

# 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

## Which God?

By David Clayton

### Many Ideas

There is only one God. This is a clear teaching of the Bible. (See Mark 12:29-34.) But did you know that among Christians there are several different ideas about who God really is? In actual fact there are several different Gods worshiped in Christendom, although only *one* of them is the true God. Many of us may be actually worshiping a false God if our ideas of God are wrong. The question is, which God do you worship? Do you worship the true God of the Bible or do you worship a false idea of God? Let us remember that those who worship God “must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24) Let us notice some of the more popular views of God.

1. First of all, there is the belief that God is a *Trinity*. This is the belief of most Christians. According to this dogma God has three parts. One part is called Father, one part is called Son, and the other part is called Holy Spirit. All three parts, or persons, make up one great Being. This Being has all power, all knowledge and has existed forever with His three parts or persons.

2. Second, there is the belief that God is only one Person, but He reveals Himself in different ways at different times. For example, in the Old Testament He was the Father, then He (the same person) took on the form of the Son when Christ was on earth, and afterwards He became the Holy Spirit. This belief is commonly referred to as the “Jesus Only” doctrine.

3. Third, there is the belief that there are three almighty Beings who all have exactly the same authority and power, and that they have all lived for all eternity. All three are said to be God, but because they are in agreement in everything they do, they are said to be one God. According to this belief, these three Beings (Gods) decided long, long ago to act in three different roles. One would act as Father, one as Son and one would work as Holy Spirit.

4. Fourth, there is the belief that God is only one Person, and that this Person is the Father alone. It is said that Jesus Christ was *created* by God long, long ago and was set above the rest of creation. The Holy

## Digital Video Production Begun

God has recently blessed us with a new digital video camera and computer editing hardware and software. This has allowed us to start producing some high quality video presentations that not only stand out in content quality, but presentation quality as well.

We thank and praise our heavenly Father that He has provided this equipment to help us find another avenue with which to reach souls with the gospel presentation!

We are currently working on a series of at least twelve messages that are designed to cover the basic issues concerning the truth about God and its relationship to the gospel. These messages will be presented by David Clayton,

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Spirit is said to be God's power, or active force. This is the belief of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Can all these ideas be correct? Of course not! It is clear that these people all worship different Gods! But does it really matter? As long as we say "God" and try to do what is right, does it matter what we believe? Yes, it certainly does! There is a popular belief in the world today that it does not matter what a person believes as long as he or she calls upon the name of God. This is a false and very dangerous idea. The Bible teaches us that those who do not love the truth *will be deceived* and will believe a lie. Because they believe this lie they will be damned (condemned) and destroyed. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Jesus Himself said: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3) And yet, how can we know God if we do not even know who we are talking to when we call upon Him? Do we mean:

- ↳ Three persons who are really one Being?
- ↳ One person operating in three ways?
- ↳ Three almighty beings acting in three roles?
- ↳ One person and a created Son?

We have outlined four popular ideas, each one different from the other and yet none of these present the true biblical truth about God.

## **The True God**

What does the word "God" mean? Generally, the word refers to anything which is regarded as superior, or which is worshiped. However, the Bible teaches that there is only one **true** God, and that this God is the greatest Being in the universe. All things come from Him, all power belongs to Him and He is ruler over all. Who is this Person? According to the Bible, **this Person is God the Father alone.**

"One God and Father of all, who is above all..." (Ephesians 4:6)

"...there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things...(1 Corinthians 8:6)

This great God, the Father, the Lord God almighty, had a Son. Way back in the days of eternity this God begot, or brought forth, a Son from His own substance. **This Son was not created, He was begotten.** Creation means to be formed from a substance outside of the creator, but birth means to be brought forth from the Father's own substance.

## **The Son of God**

This Son of God was just like His Father. He was begotten in His exact image, with the same pure, holy nature. God gave all His power and authority to His Son, and it was by His Son, Michael, that God created every single thing in the universe. (See Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:2; etc.) The book of Proverbs tells us of the birth of this Son of God, and of the relationship which He enjoyed with God in the days before the world was made. Though He is referred to as "wisdom," yet it is plain that the passage is speaking of the Son of God. We should note that in 1 Corinthians 1:24 Christ is called, "the wisdom of 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; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: 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; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." (Proverbs 8:22-30)

Jesus Himself tells us that He was the **begotten** Son of God. He says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16)

This Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the One whom God sent into the world to die for the sins of men. It is He who was in the form of God (Philippians 2:6), yet laid aside the glory which He shared with His Father and humbled Himself to become a poor wretched human being. He allowed Himself to be scorned, beaten, mocked, insulted and brutally crucified, and He endured separation from His beloved Father, in order that we sinners could have life. This One who gave His life was the Son of God. He was of the very nature of God, because He was born from God, though He was not God Himself. What a great marvel it is when we consider that it was His own beloved Son that God gave; the one who came from the very bosom and heart of the Father. (John 1:18)

## Two Vital Truths

There are two truths which are vital links in the plan of salvation. These are truths which we must believe if we are to be saved.

- The first of these is the truth of God's wonderful love for the human family. This love was so great that God gave His Son to become man and to die for men.
- The second great truth is that Christ died to pay the price for our sins. He did not pretend to die, but He really and truly did die.

Now the teachings of Christendom say that Jesus Christ was not really the Son of God in the true sense!! Some say He was not born from God, but that He was the eternal God Himself. Others say that He was really created by God!! These false ideas contradict the two vital truths which we just mentioned.

### The Proof of God's Love

It was because God *loved* you and me that He gave His Son to suffer and die. It pained the heart of God to watch His Son suffer and die, but He "so loved" you that He gave that which was most precious to Him; His one and only Son, so that you might have life! Surely we can see that this great God really has a very great love for us.

Why do some Christians now teach that Jesus was not really begotten from God, but that He always was a part of a three-in-one God in which all three members were equal in power and authority? Did the Bible lie when it says that God sent His Son into the world? (1 John 4:9)

The Jehovah's Witnesses, on the other hand, say that God created Jesus, then gave Him to be crucified. Does this show the love of God? Not at all. These satanic ideas make it seem that God is really a selfish person who sacrificed His creature, but made no sacrifice Himself. It is only when we realize that Jesus was, and is, really, the true, begotten Son of God; His beloved, brought forth from Himself, that we can understand how much God must love us. He loved us so much that He was willing to give such a gift; to suffer with His Son as He died in terrible physical, mental, and spiritual agony, that wretched, sinful men might have the chance to live in eternal happiness.

The enemy of God and His truth, the devil, has done his best to destroy the greatest truth in the universe, the truth of the marvelous love of God for the sinful race of men. How can we discern that love? We see

that love only when we understand that it was His own Son, the beloved of His bosom, His one and only begotten Son, that God gave for us; for you and me. But Satan has deceived the Christian churches. He has led the people who should protect this truth to destroy it, and today, many Christians teach that although Jesus is *called* the Son of God, He is not *really* God's Son in the true sense.

It should also be obvious that if Jesus was not God's Son, but God Himself, it would not be true that He died for our sins because the Bible teaches that God cannot die. (1 Timothy 6:16)

### Where It Began

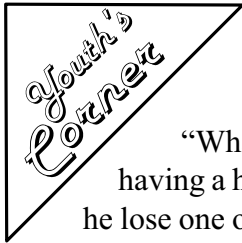
Sixteen hundred years ago, in AD 325, the great theologians of the Catholic Church came together at Nice, to discuss whether or not Jesus was really God's Son. Some of them, led by a man named Arius, decided that He was really not the Son of God, but was created by God before anything else. Today, the Jehovah's Witnesses still hold to this belief of Arius. The other group, led by a man named Athanasius, decided that He was not really begotten of God in the true sense, but that Jesus was actually a *part* of God. This thinking developed into the concept that God was really one Being, or one "substance" which had three parts called Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Today, most Christians still hold to some form of this belief. In doing this, all of them deny the truth that Jesus was really God's true, begotten Son! This Council of Nicea is where these false ideas started and for the past 1600 years they have remained imbedded in popular Christian thinking.

The question is, do *you* believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

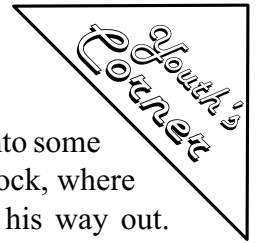
I believe God has allowed this study to come into your hands because He wants you to know that He loves you greatly. He wants you to know that His love for you is so great that He "spared not *his own Son*, but delivered him up for us all..." (Romans 8:32)

If you believe this, truly believe, then the love of God will transform your life. You will have fellowship with the true God and His Son (1 John 1:3) and you will be given a place in the kingdom of God.

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## Lost Sheep



“What a man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.” Luke 15:4-7.

When Jesus spoke these words, he was talking to a company, many of whom knew by experience what a shepherd's life is in Palestine. There the flocks are not kept in level, inclosed pastures, but on the hill-sides, among crags and precipices. The climate of Palestine is warm, and the shepherds watched their flocks day and night, sleeping in temporary booths or on the ground in the open air. Sometimes several flocks of sheep were herded together. This made it more pleasant for the shepherd; for then, while one slept, two could keep watch, and thus in turn relieve one another.

There was always the danger from robbers and wolves to be guarded against. Sometimes a sheep would stray away from the flock; so they were frequently numbered to see that none were lost, for the shepherd must give a strict account of all the sheep under his care. If the owner of the flock found one sheep missing through any neglect on the shepherd's part, the keeper

was discharged, and compelled to pay for the sheep that was lost.

At one time Christ was reproving the Pharisees because they were not true shepherds, but closed their eyes to the plainest truths which he presented in his lessons. He called them blind guides, because they were false teachers. He then presented the parable of the true and the false shepherds, telling them that he was the good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep; while the hireling, whose own the sheep are not, would flee and betray the flock in time of peril. The Pharisees were of that number who were holy in their own estimation. They took no notice of the lost sheep. They were, they thought, just and righteous, and felt no need of repentance or of a Saviour. This parable of the lost sheep was for their benefit; and if they had not been filled with pride and self-conceit, they would have been instructed by these precious lessons given by Christ, and would have seen that they had a work to do for those who had not so great a knowledge of the truth as they possessed. The Pharisees, on account of their learning and advantages, felt above being instructed; but this made it all the worse, because they should have known Jesus and accepted his teachings, and then they would have had divine wisdom given them.

The shepherd's life is one full of peril. If he is trustworthy shepherd, he will not be careless and study his own ease, but he will search for the straying sheep amid storm and tempest. Perhaps he will find the lost

sheep slipped into some crevice of the rock, where he cannot find his way out. He is beset with fears on every hand. The good shepherd does not come with a harsh voice, scolding the poor frightened sheep, but he speaks in pitiful, soothing, winning tones, so that when the sheep hears his voice, he will follow, unless he is imprisoned in the rocks or tangled in the brambles. Then the only means by which the shepherd can find the sheep is by following up the bleat of distress that the wanderer sends in answer to his call. And when the good shepherd finds the lost one, he puts the weary wanderer upon his shoulder, and brings him back to the fold, rejoicing at every step.

This is the way the true Shepherd treats the lost sinner. He goes after him; he does not hesitate at peril, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. He is intent upon bringing the sin-burdened soul to repentance, to salvation, to peace, rest, and happiness in his Saviour's love. And it is the privilege of every one who has experienced the love of Jesus in his own heart, to think if there is not some one whom he can by personal effort, by studied tact and kindness, bring to Jesus, who is ready and willing to accept all who will come to him. We can all do much through personal effort. We can be laborers with Jesus Christ. Will the Instructor family see what they can do to seek and to save the lost sheep? (Ellen G. White—*Youths' Instructor*, April 28, 1886)

# Evangelism in the Carolinas

By Benjamin Vela

## North Carolina

Hickory, North Carolina, was the site for a recent seminar entitled, "Prepare to Meet God." We had 28 meetings beginning September 27 and ending October 21, 2000. The attendance varied between five and ten visitors most nights. We studied the original Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs, and we found them to be laid firmly on the Bible foundation. Those who attended most of the meetings rejoiced to step back on the original platform of truth. The pioneers discovered Biblical truth by much diligent study and prayer. I believe that these Biblical principles cannot be compromised in the least. We saw the Lord bring four individuals to baptism on the full platform of truth. Each made a personal review of all the basic doctrines of the Bible. One family asked for studies at their home. The central doctrine of the Bible and the Christian faith was the same as the original platform was built upon: the truth that Jesus Christ is really the Son of God; that God so loves the world that He gave a true Son to save us. We saw the Lord deliver one from neck pains, another of a cough, and a third from severe pains, several times, so that they could attend the meetings.

There were many lessons that we learned from holding these meetings. One of the lessons we learned was: the advertising needs to be straightforward, and honest.


We learned that when we prayed for God to bring souls that should hear the truth, He is able to guide them if they are willing to listen to His still small voice. God brought Loi, a South Vietnamese man who had been beaten up a few weeks before we met him. He had lost all his identification. We witnessed how God helped Loi to get his driver's license back. Now he has a job and a place to live. He attended the last few meetings. Best of all, he says, "I have found the real Jesus." He wants to get to know God better. Because Loi speaks several languages, he hopes to be able to reach his people.

We also learned how some resist the call of God. A brother I knew in Miami visited the health food store where I was. Before he came in the door he was thinking of Miami and was very surprised to see me up north. He called it a providence of God that we met, yet he did not come to the meetings. Please pray for him.

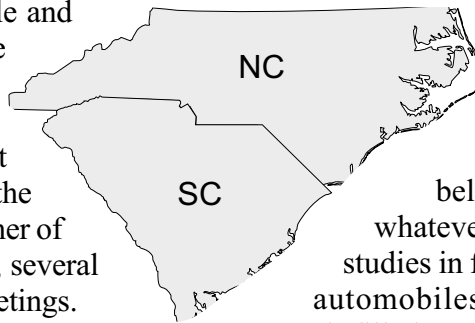
In Hickory, several who could not attend wanted to get the tape recorded messages. Plans are already being made to have a series next year in a different location. One sister came from Round Up, Montana to hear the series, and was thrilled to be baptized in the original Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. She wants a series in Montana next year.

## South Carolina

After the meetings in North Carolina, I visited Summerville, South Carolina, for three days where there was a group of about ten who were interested in the original platform of truth. They had been sharing in the mainline Adventist Church the change of doctrine that has taken place regarding the Godhead. Because the original beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were not allowed to be presented in the church where they were attending, they felt the need to study the Bible free from the control of others, and have started to meet in a home church environment. These believers wish to stand on truth alone, whatever the sacrifice may be. We had Bible studies in four homes, and while traveling in our automobiles as well. They want a series of truth-filled meetings early next year.

Please pray for these needy fields. The work is very young in both. Rumors run riot; false tales bear rule, yet as we live the selfless life of Christ, many rumors will die out for lack of support. Our work is to lift up the Son of God, as our *Substitute* and *Example*, and then the drawing power of His Father will give strength to break ties with the whole system of Babylon with its errors in doctrines. All the errors of doctrine must be revealed so that all who are entangled in Babylon's web of destruction may come out of her. Yet, we must have the character of Christ, so our meditation is to be on Him constantly. When Christ is our Head, as the Father is His Head, we will come into harmony with every Biblical principle because we love Him as He has loved us. 

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# More Clarifications

By Allen Stump

In the September issue of *Old Paths*, under an article entitled, “Setting the Record Straight,” we noted that a publication produced by Pilgrims Rest, called *Checkpoints*, had published some incorrect statements concerning the late Brother Bill Stringfellow. In that issue we clarified and corrected the distorted picture presented in *Checkpoints*. Prior to our publication of the September issue of *Old Paths* I had a lengthy conversation with Vance Farrell concerning what he had published about Bill Stringfellow.

Unfortunately, it is again time to set the record straight. It has come to my attention that Farrell has published what is supposed to be some of our conversion in the November 1, 2000, issue of *Checkpoints*.

Under the heading, “A Statement,” is the reported conversation between myself and Farrell. This report, which does not contain any quotation marks, does not accurately represent what I said in many respects. It deletes many things that I said, making it appear that I tried to avoid some of Farrell’s questions. Further, some parts were totally false. Personally, I do not wish to worry about defending myself, but neither do I wish for the truth to be misrepresented. I am reminded of the following statement:

“When Jesus was asked the question, Art thou the Son of God? he knew that to answer in the affirmative would make his death certain; a denial would leave a stain upon his humanity. There was a time to be silent, and a time to speak. He had not spoken until plainly interrogated. In his lessons to his disciples

he had declared: ‘Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in Heaven.’ When challenged, Jesus did not deny his relationship with God. In that solemn moment his character was at stake and must be vindicated. He left on that occasion an example for man to follow under similar circumstances. He would teach him not to apostatize from his faith to escape suffering or even death.” (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 127)

A point by point clarification of the *Checkpoints* article is beyond the space and scope of this newsletter, but a few areas must be noted. *Checkpoints* reports me as stating that, “At His incarnation, he [Christ] became the Son of God.” This is certainly not what I said! Anyone who has read my published works, or talked to me personally, knows that I believe that Jesus is the literal Son of God, begotten of the Father in the times of eternity past. Further, the article is written in a way to imply that I do not believe in the divinity of Christ. This is also totally false. In fact, I attempted to help Farrell understand that if Jesus was not the literal, divine Son of God, there would be no divine sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Another misrepresentation *Checkpoints* made was to misrepresent my view of Ellen G. White. If someone had only the *Checkpoints* report, they could easily believe that I place a low value on Sister White’s writings. I know this to be so because people have contacted me after reading the report to see if this was so. As in the above-mentioned reference to the

position I hold regarding Christ, my position concerning Sister White was presented in a way that did not give an accurate picture.

Let me plainly say that I believe Sister White was a prophet. I do not believe it simply because she said that I should. The Mormons claim to believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet because he said he was, rather than because of evidence that can be substantiated from the Bible. However, in Ellen White’s case, the evidence is plain that God used her in a miraculous manner. If anyone had a proper understanding of her writings in relationship to the Bible, it was her. She never tried, in any manner, to include her writings into, or on the level of, the canon of Scripture. She stated:

“In harmony with the word of God, His Spirit was to continue its work throughout the period of the gospel dispensation. During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God.” (*The Great Controversy*, p. viii) This statement shows clearly that she

believed that the canon of Scripture is closed. It is also clear that spiritual gifts are to continue till the end of time. However, the gifts are to be tested by the Bible, not the Bible by the gifts. She further declared concerning her work:

“I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth. Thus God dealt with Peter when He was about to send him to preach to the Gentiles.” (*A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*, p. 64, 1851. Reprinted in *Early Writings*, p. 78.)

Comparing her works to the Bible she said, “Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.” (*R&H*, Jan. 20, 1903) Please note that she referred to her writings and labors as “light.” Yet she called them “a lesser light” whose purpose was “to lead men and women to the greater light [the Bible].” The author of *Checkpoints* says, “The Lord guided her to say ‘lesser light’ because of the scandals and errors of Joseph Smith and Mary Baker Eddy, contemporary to her.” This is an astounding statement. Why? First, because there is not a single reference to the Mormon leader, Joseph Smith, or the Christian Science leader, Mary Baker Eddy, in all of Ellen White’s voluminous writings! So, for someone to give the above reason for Sister White referring to her writings as “a lesser light,” it must be a product of their imagination. Second, it actually brings the charge of lying upon God and Sister White. Sister White’s

writings could not be equal with the Bible if she said they were “a lesser light”; to avoid “scandals” or for whatever reason, for if she did not tell the truth about her writings, then they were not light at all, neither lesser than, nor equal to, the Bible!

The Scriptures portray a picture of the Jewish leadership in the time of Christ as being a people that claimed to have great reverence, respect, and obedience to the writings of Moses. However, Jesus forthrightly declared that they did not really believe Moses. He said, “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.” (John 5:46) Many claim to have great loyalty for, and give full allegiance to, Ellen White today, but they only believe in an Ellen White that suits their own ideas. They do not really believe the plainest statements of her writings. Especially her statements that Jesus is “the begotten Son of God.” What a shock it would be for some today to hear Jesus say, “If ye believed Ellen White, ye would have believed Me: for she wrote of Me.”

Again, let me clearly say that my conversation with Farrell lasted much longer than the *Checkpoints* article indicated and the article does not accurately represent all of the conversation. Farrell does not understand my position, or if he does, he does not wish to accurately represent it. Anyone who, asking in honesty and not for debate, would like to know my position on any matter, may call or write me and I will answer all that I can. Or, you may view my published writings on the Internet at the Smyrna website: (<http://www.smyrna.org>). The following words of counsel are well for all to consider:


“All who make untruthful statements . . . are serving him who has been a liar from the beginning. Let

us be on our guard against untruthfulness, which grows upon him who practices it. I say to all, make truth your girdle. Be true to your faith. Put away all prevarication and exaggeration. Never make a false statement. For the sake of your own soul and the souls of others, be true in your utterances. Never speak or act a falsehood. The truth alone will bear to be repeated. A firm adherence to truth is essential to the formation of Christian character. ‘Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness’ (Eph. 6:14).

“He who utters untruths sells his soul in a cheap market. His falsehoods may seem to serve in emergencies. He may make business advancement because he gains by falsehood what he could not gain by fair dealing. But he finally reaches the place where he can trust no one. Himself a falsifier, he has no confidence in the word of others.

“There is absolutely no safeguard against evil but truth. No man can stand firm for right in whose heart the truth does not abide. There is only one power that can make and keep us steadfast—the power of God, imparted to us through the grace of Christ.

“Connected with Christ, human nature becomes true and pure. Christ supplies the efficiency, and man becomes a power for good. . . . Truthfulness and integrity are attributes of God, and he who possesses these qualities possesses a power that is invincible.” (Ellen G. White—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 179)

“The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, *nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth:* for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.” (Zephaniah 3:13) 

## Thoughts from The Gospel and Creation

God alone is good. His life is goodness itself. God's life consists of acts of goodness. One's life is just what his ways are, and all God's ways are right. The law of God expresses His ways, for we read, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in His ways." (Psalm 119:1-3) And His ways are as much higher than man's ways as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Now the righteousness of God is a thing that man may have. The Saviour said to His disciples, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." (Matthew 6:33) But where are we to seek for it? In Christ, because God has made Him unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30) It is in Him that we may be made the righteousness of God. But since God's righteousness is His life, it is impossible for us to have His righteousness without having His life. This life is in Christ, for Christ is God, and God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. The only life ever lived on this earth that was perfectly righteous was the life of Christ. His life alone could resist sin. "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." (1 John 3:5) The life of Christ is the righteousness of God. It is that which we are to seek.

But man cannot live God's life. Only God can live His own life. It would be the height of presumption for any one to think that he could live the life of God. The life of God must be manifested in the man, if he has any righteousness, but God Himself must live the life. The Apostle Paul expresses it thus: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Note again how easy it is for a man to set himself up as above God. Since righteousness is life, even the life of God, it is evident that for a man to claim that he has life in himself, - that he has by nature in himself a principle that cannot by any possibility die, - is the same as saying that he has righteousness in himself, and thus again to claim indirectly that he is God. This again is that man of sin. (E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel in Creation*, 1893 Edition, pp. 58-60)

Lynnford Beachy, and Allen Stump. Lord willing, we hope to have the first of these ready for distribution next month.

The series will be produced in two different formats; one for Seventh-day Adventists, and another designed just for non-Adventists. The non-Adventist series will not include the last four titles below or use Spirit of Prophecy to clarify the truth.

A current list of the titles we are planning on for the series on the truth about God are:

- ↪ The Love of God
- ↪ Who is the God of the Bible?
- ↪ The Father and the Son
- ↪ The Death of Christ
- ↪ The Holy Spirit
- ↪ Answers to Trinitarian's Objections
- ↪ The Roots of the Trinity
- ↪ The Spirit of Antichrist
- ↪ The History of the Godhead in the S.D.A. Church
- ↪ Ellen G. White and the Truth about God
- ↪ The Omega of Apostasy
- ↪ Return of the Fourth Angel

Since acquiring the new equipment, we have produced one video with a presentation by Brother Dana Uhl, here at Smyrna, that is ready for distribution. The title is, "A Song of Hope and Trust." It is a very encouraging message and we highly recommend it.

You may request a copy by phone, fax, e-mail, or postal mail. The tape is sent free upon request. The cost of tape production is \$6.00 for those who are able *and* wish to help with the expenses.





# Measuring

# Up in Christ



By Ben Vela

*(This article is another abridged and edited message in the series of articles we are running from the West Virginia camp meeting. This message is available on both audio and video cassettes. Editor)*

“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.” (2 Peter 1:12, 13) In order to establish the present truth it is important to stir up the memory. Repetition is an excellent way to remember good things. Even angels delight in repeating the important truths of the Bible. Psalm 24:7-10 gives an example of this truth, where the angels respond to the return of Christ to heaven from earth: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.” One angel asks of the other angel the question, “Who is the King of Glory?” Angels enjoy hearing the truth again. Do we love to hear the present truth over and over again?

Writing to the Ephesians, Paul says, “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.” (Ephesians 4:3, 4) We are called to one hope and it is in unity of Spirit. The Bible clearly states that there is only one Spirit and one God. Now if “one” does not mean one, then when it says “one hope” we would be in big trouble, because if “one” means “more than one,” we can have lots of denominations. However, there is only one Spirit, one

God, and one hope. Thank God we have narrowed down the church as having only one hope in one God.

Verses 5-7 say, “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.” Grace (singular) is given to us by God the Father, who is above all and through all, and in us all. The gift is given according to the measure of Christ, His Son.

Let us look at some measuring instruments so we can see some practical applications. A carpenter builds a house. He lays out his measuring tape to measure the foundation, the walls, and the roof. Everything is measured before it is made, and it is made according to the blueprint. Grace is a gift, yet it is measured according to the pattern, the Son of God. We can wait and measure our lives after they are all over (this of course would not be wise), or we can now measure our lives in Christ. Are we measuring up to Christ? Where do we come short? We have our Bibles, and we have prayer. We can pray for wisdom so that we can see where we are not measuring up. If we do not measure up, then we are to receive the needed gift of grace, to measure up to Christ, by receiving Christ!

Another measuring device is found in the kitchen. It is the measuring cup. Some people do not need these cups to make a good-tasting dish. Yet if an item that tastes good is to be repeated, then it requires that a recipe be made. Then it is necessary that the recipe is measured exactly to come out with the same results. Christ’s life had the perfect results of victory over sin, so we must measure our lives by His, in order to see what we need. Then we are to ask the Son to reveal the spiritual recipe of victory over specific sins in our lives. God has a standard in every area of our lives. There is a high standard for our thoughts and

purposes, a standard for our business and associations, a measure in Christ for our music, diet, dress, etc. Christ's recipe must be measured so that we can replicate the pattern. We are not making a copy, but we are actually partaking of the same inheritance as He did, through His Father. Christ wants to measure to us the same experience of victory He knew; then we will be true Christians.

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)" (Ephesians 4:8-10) This was what the disciples claimed on the Day of Pentecost. Because Christ ascended on high to sit at the right hand of His real Father, He can give gifts to men. Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth. That is, He died. It was a terrible experience for the Father to allow His real Son to die. According to the law of justice, the punishment must be measured out exactly for an atonement to be made for the sinner. Therefore, the Father must allow His beloved Son to pay for our crime if we are to be saved. The record of the pain of that separation is mentioned in God's Word: "My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me." (Mark 15:34)

When Christ lost fellowship with His Heavenly Father, He was also losing fellowship with His God. Death is a terrible thing, but a conscious knowledge of the face of God the Father turning from His Son is what broke the heart of Christ on the cross. The Son would have no reassuring words to comfort Him that He would be raised again. At the cross, Christ received no hope of living again. He gave His life as if giving it a sacrifice for eternity. He knew that our penalty was eternal death, and He was willing to give this gift for us. The Father, at infinite cost to Himself, received the payment of the infinite sacrifice of His Son. No greater sacrifice could be given. The Son that went into the grave is the same Son who was exalted. All that comprised Christ's identity slept the slumber of death in the tomb. There was no conscious communication between the Father and the Son at the Son's death. The Son must lose all conscious knowledge of His Father, and the Father must consciously bear the lose of His Son. Sin must have its end because of the death of the Son of God. The final words of Christ are words of faith. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46) God the Father, who is above all, would exalt His Son far above the heavens, after His

ascension. In the raising of His Son far above the heavens, is the promise of a gift in measure with the position that God the Father gave His Son, that the Son may fill all.

Our problem is that we have found many other things to measure up to other than Christ, the Son of God. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (2 Corinthians 10:12) We measure ourselves by ourselves and each time we set our personal measuring tape against others, our own ruler gets shorter. "But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you." (2 Corinthians 10:13) This measure of the rule is distributed by God to us, and it reaches even to us. Thank God that it is a measure that reaches to us and to others also. We have a gift distributed to us that helps us reach the measure; the exact measure necessary to meet all circumstances. We should go to God more often to have a measured blessing imparted to reach unto others. "For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:14) Others may have the blessing, but we have the assurance also. The gift reaches all the way, even to us. Our Heavenly Father and His Son greatly desire that we will allow them to come into us by their one divine, omnipresent Spirit.

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3:34) The Father gave His Son His divine Spirit, or divine nature, not by measure. As the Son of God, He is, by nature of sonship, as divine as His real, divine Father. We as humans are finite; we are only part of our mother and father. But the Son of God has not His Father's spirit, character, holiness, and righteousness in measure. As another Scripture says, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." (Colossians 1:19)

Because all the fullness of His Father dwelt in His real Son, then in His Son we can have the Holy Spirit of the divine Father measured as a gift according to our need, that the Son may fill all. Having received the Spirit of God without measure, He can indeed fill all.

Now for your homework assignment: meditate on Ezekiel chapters 40-42. Let us now notice Ezekiel 40:3, 7: "And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the

appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate. And every little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad; and between the little chambers were five cubits; and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within was one reed." Even the little chambers have to be perfect—measure as long as the reed, and as broad as the reed. The little chambers represent every facet of our lives. The Man who can help us measure right, is the only Man who has lived a perfect life. Ezekiel 42:20 states: "He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place." There has to be a measuring between the sacred and the profane. We, God's people, are to be God's temple on earth. But in heaven we have a pattern sanctuary and a pattern Saviour to be measured by.

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." (Hebrews 8:1, 2; 4:14) We must hold fast our profession that Jesus is the real Son of God, that He is our high Priest, and that He ascended far above all, sitting at the right hand of God the Father who is above all, for Christ has passed into the heavens. The Psalmist says: "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight." (Psalm 72:1-4, 7, 12-14)

We are told that the 72nd and the 66th Psalms "were often sung by Christ. Thus in the most simple and unassuming way He taught others." (*Youth's Instructor*, September 8, 1898) He sang of Himself, the King's son. He sang of the judgment. Not just investigative in nature, but as a judgment of righteousness.

He sang of His gift to save the children of the needy. He can deliver the needy when he cries. He can save and redeem their souls from deceit and violence.

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Romans 12:3) Every man has been given a measure of faith. It is important not to have faith in our faith. When have you and I ever been able to do anything with our believing power? Now, if we believe on what Christ can do for us, then we will receive the victory we need, for Christ's faith was victorious. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12) Why settle for the faith of Enoch or John the Baptist when we can have the faith of Jesus? Why try to have the faith of any present person? We may have the FAITH OF JESUS!

Let me tell you a story about two boys and their father. One day one of the two boys went into his room and found the dung of a horse in the middle of the floor. He cried out, "Daddy what a mess in my room." He complained and pouted all the day. The other son also found the dung in his room, but he cheerfully cleaned up the mess and shouted, "Daddy, where is my horse, I want to go for a ride." The two sons looked at the same crisis in two different ways. One looked at the problem, the other saw the gift available, and claimed the prize as his own.

"Many see and feel their lack, yet they seem to be ignorant of the influence they exert. They are conscious of their actions as they perform them, but suffer them to pass from their memory, and therefore do not reform. If ministers would make the actions of each day a subject of careful thought and deliberate review, with the object to become acquainted with their own habits of life, they would better know themselves. By a close scrutiny of their daily life under all circumstances they would know their own motives, the principles which actuate them. This daily review of our acts, to see whether conscience approves or condemns, is necessary for all who wish to arrive at the perfection of Christian character. Many acts which pass for good works, even deeds of benevolence, will, when closely investigated, be found to be prompted by wrong motives. Many receive applause for virtues which they do not possess. The Searcher of hearts inspects motives, and often the deeds which are highly applauded by men are recorded by Him as springing from selfish motives and base hypocrisy.


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Every act of our lives, whether excellent and praise-worthy or deserving of censure, is judged by the Searcher of hearts according to the motives which prompted it.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 511, 512)

“Christ is watching. He knows all about our burdens, our dangers, and our difficulties; and He fills His mouth with arguments in our behalf. He fits His intercessions to the needs of each soul, as He did in the case of Peter. . . . Our Advocate fills His mouth with arguments to teach His tried, tempted ones to brace against Satan’s temptations. He interprets every movement of the enemy. He orders events. (Letter 90, 1906)” (Ellen G. White — *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 931) The judgment in heaven involves more than seeing how evil we are. Christ is interceding in our behalf. He is interpreting the movements of the enemy in their true light. He is trying to teach us through our trials. He orders events to make a way for victory. We must, by faith, enter

with Christ into the judgment hall of heaven. We must be seeing in advance the special lessons and events that are measured for us each brand new day. If we are not seeking Him daily we will miss the blessing of the events that He has ordered. 

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**Old Paths** is published monthly by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801-9606. It is sent free upon request. Our web sites’ URLs are: <http://www.smyrna.org> and <http://www.present-truth.net>. Phone: (304) 732-9204. Fax: (304) 732-7322. Duplication is not only permitted, but strongly encouraged.

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