the old paths, and walk therein. The only way to walk in this way is to enter by the blood of Jesus into the sanctuary. There is no other way. For us to understand the sanctuary message, it is very important to know the true history of the sanctuary and not only the true history but also the truth that is in that history. In order to get this, we have to go back in history to see how God raised up the sanctuary and how he designed the services in the sanctuary to be done. The three angels' messages of the Bible run from Genesis to Revelation and we have to begin at Genesis to find the golden line that runs through the Bible. We need to know the true history and the truth in this history, and this morning [at camp meeting] we will study in the Bible the truth that is in the true history of the sanctuary.

We remember that in the sanctuary there were a lot of services occurring—the killing animals, the shedding blood, the priest putting his finger in the blood, the sacrifices and burnt offerings. Did all these sacrifices and burnt offerings please God?

Look what Isaiah says: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats (Isaiah 1:11).” God did not delight in these things.

The temple and the temple service constituted a wonderful object lesson for Israel. It was intended to teach man God's holiness, his own sinfulness, and the way to God. One of the important lessons of the sacrificial system was to teach priest and people to abhor sin and to shun it. When a man sinned inadvertently or through error, he was expected to bring a sin offering to the temple. The first requirement in the sacrificial ritual was the placing of the hands upon the animal and the confession of sin by the sinner. Then with his own hand he was to slay the animal. After this the priest was to take of the blood and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering. The inwards were then burned with the fat on the altar, and a part of the flesh was eaten by the priests in the holy place.

This was to teach abhorrence for sin. God intended this abhorrence for sin to be so great that men would “go and sin no more.” No normal person likes to kill an innocent animal,

especially if he realizes that it is because of his sins that the animal has to die. A normal priest would certainly not delight in the service of blood which he was compelled to perform because of sin. To stand all day, working with dead animals, dipping the finger in the blood, and sprinkling it on the altar, could not be very attractive or pleasant. God himself says he delights not “in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats (Isaiah 1:11).” Neither would the true priest.

The sacrificial system afforded the priests an excellent opportunity to teach the plan of salvation to offenders. As a sinner brought his offering the priest might say, “I am sorry that you have sinned, as I am sure you are sorry. God, however, has made provision for the forgiveness of sin. You have brought an offering. Place your hand on that offering and confess your sin to God. Then kill the innocent lamb, and I will take the blood and make atonement for you. The lamb you are killing is symbolic of the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. The Messiah is to come and give his life for the sin of the people. Through his blood you are forgiven. God accepts your penitence. Go, and sin no more.”

Through this solemn ritual the man would be deeply impressed with the heinousness of sin, and would go away from the temple with a firm determination not to sin again. The fact that he had killed an animal would teach him as nothing else could do that sin means death and that when anyone sins, the lamb must die.

Beautiful and impressive as was this service, it was capable of perversion. If the sinner should conceive the idea that his offering paid for the sin that he had committed, and that if he only brought an offering every time he sinned all would be well, he had an entirely wrong conception of God's intent. Yet that is how many came to consider the ordinances. They felt that their sacrifices paid for their sins, and that should they sin again, another sacrifice would atone for it.

Repentance and true sorrow were minimized. The people came to believe that whatever their sin might be, it could be atoned for by a gift. With the presentation of their offering, they considered the transaction finished. Many of the priests encouraged the people in this attitude. Sin was not as abhorrent in their sight as intended it should be. It was something that could be paid for with the gift of a lamb, which at most cost a small sum. The result was that “thousands of rams” and “ten thousands of rivers of oil” were bought to be pleasing to God (Micah 6:7).

Perversion of the Symbol: The remuneration of the priests was in large part derived from the sacrifices offered by the people. Thus priests came to look upon the sacrifices as a means income to them. In addition to the tithes they received, the priests retained a part of most of the sacrifices offered. They also received part of the meal offerings and

peace offerings-flour, oil, corn, wine, money, and salt-as well as offerings for special occasions.

These ordinances, therefore, easily became perverted. Some of the corrupt priests saw clearly that more the people sinned, the more sin and trespass rings they brought, the greater would be the portion coming to them. They went so far as to encourage the people to sin. Of the corrupt priests it is written: "They eat up the sin of My people, and they set their heart on their iniquity (Hosea 4:8)." This text affirms that the priests, instead of admonishing the people and urging them to abstain from sin, "set their heart on" the people's iniquity, and hoped they would sin again and come back with another offering. It was to the financial advantage of the priests to have many offerings brought, for each offering added to their income. As the priesthood became more corrupt, the tendency toward encouraging the people to bring offerings increased.

An interesting commentary on the length to which some priests perverted the ordinances is given in the second chapter of First Samuel: "And the priests' custom was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh hook of three teeth in his hand. And he struck it into the pan, or kettle or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh hook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desires; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shall give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force (1 Samuel 2:13-16)."

This shows the degradation of the priesthood even at that early period. God had commanded that the fat should be burned on the altar, and that if the flesh were eaten, it should be boiled. The priests, however, wished to get their meat raw with the fat, so that they could roast it. To them it had ceased to be a sacrificial meal, and had become, instead, a gluttonous feast. The following comment is made: "The sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord (Verse 17)." This tendency of the priests to encourage the people to bring sin offerings rather than to abstain from sin became more pronounced as the years went by. In the tabernacle as first erected by Moses, the altar of burnt offering was quite small, being only five cubits square. Solomon's temple the altar was enlarged to twenty bits, or about thirty feet on each side. In Herod's temple it was still larger. It appears that the altar of burnt offering was made larger and larger to accommodate the offerings placed upon it.

Increasing Degradation: The time finally came when God had to do something or the whole temple service would become corrupt. He therefore permitted the temple to be destroyed, and many of the people were carried into captivity

to Babylon. With the temple gone, the practices would naturally cease. The minds of the people would be called to the spiritual significance of the ordinances which they had so often witnessed, but which now were no more. In Babylon there was neither burnt offering nor sin offering, nor the solemn feast of the Day of Atonement. Israel hung their harps on the willows.

After seventy years in captivity they were permitted by God to return to their homeland and to build the temple again. He hoped that they had learned their lesson. But they had not. The altar of burnt offering was made even larger than before. The people became more firmly settled in their regard for the mere form and ritual of the temple and its sacrificial service, and they failed to heed the prophetic message that "to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22)." The income of the priests from offerings became large; so large, indeed, that the money accumulated in the temple constituted one of the largest collections of wealth in antiquity, and the priests became money lenders.

At feasts such as the Passover, Jerusalem was filled with visiting Jews from Palestine as well as from other lands. Josephus tells us that as many as one million visitors were in the city at one time. Israel was commanded by God not to appear empty handed before the Lord, so all these pilgrims brought offerings (Deuteronomy 16:16). It was a physical impossibility for the priests to offer as many sacrifices as would be required to accommodate all the people. They were therefore encouraged to convert their offerings into cash and leave this cash as temple money with the priests, who would at their convenience offer the sacrifice which the money called for. It was soon found that it was easier and safer not to bring the sacrificial animal from home. The offerer ran the risk not only of having the animal rejected by the priest for some defect, real or supposed, but of incurring an additional loss. For to sell an animal that had been rejected by the priests was not easy, especially when a thousand others were trying to do the same thing. For some purposes only temple money could be used, and on this an exchange was charged. This changing of common money into temple money was another source of large income to the priesthood.

As noted before, the priests were divided into twenty-four courses, each one of which was to serve one week at a time, twice a year. When the office of the high priest became a political one, and he was appointed by the government, corruption became widespread. Since it was a very lucrative position, men began to bid for the office of high priest, and it was actually sold to the highest bidder. To get this money back, the high priest took control of the selection of the courses; and only such priests were called to serve at Jerusalem at the time of the feasts as could be depended upon to share with the officials the large revenues contributed at that time. Corruption came again to prevail, and many were the priests who were called to serve at the temple at the great feasts only because they were willing to divide the spoil with

the higher officials. The order in which the priests were to serve was changed, and the entire plan of God corrupted. Christ's later designation, "a den of thieves," was not a mere poetic expression; it was literally true.

A Corrupt Priesthood: "The priesthood had become so corrupt that the priests had no scruples in engaging in the most dishonest and criminal acts to accomplish their designs. Those who assumed the office of high priest prior to, and at, the time of Christ's first advent, were not men divinely appointed to the sacred work. They had eagerly aspired to the office through love of power and show. They desired a position where they could have authority, and practice fraud under a garb of piety, and thereby escape detection. The high priest held a position of power and importance. He was not only counselor and mediator, but judge, there was no appeal from his decision. The priests were held in restraint by the authority of the Romans, and were not allowed the power of legally putting anyone to death.

"This power rested with those who bore rule over the Jews. Men of corrupt hearts sought the distinguished office of high priest, and frequently obtained it by bribery and assassination (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp., 13, 14)."

As Jesus entered, he was indignant to find the court of the temple arranged as a cattle market and a place of general traffic. There were not only stalls for the beasts, but there were tables where the priests themselves acted as money brokers and exchangers. It was customary for each person who attended the Passover to bring a piece of money, which was paid to the priests upon entering the temple.

From the changing of foreign coins and different denominations of money to accommodate strangers, this matter of receiving their offerings had grown into a disgraceful traffic, and a source of great profit to the priests. Many came from a great distance and could not bring their sacrificial offerings. Under the plea of accommodating such persons, in the outer court were cattle, sheep, doves, and sparrows for sale at exorbitant prices. The consequent confusion indicated a noisy cattle market, rather than the sacred temple of God. There could be heard sharp bargaining, buying and selling, the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, and cooing of doves, mingled with the chinking of coin, and angry disputation. A great number of beasts were annually sacrificed at the Passover, which made the sales at the temple immense. The dealers realized a large profit, which was shared with the avaricious priesthood and men of authority among the Jews. These hypocritical speculators, under cover of their holy profession, practiced all manner of extortion, and made their sacred office a source of personal revenue (*Ibid.*, p. 115, 116).

These conditions, of course, did not exist originally. It was only after centuries of transgression that corruption reached the heights here depicted. It was comparatively early, however, that abuses began to creep in, as evidenced in the quotation from the book of Samuel in the earlier part of this

chapter. As the priests thus lost sight of the original intent of offerings, and perverted God's plan in the sacrifices, it became necessary to send warnings to them. To do this, God used the prophets. From the very first the prophets' message to his people was: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 1 Samuel 15:22. To some of the apostatizing priests it seemed a calamity that the people should stop sinning, for in that case sin offerings would cease. To this the writer of Hebrews refers when he says: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the overcomers there unto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins (Hebrews 10: 1, 2)."

The Prophet Recalls From Apostasy: The Old Testament can be better comprehended when the struggle between priest and prophet is understood. It was a tragic struggle, which ended in many cases with victory for the priests. The prophet is God's mouthpiece. The people may go wrong, and the priests may go wrong. God, however, is not left without a witness. Under such circumstances he sends a prophet to his people to bring them back to the right way.

It may easily be imagined that the prophets were not popular with the priests. As the priests served in the temple from day to day, inviting the people to bring their sacrifices, the prophets would be commanded by God to take their position near the temple gate and warn the people to bring no more offerings. This is written of Jeremiah: "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. Thus said the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these (Jeremiah 7:1-4)."

After this follows further admonition by the prophets for the people to amend their ways and not trust in lying words. "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely," says the Lord through the prophet, "and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations (vs. 9, 10)?" Then he adds significantly, "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you (vs. 22, 23)."

Obedience, Not Sacrifice: Hear what God has to say through Isaiah: "To what purpose is the multitude of your

sacrifices unto me? said the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow (Isaiah 1:11-17)."

Note the strong expressions: "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams"; "I delight not in the blood of bullocks"; "who hath required this at your hand?" "bring no more vain oblations"; "incense is an abomination unto me"; "your appointed feasts my soul hates"; "I am weary to bear them"; "I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."

Amos says: "I hate, I despise your feast days. . . . Though you offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts (Amos 5:21, 22)."

Micah, in like strain, asks, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul (Micah 6:6, 7)?" He answers the question in this wise: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God (v. 8)?"

The last prophet in the Old Testament says: "Now, O you priests, this commandment is for you." "Ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, said the LORD of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law (Malachi 2:1, 8, 9)."

David had the right view when he said: "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Psalm 51:16, 17)."

Priests Oppose Prophets: God could hardly have used stronger words than those used in rebuking both the priests and the people, but he was amply justified. The priests had corrupted the covenant. They had taught the people to sin, and had made them believe that an offering or a sacrifice would pay for the sin. They deserved the rebuke of the Lord

which he sent through his prophets. The results were what might be expected under the circumstances. A bitter hatred against the prophets sprang up among many of the priests. They hated the men who were sent to rebuke them. Much of the persecution of the prophets in the Old Testament was carried on or instigated by the priests. It was not so much the people as the priests who opposed and persecuted the prophets.

It was the priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees who were the constant opposers of Christ. For them Christ reserved his most scathing rebuke: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites because you build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore you be witnesses unto yourselves, that you are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill you up then the measure of your fathers. You serpents-you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes. And some of them you shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall you scourge in your Synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation (Matthew 23:29-36)."

Sin No More: Christ was a prophet. As such he sounded the prophetic message: "To obey is better than sacrifice." "Go, and sin, no more," was the way he put it (John 8:11). He annulled the sacrificial system in offering himself upon Calvary. Christ personally did not offer any sacrifices. He did not sin, and by teaching men not to sin he struck at the very heart of this priestly perversion. Though Christ was careful not to offend needlessly, and though he sent the lepers to the priests for certification (Luke 17:14), it could not escape the attention of the officials that Christ was not seen in the temple with the customary offering. They felt that his message constituted a rebuke to their practices, and they were glad when they found an accusation against him in his reported words concerning the temple (Matthew 26:61). The priests hated Christ, and when the time came, he followed the long line of noble heroes among the prophets by giving his life. The priests rejected the prophetic message. It was they who in reality brought about the crucifixion of Christ. In that they filled up the measure of their iniquity. They believed in sacrifices for sins and that through this provision forgiveness might be had. The larger message of victory over sin-the prophetic message-many of the priests did not understand, or at least did not teach.

It is not to be thought, however, that all the priests were wicked. There were many faithful men among them. Some of the priests, indeed, were also prophets, as Ezekiel. It was

The True Remedies Part 2

By Dr. Glenn Waite

God's intent that every priest should have the prophetic spirit and sound the prophetic message. In God's plan it is not enough to attempt to remedy matters after a wrong has been committed. It is far better to prevent evil than to attempt to heal it. Wonderful as it is to be lifted up from sin and degradation, it is still more wonderful to be kept from sinning. "Go, and sin no more" is the true prophetic message. It is better to obey than to sacrifice. Every servant of God should echo this message if he would fulfill the counsel of God. God has always had need of prophets. They are his messengers to correct wrong. When wrong tendencies appear among his people, God sends his prophets to correct these tendencies and admonish the people. The lesson for this time should not be lost. The work of the prophet is not done until the Lord's work in the earth is finished. God wants his ministers to sound the prophetic message. When abuses creep in, a voice must be lifted, calling the people back to the right ways of the Lord. And back of every such message must be the clarion call to abstinence from sin, to sanctification, to holiness. The prophets said, "To obey is better than sacrifice." Christ said, "Go, and sin no more." Every minister must exemplify this doctrine in his life and teach it with his lips. To the extent to which he fails to do this, he comes short of his high privilege. Of all times, now is the time to send the prophetic message to the ends of the earth. This was the command of Christ when he gave the great gospel commission to teach all nations and baptize them, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded (Matthew 28:20)." This command to observe all things is parallel to the prophetic message that to obey is better than sacrifice. When this work is done, the end will come. ✂



The Very Good Berry Pie!

(This tasty recipe is sure to encourage the most lackluster appetite.)

Start with 5 cups of fresh berries. (Blueberries work very well; peaches too!) Pick out 2½ cups of the best berries and set aside. Place the other 2½ cups of berries in a sauce pan.

Mix 3 tablespoons of cornstarch in ½ cup cold water and add to sauce pan (or use thickener of your choice).

Stir constantly over medium-low heat until the mixture is thick, clear, and close to the color of the berries throughout.

Take off heat and add ¼ cup sweetener, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and 1/8 teaspoon salt. You may optionally add 2 tablespoons soy margarine and 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind. Cool a little and then stir in the fresh berries. Cool the mixture a little more, pour into a baked pie shell, and chill.

Onycha Holt

Some people have the idea that temperance means you can have a little of something just as long as you do not use a lot. In other words, some people believe that a little alcohol is okay or one cigarette a day is all right. Let me ask you what would you think about taking just a tiny bit of arsenic every day? Would this be okay? It might not kill you on the first day, but it will catch up with you later. When Ellen White addresses abstemiousness, it is often in speaking against alcohol and tobacco in all its forms. She also states that coffee and tea, highly seasoned foods, and flesh foods have a stimulating effect on us, but one thing many people do not realize is that refined sugar and refined foods have a stimulating effect too. You get a lift from sugar or simple carbohydrates that are not in their natural form, but after you get the lift, you have a depression and you feel a need to get the stimulant again, which causes another depression and a new desire for the stimulant. This is the same effect that you get from all the harmful substances against which Ellen White speaks. Tobacco has the same effect. You get a lift from tobacco in whatever form you take it, whether it is smoking or chewing. You then get a depression and you have a rush to have another cigarette, for example, to pull yourself out of the depression, and it actually becomes an addiction. The same thing happens with sweets and refined foods—they can form an addiction because you have a stimulant and then a depression, a stimulant and a depression.

So we can see, based on this understanding of how the physiology of our bodies work, that abstemiousness from harmful substances is necessary for the Christian. With heaven's help every habit and addiction may be overcome. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:57 that victory is a gift that God gives to us and that by faith we can believe that we are dead to sin (Romans 6:11), yet at the same time we must follow the practical counsel in Romans 13:14: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." This tells us that if we have a tobacco problem, we do not keep a spare pack of cigarettes in a safe place just in case we fail or desire to give in. Furthermore, we are to have one Lord and Master in our lives—Christ—and when we are controlled by harmful substances then we have allowed something to take the place of Christ as Master and Lord of our lives. Ellen White states that "the only safe course is to touch not, taste not, handle not, tea, coffee, wines, tobacco, opium, and alcoholic drinks (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 488)." I would also note that she adds to this group rich, highly seasoned foods and flesh foods: "The food is often such as to excite a desire for stimulating drinks. Luxurious dishes are placed before the children,—spiced foods, rich gravies, cakes, and pastries. This highly seasoned food irritates the stomach, and causes a craving for still

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Ellen G. White and the Truth About God, Part 1

By Allen Stump and Onycha Holt

(Earlier this year we published the DVD “Ellen G. White and the Truth About God.” The following is an edited transcript of the first part of this presentation. Editor)

The disciple Jude writes: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye *should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.* (Jude 3)” “The faith” which Jude refers to is the body of truths that we hold concerning our Christian belief. Peter says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: *Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.* (1 Peter 5:8, 9).” Both these writers encourage the believer to hold onto the faith.

Revelation 14:12 states: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” While much attention has been given to the phrase “they that keep the commandments of God, it should be noted that those who receive the seal of God and avoid the mark of the beast also “keep [or as the Greek can be translated ‘hold onto’] the faith of Jesus.” The phrase “the faith of Jesus” serves as an object of the verb “keep.” Thus, the remnant will be those who “earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3).”

Now, within Adventism “the faith” includes not only the body of truths that were established early in the apostolic age, but also those special truths the Bible indicates would be revealed in the last days. These special truths are known within Adventism as the “three angels’ messages,” and a proper understanding of God is vital to correctly understand these messages, as well as being vital to our salvation and to our ability to serve God as he directs. Notice Ellen White’s emphasis on the importance of knowing God:

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world.

In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, *we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself.*

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character.

This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon *a right knowledge of God. This*

knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come (The Ministry of Healing, p. 409).

So, we can see that it is only by properly knowing God that we can develop a character like his, live a pure life, work efficiently for him, and be prepared for eternal life. That is why we at Smyrna Gospel Ministries are so adamant on proclaiming the true knowledge of who our heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are, and this also is why we will now take an in-depth look at what Ellen White has to say on these subjects.

I would like to remind you of a statement Sister White wrote in 1896:

If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory (*The Review and Herald*, October 6, 1896).

If the Lord could have come before 1896, then logic would say that the faith and doctrines believed before 1896 were truth, for Revelation 14:5 states that the 144,000 will have no guile in their mouths. This truth was to be given to the world in what is known as “the loud cry,” but because the church had become lukewarm and unfaithful in carrying the truth forward, God commissioned two men—Elders Jones and Waggoner—to bring revival to his church. Their view of God and Christ did not differ from that of their brethren. In *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 91, Sister White declared that God sent “a most precious message” through them and declared in *The Review and Herald* of April 1, 1890 that it was “the third angel’s message in verity.” It is important to note that this “most precious message” did not include the Trinitarian doctrine!

The main doctrines and foundational points of our faith were established through much Bible study and with the aid of divine revelations given to Sister White.

Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, “We can do nothing more,” the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a

clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to *Christ, His mission, and His priesthood*. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me (*Special Testimonies, Series B, no. 2, pp. 56, 57*).

Here we see the dual aspect of Bible study and revelation. The brethren would come together for study and prayer and would sometimes continue “through the entire night.” “Sometimes the sun would rise before they would give up the struggle.” (*Sermons and Talks, vol. 1, p. 345*) When they could go no further in their study, Sister White “would be taken off in vision, and instruction would be given.” Note that it was not new scripture but “a clear explanation of the [Scriptural] passages” they had been studying that was given by revelation. Simply, she was given understanding on how to “rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).” As she noted later:

In the word of God we have found the truth that substantiates our faith (*The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters, p. 257*).

Let us remember that these main foundational points were established early, by 1850, and as King David asked, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do (Psalm 11:3)?” The Scriptures also teach that “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (Proverbs 4:18),” and this “shining light” that grows brighter will not darken that which has been established as truth! Any deviation from these truths brings apostasy which, if continued, results in a city that was once faithful becoming a “harlot.” (See Isaiah 1:21.)

Let us now look at a representative statement from Sister White expressing a nontrinitarian position. It’s found in *Patriarchs and Prophets* on page 34:

The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate—a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: “The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations

of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him (*Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 34*).

A careful reading of this paragraph reveals several important points that should not be overlooked. First of all, Sister White calls the Father “the Sovereign of the universe.” She doesn’t state that Christ is the Sovereign with him. However, she does say that the Sovereign had “an associate—a co-worker,” singular tense. This “associate” she declares to be Christ who is “the *only being* that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.”

Furthermore, she quotes portions of Proverbs 8:22-30, attributing this to Jesus Christ. Like most commentaries, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* acknowledges these verses to apply to Christ, but the authors state that they only apply in an “allegorical” sense (vol. 3, p. 972). The author of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, however, is describing real events, not allegories! The whole language of the chapter is that Jesus Christ is the literal Son of God “invested” with power and authority from his Father. Continuing in *Patriarchs and Prophets* she says:

To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ’s, was first among the hosts of God...

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. *The Son of God shared the Father’s throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both*. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng—“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,” the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that *none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will*. The Son of God had wrought the Father’s will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God’s plan, but would exalt the Father’s glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love (*Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 36*).

At this council, the Father set forth the true position of his Son as the Creator of all things. “None but Christ, the Only Begotten of God” could enter into all his counsels and purposes. The throne was shared with the Son “and the glory of the eternal self-existent One encircled both.” Both means *two*.

Please notice carefully the basis on which Ellen White claims Jesus to be the Son of God:

There is but one way of escape for the sinner. There is but one agency whereby he may be cleansed from sin. He must accept the propitiation that has been made by the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. The shed blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." A complete offering has been made; for "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, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (*Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895).

Clearly, she did not see Christ as being created as the angels were nor did she see Jesus as being adopted. She understood Jesus to be the begotten Son of God. How was he begotten? Neither she, nor the Bible, explains how this occurred, but inspiration states it as a fact. This is one place that the truth of Deuteronomy 29:29 applies: "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God."

Virtually all Christians give assent to the claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; however, most theologians do not accept that Jesus is the literal begotten Son of God. They believe, instead, that he is a coequal and coeternal "person" of the Godhead and not the literal offspring of the Father. They say the term "son" is to be understood as a role or a symbolic position Jesus assumed to help humanity understand the love and sacrifice of God for man through using an endearing human relationship.

According to the Trinitarian doctrine, when the Bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," it really means that God shared his fellow companion or pal with man. According to this teaching, Jesus didn't call God his Father because he *was* his Father, but rather, as Trinitarians insist, "to bring us into a close and personal relationship with God." You can find that very statement in the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* on page 20. There we also read that, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, "the Father seems to act as source, the Son as mediator, and the Spirit as actualizer or applier (*Ibid.*, p. 24)." The false theory that the relationship of God and Christ is not literal, but role-played, is arrived at through the use of a spiritual application of the terms "Father" and "Son." Ellen White, however, did not endorse such a position.

In *The Signs of the Times* article of May 30, 1895, Sister White stated that Christ "was one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection." Several places in her writings, she, along with the pioneers in their writings,

acknowledges Christ to be equal with the Father. However, she states that this equality was one given or conferred upon Christ by the Father and that it was not an equality that Christ naturally had.

The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they clearly bring to view the personality and individuality of each. Note the following statements:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son (Hebrews 1:1-5)?

God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 268, 269).

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. *The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself*; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had *invested* with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was his Son to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in him (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 17, 18).

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. . . . *The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer*, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37).

In order for Christ to be exalted as equal with the Father, there must have been a time when he was not in every respect equal with him. This exaltation would not have been possible if Christ had been a coequal, coeternal being with the Father. However, if Christ was the literal Son of God, then the Father would have been able to elevate him. The Ellen G. White

compact disc shows that never once did Sister White call Christ a “created son” or an “adopted son.” Despite many theologians insisting that the Sonship of Christ is one of role-playing, Ellen White never even hints at such a possibility. The writings of Ellen White speak in a very literal way of Christ being the “begotten Son” of God. Furthermore, we have been counseled:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. *We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history (Life Sketches of James and Ellen G. White, p. 196, 1915 edition).*

As the Advent Movement was growing, Ellen White had to confront fanaticism on the truth about God, as she relates in volume 8 of *Testimonies for the Church*:

After the passing of the time in 1844, we had fanaticism of every kind to meet. Testimonies of reproof were given me to bear to some holding spiritualistic theories.

There were those who were active in disseminating false ideas in regard to God. . . . This is only one of the instances in which I was called upon to rebuke those who were presenting the doctrine of an impersonal God pervading all nature, and similar errors (pp. 292, 293).

Here we find Sister White dealing with errors similar to what Kellogg was advancing—an impersonal God—but she also mentions other errors. While we do not know if these errors included the Trinity doctrine, we plainly see that when false views of God were presented, she spoke out clearly and decisively.

The breadth of this subject is tremendous and we prayerfully ask the reader to consider the counsel of Proverbs 18:13: “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” We will be carefully examining other statements of Sister White, including statements that *appear* to present the Trinitarian position, but we do not accept the position that Sister White is in error. I ask you to retain an open mind and an earnest desire to have the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

History testifies that the early Adventists were nontrinitarian. Interestingly, not one of the leading pioneers ever questioned Sister White or expressed a difference with her concerning her understanding of the doctrine of God. Neither did she ever question them about their views. The tenets she expressed in her early writings clearly paralleled their thoughts.

Arguably, no person outside of Adventism has studied and researched the writings of Ellen G. White more than the late Walter Martin. During the time of the Seventh-day Adventist–Evangelical Conferences of 1955–1956, Martin asked for and was given free access to the vaults at the White Estate

along with any other materials he requested. Martin testified that he had read “extensively in the publications of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and almost all of the writings of Ellen G. White, including her testimonies (*Eternity*, October 1956).” Dr. Donald Barnhouse, editor of *Eternity Magazine*, stated in a taped telephone conversation with Al Hudson that “Froom and the rest of them [Roy A. Anderson and other church leaders] say that Walter Martin knows more about Seventh-day Adventists than any professor in Takoma Park.” After his extensive study, Martin came to the conclusion that Ellen G. White was at first Arian in belief but later became Trinitarian. This charge was never repudiated by either Froom or Anderson.

Was there double talk by Ellen White as Martin claims? Was Sister White inconsistent? The quotations from Ellen White that we have examined up to this point are clearly nontrinitarian, but we will examine some of her later statements. Let me emphasize that Christ is to be worshipped equally with God, but the equality he possesses was *given* or conferred upon him by the Father. In *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 426 she says: “Our great Exemplar was *exalted* to be equal with God.”

You see brothers and sisters, there’s a hierarchy in heaven. In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Sister White calls the Father “the Sovereign of the Universe (p. 34)” and “the King of the Universe (p. 36).” In every reference to Christ being exalted to equality with God, it is the Father who ordains it to be so. As in the Scriptures, we find the writings of Sister White portraying the Son carrying out the will of the Father, with the Father viewed as supreme.

Christ is our Example. He was next to God in the heavenly courts. But He came to this earth to live among men (*Notebook Leaflets from the Elmshaven Library*, vol. 1, pp. 114, 115; Letter 48, 1902).

In the order of heaven, Sister White lists Christ next to God. It was the desire of Satan to take the place of Christ and to become like the Father.

The Lord has shown me that Satan was once an honored angel in heaven, next to Jesus Christ. . . . And I saw that when God said to his Son, Let us make man in our image, Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man. He was filled with envy, jealousy and hatred. He wished to be the highest in heaven, next to God, and receive the highest honors (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 17).

What position did she understand Satan to have?

In the controversy between Christ and Satan, the character of God was now fully vindicated in his act of banishing from Heaven the fallen angel, *who had once been exalted next to Christ (The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 184).

He [Satan] was next to Christ in exaltation and character (*The Review and Herald*, October 22, 1895).

Forty days and nights Jesus was subjected to the temptations of the enemy—the one who was once an angel *next to Christ in majesty and glory in the heavenly courts*. It is stated, Thou wast exalted because of thy beauty . . . But he wanted to have the place of Christ, and Christ was one with the Infinite God; and because this was not accorded him, he became jealous, and he was the originator of sin (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 180; MS 57, 1890).

These statements reveal Satan’s place in heaven had been next to Christ, who was next to God. Referring to Satan, Sister White says:

He glorified in his brightness and exaltation and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host, angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father. He shared the Father’s counsels, while Lucifer did not thus enter into the purposes of God. “Why,” questioned this mighty angel, “should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37)?

While the great controversy between Christ and Satan is fought out today upon this earth between their respective followers, the war clearly began in heaven.

Evil originated with Lucifer, who rebelled against the government of God. Before his fall he was a covering cherub, distinguished by his excellence. God made him good and beautiful, as near as possible like himself (*The Review and Herald*, September 24, 1901).

God put all of his creative ability into Satan who believed that his position should have been equal with Christ’s and worthy of worship. This was not to be so.

Let the brightest example the world has yet seen be your example, rather than the greatest and most learned men of the age, who know not God, nor Jesus Christ whom he has sent. *The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted* (*The Youth’s Instructor*, July 7, 1898).

This statement includes only two divine beings who are to be exalted and worshipped, not three.

One of the tenets of the Trinitarian doctrine is the lack of a divine sacrifice dying in totality. The early Seventh-day Adventists saw the subject of the atonement as the heart of the three angels’ messages. They believed that Jesus died in totality. Their understanding of the begottenness of Christ, coupled with an understanding of the mortality of the soul and the state of the dead, led them to believe that the Bible statement “Christ died for our sins” meant he died body, soul, and spirit. In fact, Sister White wrote that Satan, the author of all lies, was the originator of the belief that Jesus could not die!

When Jesus had opened before his disciples the fact that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, Peter had presumptuously con-

tradicted his Master, saying, “Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.” He could not conceive it possible that the Son of God should be put to death. *Satan suggested to his mind that if Jesus was the Son of God he could not die* (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 231).

At this point questions arise! Could the one who was divine die at all? Was not Jesus, the Son of God, immortal? *How could he die?*


At the time when He was most needed, Jesus, the Son of God, the world’s Redeemer, laid aside His divinity, and came to earth in the garb of humanity (*The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, October 12, 1896).

In addition to this, we find the following concept several places in Sister White’s writings:

The human race was under sentence of death, but the Son of God *clothed his divinity with humanity*, and came to this world to live and die in our behalf (*The Review and Herald*, June 1, 1905).

How do these ideas relate to each other? One statement says that divinity was “laid aside,” the other says divinity was “clothed . . . with humanity.” The Scriptures teach that Jesus laid aside his mental and physical attributes of divinity at the incarnation. In doing this, what was left to be clothed with humanity? The following testimony is a key to understanding the mystery:

And the Devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the Devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” He presented the world to Christ as a most dazzling, enchanting spectacle. But Christ saw that which Satan tried to veil from his eyes, and that which he flattered himself he had done. Christ had not exchanged his divinity for humanity; but he had clothed his divinity in humanity, and he gave Satan the evidence for which he had asked,—showed him that he was the Son of God. *Divinity flashed through humanity, and the evil one could not resist the authority of the divine voice*, as Jesus said, “Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (*The Review and Herald*, October 29, 1895).”

While Christ laid aside his mental and physical attributes of divinity at the incarnation, *he was still the divine Son of God invested with authority because of who he was! He was still the Son of the living God*. In all of his humanity, he never gave up his divinely appointed *authority* which the Father had given him. This explains why Satan’s temptation in the wilderness was not to make the stones turn into bread, but rather to “command” them to be bread. 

Courtesy at Home

By Ellen G. White

Something is wrong in those families, says the *Bazar*, where the little courtesies of speech are ignored in the every-day home life. True politeness cannot be learned, like a lesson, by one effort, any time in one's life; it must be inbred. "Well meaning, but rough," is said of many a man; and too often the beginning of the difficulty lies with the parents in a family. Is it hard for the husband to give a smiling "Thank you" to his wife as she brings his slippers on his evening return home? Is it more difficult for the mother to say, "John, will you shut the door please" than to use the laconic phrase, "Shut the door!" When Tom knocks over his sister's baby-house, why should not "Excuse me, I didn't mean to," be the instinctive apology?


Many who would not be guilty of discourtesy to a stranger, or to a friend in the world without, lay aside much, if not all, their suavity of manner on entering the home circle. The husband and wife dispense with those little graceful attentions which, though small, are never unimportant. The children are ordered hither and thither with crusty words; no "Thank you" rewards the little tireless feet that run on countless errands. The dinner is eaten in silence, broken only by fault-finding and reproof from the parents, and ill-humor and teasing among the children. In the evening, the father devotes himself to his newspaper, and the mother to her sewing, interrupting themselves only to give such peremptory orders as "Less noise, children;" "Stop quarreling;" and, finally, "Go to bed."

In many families, there is no positive rudeness among the members, only a lack of those simple, affectionate attentions which awaken a spontaneous return; a want of that consideration and gentleness of demeanor which are well-springs of comfort in every household. The well-bred host does not fail to bid his guest "Good night," and "Good morning;" why should not this simple expression of good feeling be always exchanged between parents and children? The kindly morning greeting will often nip in the bud some rising fretfulness; and the pleasant "Good-by," from old and young, when leaving the house for office, shop, or school, is a fragrant memory through the day of separation. When the family gather alone around breakfast or dinner table, the same courtesy should prevail as if guests were present. Reproof, complaint, unpleasant discussion, and scandal, no less than moody silence, should be banished. Let the conversation be genial, and suited to the little folks as far as possible. Interesting incidents of the day's experience may be mentioned at the evening meal, thus arousing the social element. If resources fail, sometimes little bits read aloud from the morning or evening paper will kindle the conversation.

No pleasanter sight is there than a family of young folks who are quick to perform little acts of attention toward their

elders. The placing of the big arm chair in a warm place for mamma, running for a footstool for aunty, hunting up papa's spectacles, and scores of little deeds show unsurpassed and loving hearts. But if mamma never returns a smiling "Thank you, dear," if papa's "Just what I was wanting, Susie," does not indicate that the little attention is appreciated, the children soon drop the habit. Little people are imitative creatures, and quickly catch the spirit surrounding them. So, if, when the mother's spool of cotton rolls from her lap, the father stoops to pick it up, bright eyes will see the act, and quick minds make a note of it. By example, a thousand times more quickly than by precept, can children be taught to speak kindly to each other, to acknowledge favors, to be gentle and unselfish, to be thoughtful and considerate of the comfort of the family. The boys, with inward pride in their father's courteous demeanor, will be chivalrous and helpful to their young sisters; the girls, imitating the mother, will be gentle and patient, even when big brothers are noisy and heedless.

Scolding is never allowable; reproof and criticism from parents must have their time and place, but should never intrude so far upon the social life of the family as to render the home uncomfortable. A serious word in private will generally cure a fault more easily than many public criticisms. In some families, a spirit of contradiction and discussion mars the harmony; every statement is, as it were, dissected, and the absolute correctness of every word calculated. It interferes seriously with social freedom when unimportant inaccuracies are watched for, and exposed for the mere sake of exposure. Brothers and sisters also sometimes acquire an almost unconscious habit of teasing each other, half in earnest, half in fun. This is particularly uncomfortable for everybody else, whatever doubtful pleasure the parties themselves may experience.

In the home where true courtesy prevails, it seems to meet you on the very threshold. You feel the kindly welcome on entering. No rude eyes scan your dress. No angry voices are heard up stairs. No sullen children are sent from the room. No peremptory orders are given to cover the delinquencies of house-keepers or servants. A delightful atmosphere pervades the house—unmistakable, yet indescribable (*The Health Reformer*, February 1, 1874). 

Service Broadcasts: We would like to remind or inform our readers that the Smyrna Chapel's regular Wednesday evening prayer meeting and Sabbath morning worship services can be heard over the Internet via Skype or over the telephone via High Speed Broadcasting. To listen over the Internet you need the free communication software Skype. This may be downloaded via Skype.com. Our calling number through Skype is +990008275126052. You may listen over a phone by calling 1-605-475-8590 and enter in conference ID 5126052 when prompted. Calling charges may apply.

Youths' Corner — What Shall We Read?

(It should be noted that all the principles mentioned here apply also to television, video games, etc. Editor)

Education is but a preparation of the physical, intellectual, and spiritual powers for the best performance of all the duties of life. The powers of endurance, and the strength and activity of the brain, are lessened or increased by the way in which they are employed. The mind should be so disciplined that all its powers will be symmetrically developed.

Many youth are eager for books. They desire to read everything that they can obtain. Let them take heed what they read as well as what they hear. I have been instructed that they are in the greatest danger of being corrupted by improper reading. Satan has a thousand ways of unsettling the minds of youth. They can not safely be off guard for a moment. They must set a watch upon their minds, that they may not be allured by the enemy's temptations.

Satan knows that to a great degree the mind is affected by that upon which it feeds. He is seeking to lead both the youth and those of mature age to read story-books, tales, and other literature. The readers of such literature become unfitted for the duties lying before them. They live an unreal life, and have no desire to search the Scriptures, to feed upon the heavenly manna. The mind that needs strengthening is enfeebled, and loses its power to study the great truths that relate to the mission and work of Christ,—truths that would fortify the mind, awaken the imagination, and kindle a strong, earnest desire to overcome as Christ overcame.

Could a large share of the books published be consumed, a plague would be stayed that is doing a fearful work upon mind and heart. Love stories, frivolous and exciting tales, and even that class of books called religious novels,—books in which the author attaches to his story a moral lesson,—are a curse to the readers. Religious sentiments may be woven all through a story book, but, in most cases, Satan is but clothed in angel-ropes, the more effectively to deceive and allure. None are so confirmed in right principles, none so secure from temptation, that they are safe in reading these stories.

The readers of fiction are indulging an evil that destroys spirituality, eclipsing the beauty of the sacred page. It creates an unhealthy excitement, fevers the imagination, unfits the mind for usefulness, weans the soul from prayer, and disqualifies it for any spiritual exercise.

God has endowed many of our youth with superior capabilities; but too often they have enervated their powers, confused and enfeebled their minds, so that for years they have made no growth in grace or in a knowledge of the reasons of our faith, because of their unwise choice of reading. Those who are looking for the Lord soon to come, looking for that wondrous change, when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption," should in this probationary time be standing upon a higher plane of action.

My dear young friends, question your own experience as to the influence of exciting stories. Can you, after such reading, open the Bible and read with interest the words of life? Do you not find the Book of God uninteresting? The charm of that love story is upon the mind, destroying its healthy tone, and making it impossible for you to fix the attention upon the important, solemn truths that concern your eternal welfare.

The nature of one's religious experience is revealed by the character of the books he chooses to read in his leisure moments. In order to have a healthy tone of mind and sound religious principles, the youth must live in communion with God through his word. Pointing out the way of salvation through Christ, the Bible is our guide to a higher, better life. It contains the most interesting and the most instructive history and biography that were ever written. Those whose imagination has not become perverted by the reading of fiction will find the Bible the most interesting of books.

Resolutely discard all trashy reading. It will not strengthen your spirituality, but will introduce into the mind sentiments that pervert the imagination, causing you to think less of Jesus and to dwell less upon his precious lessons. Keep the mind free from everything that would lead it in a wrong direction. Do not encumber it with trashy stories, which impart no strength to the mental powers. The thoughts are of the same character as the food provided for the mind.

The Bible is the book of books. If you love the word of God, searching it as you have opportunity, that you may come into possession of its rich treasures, and be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, then you may be assured that Jesus is drawing you to himself. But to read the Scripture in a casual way, without seeking to comprehend Christ's lesson that you may comply with his requirements, is not enough. There are treasures in the word of God that can be discovered only by sinking the shaft deep into the mine of truth.

The carnal mind rejects the truth; but the soul that is converted undergoes a marvelous change. The book that before was unattractive because it revealed truths which testified against the sinner, now becomes the food of the soul, the joy and consolation of the life. The Sun of righteousness illuminates the sacred pages, and the Holy Spirit speaks through them to the soul. To those who love Christ the Bible is as the garden of God. Its promises are as grateful to the heart as the fragrance of flowers is to the senses.

Let all who have cultivated a love for light reading, now turn their attention to the sure word of prophecy. Take your Bibles, and begin to study with fresh interest the sacred records of the Old and New Testaments. The oftener and more diligently you study the Bible, the more beautiful will it appear, and the less relish you will have for light reading. Bind this precious volume to your hearts. It will be to you a friend and guide (*The Youth's Instructor*, October 9, 1902).

The Fair Flowers of Promise

By Ellen G. White

As we look at a beautiful garden, with its opening buds, let us remember that this is an expression of our Father's love. As we note the varied tints of the flowers and inhale their delicate fragrance, let us think of the words, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." God has given us the flowers to teach us lessons of trust. "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" If the great Master Artist makes perfect and lovely that which is today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, will he not care much more for the beings purchased by the blood of his only begotten Son?

We are pilgrims and strangers on this earth, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The path in which we travel is narrow, and calls for self-denial and self-sacrifice. We meet with trial and conflict. But God has not left us to travel without help. Our pathway to the heavenly Canaan is bordered with the fair flowers of promise. They blossom all along the way, sending forth their rich fragrance, like the flowers in the gardens of this earth.

To blot the promises of God from the word would be like blotting the sun from the sky. There would then be nothing to gladden our experience. God has placed the promises in his word to lead us to have faith in him. In these promises he draws back the veil from eternity, giving us a glimpse of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which awaits the overcomer. Let us, then, rest in God. Let us praise him for giving us such a glorious revelation of his purposes.

All along our pathway, God places the flowers of promise to brighten our journey. But many refuse to gather these flowers, choosing instead the thorns and thistles. At every step they weep and mourn, when they might rejoice in the Lord because he has made the road to heaven so pleasant.

As we look at the promises of God, we find comfort and hope and joy; for they speak to us the words of the Infinite One. Properly to appreciate these precious promises, we should study them carefully, examining them in detail. How much joy we might bring into life, how much goodness into the character, if we would but make these promises our own! As we journey in the upward way, let us talk of the blessings strewn along the path. As we think of the mansions Christ is preparing for us, we forget the petty annoyances which we meet day by day. We seem to breathe the atmosphere of the

heavenly country to which we are journeying, and we are soothed and comforted.

Do not think to find happiness in selfish amusement. The flowers thus gathered soon wither and die. True happiness is found only in the Master's service. In him who is the Light of the world we shall find comfort and hope. Our happiness comes not from what is around us, but from what is within us; not from what we have, but from what we are.

It is our privilege to sing the songs of Zion now, to turn our eyes to the light, to bring hope into our own hearts and into the hearts of others. God wants us to gather his promises, that we may be strengthened and refreshed. Let us take our eyes from the curse, and fix them on the grace so abundantly provided for us. God is dishonored when we fret and worry. Thus we show that we are not trusting in him, but in ourselves.

This life will have much brightness for us if we will gather the flowers and leave the briars alone. Comfort, encouragement, and support have been provided for every circumstance and condition of life. No temptation comes to us that Christ has not withstood, no trial that he has not borne. He knows each one of us by name. When a burden is placed on us, he stands by, to lift the heaviest weight. He has given us precious promises to lighten every burden. He assures us that his grace is sufficient. Today we have his help. Tomorrow we may be placed in new circumstances of trial, but the promise stands fast, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Let us rejoice in the love of God. Let us praise him who has made us such royal promises. Let these promises keep our hearts in perfect peace. Let us honor God by weaving more of Jesus and heaven into our lives. Jesus lives. His hand is guiding us. This present life is not the summer but the winter of the Christian, nevertheless he may constantly enjoy the sunbeams of Christ's righteousness. He may have in his heart the peace "which passeth all understanding," even the peace which Christ gives (*The Youth's Instructor*, January 23, 1902.)

"The True Remedies," continued from page 6
stronger stimulants (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 235)."
"When the message comes to those who have not heard the truth for this time, they see that a great reformation must take place in their diet. They see that they must put away flesh food, because it creates an appetite for liquor, and fills the system with disease (*Ibid.*, p. 268)." Even when you use herbal teas, for example, you must read the label and watch for any stimulating ingredients. Caffeine and theobromine are very similar. They affect the cell in a way that it gets excited. Raising your blood sugar with cakes, pastries, and refined foods has a stimulating effect. The raising of the blood sugar gives you a good feeling, but then the blood sugar drops and you have a depression which causes you to rush to get the stimulant again and when you do this several times you get into an addiction.

Bible Reading on Genesis 17-20

1. Using *Strong's Concordance* or any good Bible Lexicon, please list what the names Abram and Abraham mean?

2. What was the token of the covenant between Abraham and God?

3. In the New Testament, Paul calls circumcision a sign of what?

4. In the New Covenant what is to be circumcised?

5. In both type and antitype, what was to happen to the one who would not be circumcised?

6. What text in Hebrews makes reference to Genesis 18:2?

7. Compare Abraham's statement of the amount of bread he would provide with what he commanded Sarah to bake if three measures equals about 20 quarts. This, added with the calf that Abraham directed to be killed, tells us what about the degree of hospitality that he wished to show? The word hospitality is not used in the Old Testament, although its concept is here clearly taught. It is used four times in the New Testament. Using a lexicon or *Strong's Concordance*, please explain what the word "hospitality" literally means.

8. What did the LORD say in regard to Sarah's unbelief that she could have a child?

9. What had Abraham recently done to give validity to God's statement in Genesis 18:19?

10. For how many souls did Abraham first ask God to spare Sodom? How many people did Abraham finally seem content to ask God to spare to city over?

11. As Abraham pleaded with God over Sodom, what did Abraham ask God in relationship to God's character?

12. When the angels entered into Sodom, where was Lot? What might we gather from this?

13. According to Genesis 19:4, how pervasive was the wickedness in Sodom?

14. What did Lot offer to do to those who wished to harm the strangers?

15. Even after being struck with blindness, what did the Sodomites try to do?

16. We are not told the exact number of children Lot had in Sodom, but how many at a minimum do we know that he had?

17. What did the angels do when Lot lingered?

18. Lot was told to escape to the mountain, but what did Lot instead request?

19. Do we know what happened to Zoar later and why Lot left it? (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 167, 168.)

20. Sadly, what falsehood did Abraham tell Abimelech? Upon what basis was this said?

21. Because Abimelech was moved by integrity, what did God do for him?

Bonus: Genesis 19:14 tells of Lot's son-in-law's reaction to his pronouncement that Sodom was soon to be destroyed. What parallel can we draw to how the wicked will view the righteous who proclaim the three angels' messages at the end of time?

Answers for July's quiz on Genesis 13-16

1. Abram was rich in cattle, silver, and gold.

2. Lot's choice to Abraham's offer showed that Lot, instead of thinking of Abram who deserved to be first or others as Christ would have, thought of himself.

3. After Abram separated from Lot, God showed him the land that he would give him.

4. Concern question 3, Stephen and Paul noted, "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on (Acts 7:5)." "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. (Hebrews 11:13, 14)."

5. The names of the kings of Sodom (Bera) and Gomorrah (Birsha) mean: Bera = "son of evil" and Birsha = "with iniquity."

6. Abram had 318 trained servants.

7. Aner, Eshcol, Mamre, Amorites went with Abraham to help rescue Lot.

8. Chedorlaomer was joined by three other kings.

9. Two kings came to greet Abram and his forces after they defeated Chedorlaomer and his confederates.

10. Christ fulfilled Psalm 110:4 in being both a priest and a king.

11. God promised he would be a shield and a great reward to Abram.

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12. The animals that Abram sacrificed as recorded in Genesis 15:8-10 were symbols of the covenant between God and Abram.

13. When God foretold the Egyptian bondage to Abram, the children of Israel would wait until the fourth generation until they came out because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.


14. Hagar was from Egypt.

15. Sarai quickly saw that her plan with Hagar was not wise.

16. The angel of the LORD addressed Hagar as Sarai's maid "to remind her of her position and her duty (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 145)."

17. The name Ishmael means "God hears."

18. Abram was eighty-six when Ishmael was born.

Bonus: The word "believed" in Genesis 15:6 is "*Aman*" and it means to foster or build upon. Abram believed or built upon the LORD. 

"Prayer Requests" continued from page 1

Cameroon, Georgia; August 9: Greece, Jordan, Malta, Papua New Guinea; August 16: Rwanda, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam; August 23: Afghanistan, Bermuda, Comoros, Fiji; August 30: Honduras, Laos, Lithuania, Monaco. We invite you to join with us in prayer for these countries, for we know the end of all things is upon us.

Please check Smyrna News and the weekly geoquiz, both on the website, for information on these countries, and if you know of any people in these areas that we can reach with the "Good News About God," please let us know!

Onycha Holt

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