



Fifteenth Decree: Contend for the Faith

“Contend for the faith of the apostolic church, ‘the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.’ Jude 3.” The Great Controversy, 64.

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Psalm of Deliverance

“When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Psalm 126.





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Resist Papal Corruption

“In lands beyond the jurisdiction of Rome there existed for many centuries bodies of Christians who remained almost wholly free from papal corruption. They were surrounded by heathenism and in the lapse of ages were affected by its errors; but they continued to regard the Bible as the only rule of faith and adhered to many of its truths.

These Christians believed in the perpetuity of the law of God and observed the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Churches that held to this faith and practice existed in Central Africa and among the Armenians of Asia.” *The Great Controversy*, 63.

THE HISTORY OF THE WALDENSES

JAMES A. WYLIE

“After ineffectual struggles against her tyranny, the leaders of these churches reluctantly acknowledged the supremacy of the power to which the whole world seemed to pay homage.

There were some, however, who refused to yield to the authority of pope or prelate. They were determined to maintain their allegiance to God and to **preserve the purity and simplicity of their faith**. A separation took place.

Those who adhered to the ancient faith now withdrew; some, forsaking their native Alps, raised the banner of truth in foreign lands; others retreated to the secluded glens and rocky fastnesses of the mountains, and there preserved their freedom to worship God....

...But of those who resisted the encroachments of the papal power, the Waldenses stood foremost. In the very land where popery had fixed its seat, there its falsehood and corruption were most steadfastly resisted. For centuries the churches of Piedmont maintained their independence; but the time came at last when Rome insisted upon their submission.”
The Great Controversy, 64. [12th century AD]

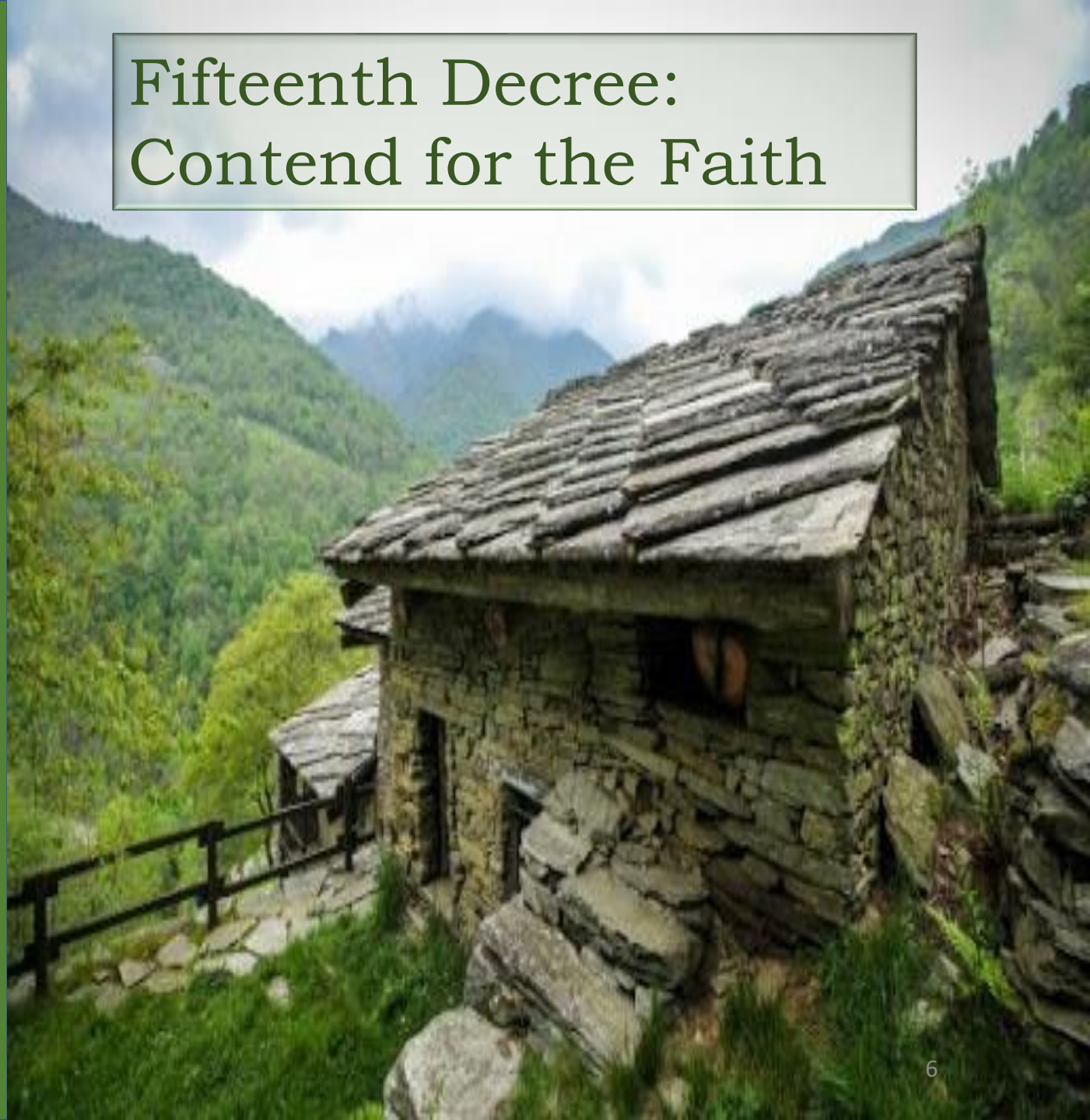
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“The faith which for centuries was held and taught by the Waldensian Christians was in marked contrast to the false doctrines put forth from Rome. Their religious belief was founded upon the written word of God, the true system of Christianity.

But those humble peasants, in their obscure retreats, shut away from the world, and bound to daily toil among their flocks and their vineyards, had not by themselves arrived at the truth in opposition to the dogmas and heresies of the apostate church.

Theirs was not a faith newly received. Their religious belief was their inheritance from their fathers. **They contended for the faith of the apostolic church,—“the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 3.**

“The church in the wilderness,” and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world’s great capital, was the true church of Christ, the guardian of the treasures of truth which God has committed to His people to be given to the world.”
The Great Controversy, 64.



THE HISTORY OF THE WALDENSES



J. A. WYLIE

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“[The Waldenses] religious belief was their inheritance from their fathers. **They contended for the faith of the apostolic church,—“the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 3.**”

To Contend:

1 : assert, maintain, hold, claim, argue, profess, affirm, aver, avow, insist, state, declare, pronounce, allege, plead
<https://www.merriam-webster.com>

2 : to strive or vie in contest or rivalry or against difficulties, to struggle against government

3 : to strive in debate : argue

4 : to compete, challenge, vie, contest, strive, struggle, tussle, grapple, wrestle, scuffle, squabble, skirmish, battle, combat, fight, war, wage war, join battle, cross swords, lock horns, go head to head, oppose, clash
<https://www.lexico.com/definition/contend>

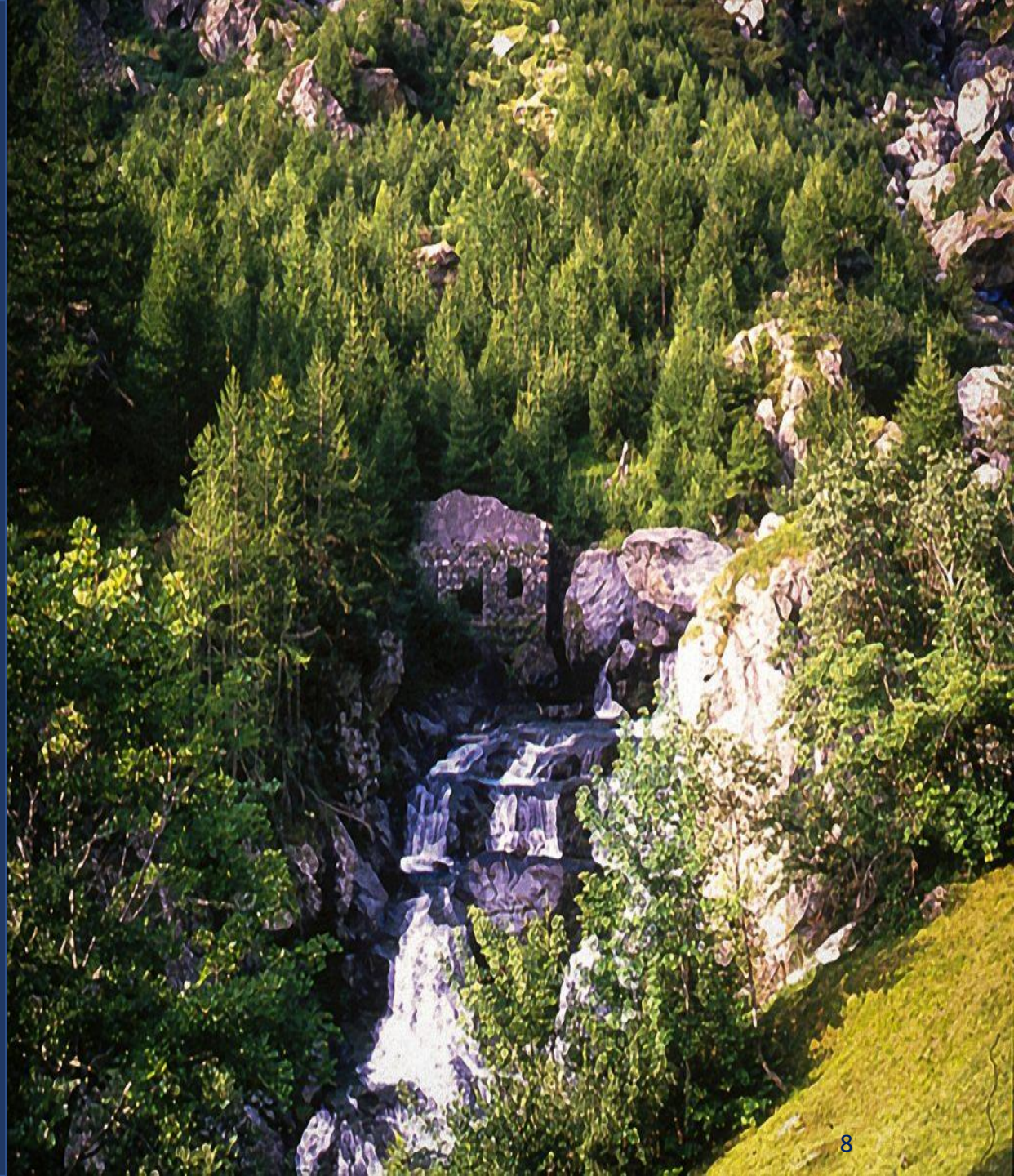
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The Faith of the Apostolic Church

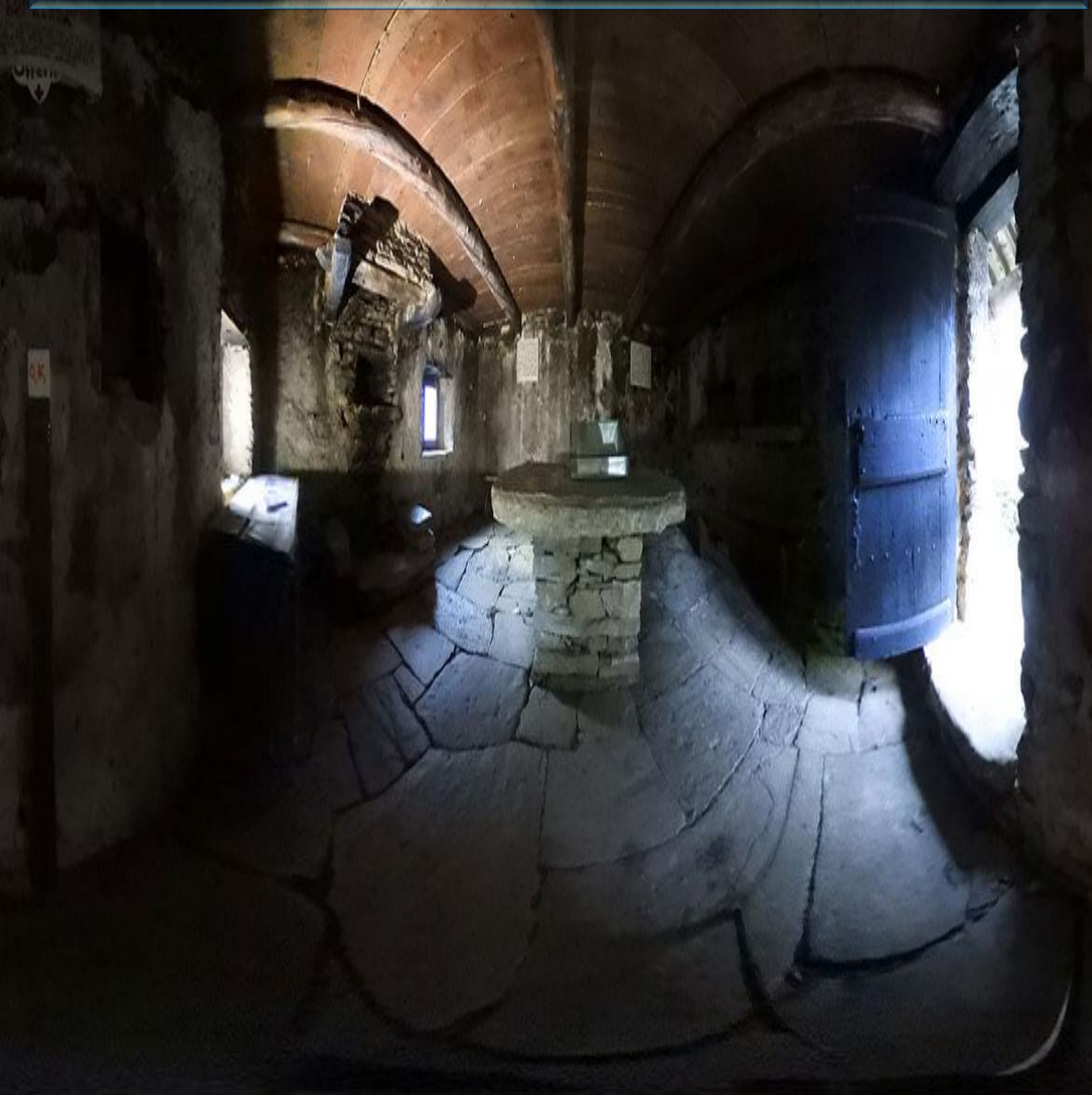
“From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His “good Spirit to instruct them.” Nehemiah 9:20.

And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God’s faithful children in every succeeding age....” The Acts of the Apostles, 53.



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....It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the Dark Ages the Waldensian Christians helped to prepare the way for the Reformation. It was the same power that made successful the efforts of the noble men and women who pioneered the way for the establishment of modern missions and for the translation of the Bible into the languages and dialects of all nations and peoples.

And today God is still using His church to make known His purpose in the earth. Today the heralds of the cross are going from city to city, and from land to land, preparing the way for the second advent of Christ. The standard of God's law is being exalted.

The Spirit of the Almighty is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its influence become witnesses for God and His truth. In many places consecrated men and women may be seen communicating to others the light that has made plain to them the way of salvation through Christ.

And as they continue to let their light shine, as did those who were baptized with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they receive more and still more of the Spirit's power. Thus the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God...."

Ibid., 53

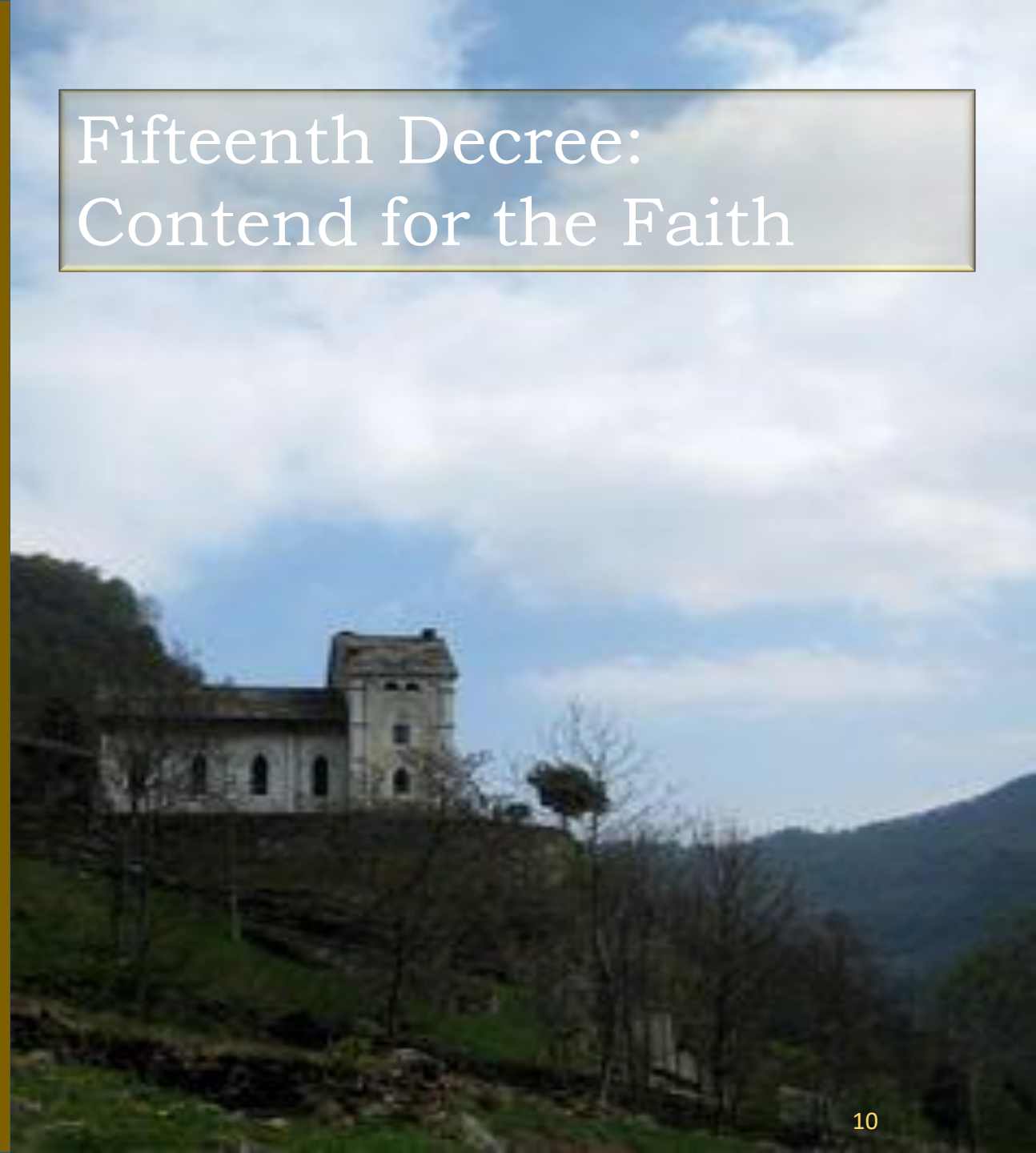
“Among the leading causes that had led to the separation of the true church from Rome was the hatred of the latter toward the Bible Sabbath. As foretold by prophecy, the papal power cast down the truth to the ground.

The law of God was trampled in the dust, while the traditions and customs of men were exalted. The churches that were under the rule of the papacy were early compelled to honor the Sunday as a holy day.

Amid the prevailing error and superstition, many, even of the true people of God, became so bewildered that while they observed the Sabbath, they refrained from labor also on the Sunday. But this did not satisfy the papal leaders.

They demanded not only that Sunday be hallowed, but that the Sabbath be profaned; and they denounced in the strongest language those who dared to show it honor. It was only by fleeing from the power of Rome that any could obey God’s law in peace.” The Great Controversy, 64, 1888.

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The Secret of the Strength of the Waldenses

- The Education of their children
 - Drew comparisons between Bible truths and nature
 - Impressed with sacred claims of the law
 - Great portions of Scripture were committed to memory
 - To endure hardness, economy, self-denial
 - To submit to control
 - To think for themselves, forethought, faith
 - To bear responsibilities, personal labor
 - To guard their speech
 - The culture of intellect
- The training of pastors
 - Before they fed the flock they went out as missionaries for 3 years
 - They did more than sermonize
 - Were sustained by freewill offerings and their own labor
 - They trained the youth
 - Bible the chief study especially gospels and epistles
 - They copied the Bible
 - The preservation of the Bible through them

...Pure, simple, and fervent was the piety of these followers of Christ. The principles of truth they valued above houses and lands, friends, kindred, even life itself. These principles they earnestly sought to impress upon the hearts of the young. From earliest childhood the youth were instructed in the Scriptures, and taught to sacredly regard the claims of the law of God. Copies of the Bible were rare; therefore its precious words were committed to memory.

Many were able to repeat large portions of both the Old and the New Testament. Thoughts of God were associated alike with the sublime scenery of nature and with the humble blessings of daily life. Little children learned to look with gratitude to God as the giver of every favor and every comfort.

Parents, tender and affectionate as they were, loved their children too wisely to accustom them to self-indulgence. Before them was a life of trial and hardship, perhaps a martyr's death. They were educated from childhood to endure hardness, to submit to control, and yet to think and act for themselves.

Very early they were taught to bear responsibilities, to be guarded in speech, and to understand the wisdom of silence. One indiscreet word let fall in the hearing of their enemies, might imperil not only the life of the speaker, but the lives of hundreds of his brethren; for as wolves hunting their prey did the enemies of truth pursue those who dared to claim freedom of religious faith." Ibid., 67.

....The Vaudois churches, in their purity and simplicity, resembled the church of apostolic times. Rejecting the supremacy of pope and prelate, they held the Bible as the only supreme, infallible authority. Their pastors, unlike the lordly priests of Rome, followed the example of their Master, who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” They fed the flock of God, leading them to the green pastures and living fountains of his holy Word. Far from the monuments of human pomp and pride, the people assembled, not in magnificent churches or grand cathedrals, but beneath the shadow of the mountains, in the Alpine valleys, or, in time of danger, in some rocky stronghold, to listen to the words of truth from the servants of Christ.

The pastors not only preached the gospel, but they visited the sick, catechized the children, admonished the erring, and labored to settle disputes and promote harmony and brotherly love. In times of peace they were sustained by the free-will offerings of the people; but, like Paul the tent-maker, each learned some trade or profession by which, if necessary, to provide for his own support.

From their pastors the youth received instruction. While attention was given to branches of general learning, the Bible was made the chief study. The Gospels of Matthew and John they committed to memory, with many of the Epistles. They were employed also in copying the Scriptures. Some manuscripts contained the whole Bible, others only brief selections, to which some simple explanations of the text were added by those who were able to expound the Scriptures. Thus were brought forth the treasures of truth so long concealed by those who sought to exalt themselves above God. By patient, untiring labor, sometimes in the deep, dark caverns of the earth, by the light of torches, the sacred Scriptures were written out, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. Thus the work went on, the revealed will of God shining out like pure gold; how much brighter, clearer, and more powerful because of the trials undergone for its sake, only those could realize who were engaged in the work. Angels from Heaven surrounded these faithful workers....Ibid., 68.

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“It is true that in the time of the end, when God’s work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God’s church.

The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest “in the time of the latter rain.” In response, “the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.”

“He will cause to come down ... the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain,” Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23.”
The Acts of the Apostles, 54, 55.

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth, there will be, among the people of the Lord, such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times.

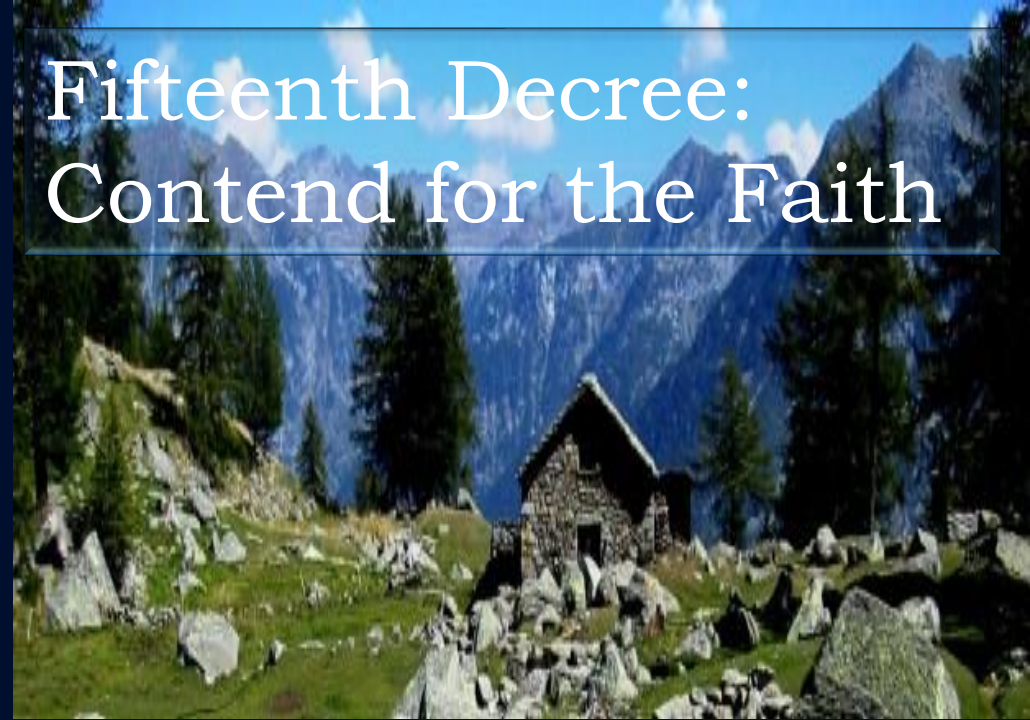
The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon his children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and his Word.

Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time, to prepare a people for the Lord’s second coming.” The Great Controversy, 464, 1888.

“The early Christians were indeed a peculiar people. Their blameless deportment and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner’s peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evildoers wherever their character and doctrines were known.... It was for the same reason that the Jews rejected and crucified the Saviour—because the purity and holiness of His character was a constant rebuke to their selfishness and corruption. From the days of Christ until now His faithful disciples have excited the hatred and opposition of those who love and follow the ways of sin.” Ibid., 46.

Primitive godliness involves (1) blameless deportment, (2) unswerving faith, (3) their doctrines were a terror to evildoers, (4) they had the same qualities of character that made Christ a hated person—purity and holiness of character. God’s people in the great closing work of the gospel will have the same characteristics. — Let us pray and strive for this every day. This can only be achieved by dying to self and allowing Christ to have full control.

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“There should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel [Trumpet], when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” Revelation 10:6, 7.

“Which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:25-27.

The Mission of the Waldenses

- They did not totally shun society
 - Contact with the world (merchants, peddlers)
 - Knowledge (sent youth to institutions)
- The missionary spirit
 - They had to work under cover (right arm work)
 - Churches sprang up where they worked
 - Worked to counteract the deceptions of Rome
 - Taught the character of God
 - Had a personal effect: there was power in the word
 - They worked all over Europe
- Persecution
 - The dragon got angry with them: illegal methods to persecute them
 - They continued to send out missionaries

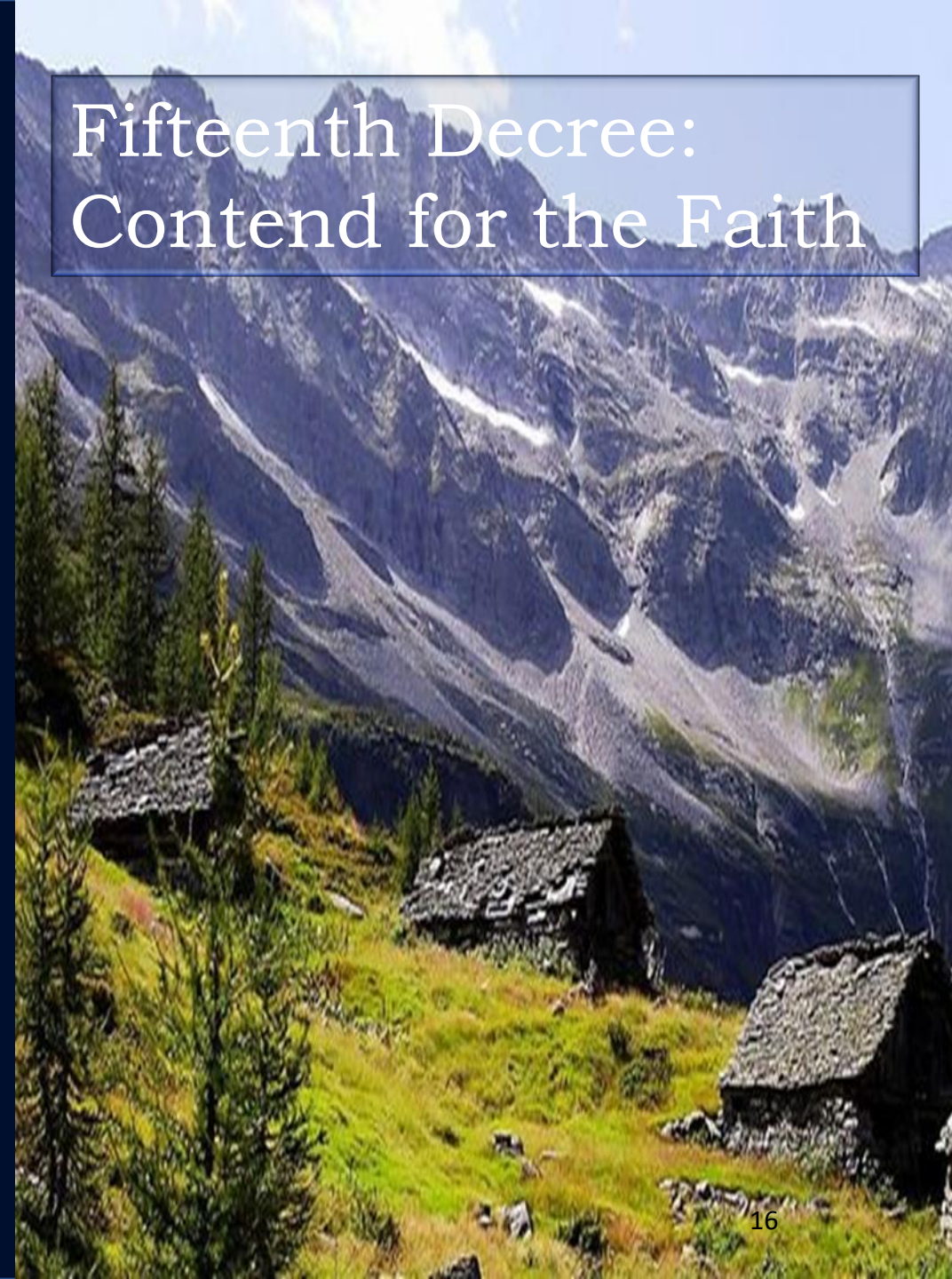
- **Our Mission** – Go and Teach – Baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.
- Teaching them to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded us from the writings of Moses and the Prophets making known the Commandments, Statutes and Judgments of the Moral Law of the Creator, His Work in the Most Holy Place, Final Intercession, Final Atonement.
- Based on the Method of True Education – By enunciating the Universal Laws of the Creator and illustrating them through applied sciences, sanctuary, brain nerves and more.
- **Our Method** – Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.”—The Ministry of Healing, 143.
- Using Gospel Medical Missionary Evangelism – 8 Laws of Health – Natural Remedies – Health Centers – Vegan Nutrition and more.
- Work all over the world.
- Persecution – we continue to send out missionaries.

Repairers of the Breach Restorers of the Paths

“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God’s remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God.

In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.”
Patriarchs and Prophets, 578.

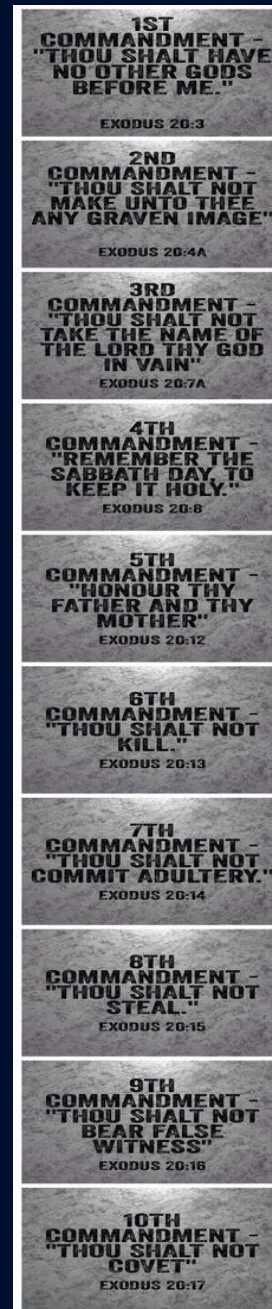
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“From that day to the present the knowledge of God’s law has been preserved in the earth, and the Sabbath of the fourth commandment has been kept. Though the “man of sin” succeeded in trampling underfoot God’s holy day, yet even in the period of his supremacy there were, hidden in secret places, faithful souls who paid it honor. Since the Reformation, there have been some in every generation to maintain its observance. Though often in the midst of reproach and persecution, a constant testimony has been borne to the perpetuity of the law of God and the sacred obligation of the creation Sabbath.

These truths, as presented in Revelation 14 in connection with “the everlasting gospel,” will distinguish the church of Christ at the time of His appearing. For as the result of the threefold message it is announced: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” And this message is the last to be given before the coming of the Lord. Immediately following its proclamation the Son of man is seen by the prophet, coming in glory to reap the harvest of the earth.

Those who received the light concerning the sanctuary and the immutability of the law of God were filled with joy and wonder as they saw the beauty and harmony of the system of truth that opened to their understanding. They desired that the light which appeared to them so precious might be imparted to all Christians; and they could not but believe that it would be joyfully accepted. But truths that would place them at variance with the world were not welcome to many who claimed to be followers of Christ. Obedience to the fourth commandment required a sacrifice from which the majority drew back.



As the claims of the Sabbath were presented, many reasoned from the worldling’s standpoint. Said they: “We have always kept Sunday, our fathers kept it, and many good and pious men have died happy while keeping it. If they were right, so are we. The keeping of this new Sabbath would throw us out of harmony with the world, and we would have no influence over them.

Many urged that Sundaykeeping had been an established doctrine and a widespread custom of the church for many centuries. Against this argument it was shown that the Sabbath and its observance were more ancient and widespread, even as old as the world itself, and bearing the sanction both of angels and of God. When the foundations of the earth were laid, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, then was laid the foundation of the Sabbath. Job 38:6, 7; Genesis 2:1-3.

Well may this institution demand our reverence; it was ordained by no human authority and rests upon no human traditions; it was established by the Ancient of Days and commanded by His eternal word.” The Great Controversy, 453, 454.

Every Divine Institution to Be Restored

1. True Education – Creation – Universal and Physical Laws
2. Creation Calendar – 7th day Creation Sabbath and Feasts
3. Marriage – Reproduction – Protection of the Unborn
4. Family – One under the Heavenly Father
5. Every Home to be a School
6. Parents and Grandparents to be Revered and Respected
7. Health Message – 8 Laws of Health – Natural Remedies
8. Agriculture – ABC of Education – Country Living
9. Worship – Based on the Creation Sabbath
10. Music – Scripture Songs
11. Sanctuary – Cleansed at Last of all the Records of Sin
12. Tithes and Offerings
13. Prophecies Fulfilled
14. Creator's Character Vindicated at Last
15. His Commandments – Statutes – Judgments Obeyed
16. No More Tears – No more Sorrows – Peace with Him
17. Thy Kingdom Come Thy Will be Done in Earth as in Heaven

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“And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”

Isaiah 58:12-14.