

Our Firm **FOUNDATION**

The 7th-Day Sabbath

Immutable Law of God

Non-Immortality of the Soul

Christ Our Righteousness

Three Angels' Message

The Sanctuary

Vol. 13, No. 5

May 1998

Spiritism Engulfing the SDA Church

The Test of Doctrine

Isaiah and the Remnant Church

Walking in the Spirit

Do We Really Believe in Creation?

It Is Best to Be Christians

**The Prophetic Gift in the Gospel
Church, Part 1**

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Editorial

SURELY we are facing the most momentous times and events ever recorded in the history of the great controversy. The final movements are very rapid, and are bursting into the headlines of our daily newspapers and TV news. The situation that now exists in our beloved church continues to worsen at an alarming rate. The indebtedness of our institutions, the misuse of funds, including tithe, brings alarm to the faithful and loyal Seventh-day Adventists.

However, the most alarming of all is our drifting away from the old landmarks that have given us the right to be called the remnant church in the final hour of the great controversy. Our prophet, Ellen White, warned us that, if such a drift were allowed to continue, there would be a reorganization of our institutions, and that the old landmarks of truth, which God gave us at the beginning, would be counted as error. Then books of a new order would be written. A new philosophy of truth would be taught, and nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of this new movement—that we now can call the Omega of Apostasy—and it would be of a most startling nature. See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 197-205.

This new movement would attempt to destroy the confidence of God's people in the Spirit of Prophecy, and it would be the very last deception to come to the remnant church. See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 48; *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 670-684. If this deception were to be successful, the people's confidence in the old landmarks would be destroyed. The 2300-day prophecy, the cleansing of the sanctuary, the three angels' messages, the law and the Sabbath, and the faith of Jesus would be counted as error. See *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, 30. Then victory over all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to sin would be considered an impossibility, and

we would be told we could be saved **in** our sins, instead of **from** our sins. We now call this understanding the New Theology, which is really not new; it began with Satan in the Garden of Eden and became his counterfeit gospel. For almost 6,000 years countless millions have lost their right to eternal life by believing and living according to Satan's deception.

Does God aim to save us **in** our sins? What do the Scriptures say? "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:6-9.

We can become new creatures in Christ only as we are willing to be made willing to give strict obedience to all truth by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are told that justification alone is all we need, while sanctification is something that God does for us at the very end of time. "Believe—only believe," they say, "Jesus kept the law perfectly for you. You cannot keep it. Just believe, and justification is yours." This is Satan's greatest lie, and the thousands who accept his counterfeit gospel will be lost.

Sanctification is an important part of the gospel, and by the Holy Spirit's power it will hold the sinner in a relationship of justification, when there is a true repentance not to be repented of:

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." 2 Corinthians 7:10.

Ellen White wrote these inspired words concerning the true gospel and righteousness by faith:

"The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation. There is to be cooperation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 482.

"Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 214.

The New Theology holds up Christ's life and ministry as a substitutionary saviour, without requiring loving obedience to the unchangeable law of God. They say that the atonement was completed at the cross. These teachings are all part of Satan's gospel. There is a deadly danger in this idea of salvation **in** sin.

We may be tempted in our fallen natures with a thousand desires, but in the true Christian life there are only two choices—to obey the true gospel or to disobey. Disobedience to the righteous law of God brought sin, misery, and death into a perfect world. Perfect obedience to the same law, **through the Holy Spirit's power**, brings joy, peace of mind, and happiness to the seeker for present truth.

Let us remember that mere intellectual beliefs cannot save us—because right opinions cannot make right hearts. Let us make certain that our own souls are completely surrendered to God, that He may accept us into His perfect kingdom.

Ron Spear—EDITOR

It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—EDITORS

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Invitation to Writers

We are accepting article-length (1000–3500 words) manuscripts for possible publication in *Our Firm Foundation*. We cannot give consideration to longer submissions. Whenever possible, we ask that manuscripts be submitted either on 3½ or 5¼-inch floppy disk in IBM format or neatly typed and double-spaced. Address all correspondence to Editors, *Our Firm Foundation*, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328.

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Saving Grace A Personal Experience

SAVING grace is **God reaching out to each of us**, to offer a better way of life—a life of true happiness, a life of being led of God—not a life of ease, full of pleasure-loving activities, and an avoidance of all trials and perplexities. It is living a life of walking with God by His mighty power, and finding happiness and a peace that passes understanding even amidst trials. Will I, will you, respond to Him?

When I was a child my parents wanted me **to know about God**, and they took me to church to learn about Him. Indeed

I learned some, but I was not taught how to bring God into my personal, daily life; nor was I taught that I needed to consult and commune with God. I just learned **about Him**. That was all my loving parents knew, and they gave what they had.

As a toddler, trials, perplexities and sorrows came into my life for a time. My father became severely ill with cancer of the throat, consequently it was years before he was again a part of our home. My father came home from the hospital one day, and my mother reintroduced him to me. I did not know him, and hid

behind my mother's skirt. God shows us His love by using trials and perplexities to teach His children about the need for surrender and obedience. Parents stand in the place of God to their children. As I trusted and obeyed my mother, I found this man to be very kind and loving, and I came to know him as my father. He loved me so very much! It took a surrender of my will to experience my father's love, didn't it?—So too with my heavenly Father. Then during my childhood the cancer returned, and my father was again gone for a long time. My mother had to work full-time to support our family of five children.

Then another man came into our home and life, and worked havoc for many years. A divorce from my real father ensued—with heartache and confusion. Then physical battles came into our home. Mental and emotional upheaval and fear became our daily life—all as a result of this other man. Gunshot wounds, and hospitalizations tore at everyone's heartstrings. Anger, fear, resentment—all had to be sorted out. I wondered, Is there a God anywhere?

It was these trials that awakened my need of God. My family knew about God, but they were independent of God's leading. At that time they did not know a personal God. However, God reached out to me amidst these trials and sorrows—as I am sure He did to everyone in my family. I'm so grateful someone had been praying for me, and asking God to work in my life in a fuller way, for I seldom prayed.

During a most trying situation, this stepfather threatened suicide in the bedroom of our home. The police came, and there in our living room told us that they could do nothing until this man harmed himself or someone else. A sense of unfairness and resentment for all this heartache in our home entered my thoughts and feelings.

Then it was that God made Himself known in my conscience. "Sally, what about 'that man'—shouldn't you have compassion for the condition he is in?" I accepted the thoughts God was bringing into my mind, and as a result I lost sight of how this experience brought misery to me and my family. This compassion and pity was from above. It was not my natural inclination to think that way. As I cooperated in thinking those thoughts, I no longer just had Jesus by my side, but He was working **in me**—giving me His thoughts, feelings and attitudes. He be-

Sally Hohnberger

came real to me! The amazing thing is what happened to me next. A peace that passes understanding—a love that I couldn't explain—filled my heart, my mind and even my emotions. This, my friends, was for me the beginning experience of saving grace, freeing me from my selfish thoughts and emotions. The Holy Spirit was wooing me to trust Him more—even in this unstable environment. Would I continue to cooperate?

As yet I didn't understand salvation, grace, and God, nor the need for **my cooperation to reach back to God** as He reaches out to us, but I cooperated in my heart and life in this instance; and God blessed me. There is a process we go through in coming to know God and in experiencing divine power making a change in us, even though we do not understand all the intricacies of this process as yet. God was calling me into a deeper relationship with Him, and when I cooperated with Him, I was blessed; however, when I didn't cooperate with Him, for whatever reason, sooner or later I was miserable. My relationship with God was beginning, but it was an on-again, off-again experience, according to my awareness of my needs. However, God wanted me 100 percent of the time, but He had my cooperation only some of the time. It was years before I understood this need, and then I came closer to God.

I began to occasionally pray for this man—my stepfather. However, home was still miserable, and unstable. Finally, through various circumstances, he left our home, and another divorce was our lot. There are consequences for not following God's way of life, aren't there? If only my mother had known a personal relationship with God—then she could have confidently had union and communion with Jesus, seeking advice for her life and surrendering to His will. Then we all could have been spared these heartaches and trials. If only I had prayed and cooperated more, but, alas, I did not!

My mother did the best she could under the circumstances with her understanding. Years later God made me aware of some of these resentments from my childhood that I still held in my heart. God showed me my wrong feelings so He could free me from them, and change those wrong thoughts and feelings. It required me to cooperate fully with Him as He led me to forgive and forget by His marvelous grace. As I chose to let the feelings go, God took them away. Isn't God

good to offer to save us from these hurtful thoughts and feelings? People tell me that there is no hope for children in a divorce situation to be free from revenge or bitterness. I say there is hope for everyone who reaches out to God and cooperates as He leads them. Then God can and will transform them on the inside. I know! I've experienced it!

During the divorce from my stepfather, I—a young teenager—drove my mother to the court proceedings. To my surprise, I was asked to take the witness stand. When I was asked to reveal what this man had done to us, fear gripped me. I was unprepared and immature. I

our own transgression of His way and will. Yes, He wants to be our God, and us to be His people. Isn't this saving grace? God wants to offer us a different way of life. He wants to lead His people in the paths of right doing, and enable them to do it by His divine power.

Our lives found peace at last. We started going to church again, but unfortunately we soon fell back into our old ways of sleeping-in and using God's time for personal pleasure. God gets crowded out so easily, even after He does great things for us! How sad! We need daily to reach out—connect and be consciously

Obedience is the result of Christ dwelling within and directing us. Doing God's will in sunshine or rain gives peace and true happiness. Salvation is sweet after we surrender our will to His.

didn't know what to say. If I were to tell the truth, my mother could be shot again by this unstable, irrational, violent man. If I did not tell the truth, the court could deny the divorce request, and then what? My mind was confused and emotional. The predominant thought was, What should I do? I wanted to do what was right for my mother, this man, and my family. God answered the call of my heart to do right. He used the judge, who was above me in that tall desk, in that authoritative robe. Leaning over toward me, he said in the kindest voice, the encouraging words, "Just tell the truth. Don't be afraid. Do the best you can." That was all I needed, and the all-knowing God knew my needs. Again **I responded to the will of God**. Against my reasoning my heart knew that I needed to tell the truth. It was courage given of God which enabled me to speak the truth in that courtroom setting. God blessed, and circumstances led this man far from our home and state.

God will help us when we reach out to Him, won't He? But we have a part to do ourselves in cooperating with Him. When we cooperate and do the right thing, trusting in God, the blessings come in God's own timing—even if it means bringing us out of consequences due to

led of God moment by moment, don't we? Without Him we can do nothing!

What trials and perplexities are making your life miserable? Have you reached out to God—taken time to know His will for your life, and sought to do what is right in Jesus' strength? He loves to commune with you, show you a way of escape, and draw you into a closer union with Him. Obedience is the result of Christ dwelling within and directing us. Doing God's will in sunshine or in rain gives peace and true happiness. Salvation is sweet after we surrender our will to Him. Open independence, indecision or partial obedience—not letting self go—is why many find the Christian life so hard. Try God and see for yourself. He longs to draw you unto Himself, and show you His love—even more than my earthly father did to me as a toddler. "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm 34:8.

In my later teenage years, God again markedly directed my path. He led me to be kind at last to some young fellow. You see, I had strong prejudices against boys and men. One day God spoke to my conscience, saying that not all boys are like the ones I had known. "You need to be kind to one someday" was the suggestion as I walked into my next class. "Well, why not now,"

was my next thought. I responded to that thought and said “Hi” to a nice, blonde-haired, green-eyed boy who sat right in front of me in class. Yet it was contrary to my character at that time. This cooperation with God changed my life! The boy Jim and I were both nominal Christians at that time. We began dating in a very proper manner, getting to know each other, and then our life’s path separated for a year. I got to know other young men, but I was not satisfied. None were the gentleman he was. Through obedience to God’s prompting my con-

brace about two weeks at that time. I really didn’t expect God to answer this prayer, but, friends, He did! God allowed my heart to reach out to Him often in exercising the muscle of prayer—perseverance, and trusting Him to work out what was best for us. God also required me to bring my life into harmony with His revealed will to eliminate the hindrances to His blessings. Sin and selfishness separated me from God. When these problems are present, they hinder God’s working in one’s life. So I needed

had healed him and saved him from that crippling deformity. What gratitude filled my heart!

Why do we as a people pray but then cooperate so little with God? God wants to save us from far more than just physical impairments though. He wants to save us from the bondage of, and servitude to, sin and selfishness. Often He uses physical healing to teach us that He can heal us spiritually and emotionally too! Have you asked God to heal your deformities—both physical and spiritual? Will you cooperate in all that you know He wants you to do?

What are these miracles for?—To draw us to God, to show His love toward us in order to motivate us to trust Him more, to believe we can walk in God’s ways—no matter where we are coming from—and to help us to see that God is real and lives today. This miracle accomplished just that in our lives! It drew us closer to God so that He could deliver us more fully. Do you see His **salvation** in action through saving grace? God wants to free us from the consequences and curse of sin. Our God is able to deliver all who come to Him. Our heavenly Father wants each of us to come to Him with all our trials, perplexities, and deformities, to seek healing according to His will.

Years later we learned that God does not always free us or heal us from disease or deformity. When this was the case, we found that He always gives us the strength and wisdom to keep our hearts and minds—even through the trials, disease or deformity. All of them can be blessings! The real and lasting blessing is to have Jesus indwelling, giving the inward peace and contentment for those things which we cannot, or God chooses not, to change.

When Jim and I were in our 30s we came to understand more Bible truths, and we were desirous of being more dependent Christians—following Jesus more closely. We had come to understand that God’s ways and will often were contrary to our ways of life and lifestyle. We had come to see that following Christ would cost us something, for many changes were necessary for us to come into harmony with His Word. God asked us to change our language and our lifestyle—to cease partying, to change our day of worship, to make some diet changes, and then to enter into a prayer life. Each change proved to be a blessing as well as a discipline!

Continued on 22

We had come to see that following Christ would cost us something, for many changes were necessary for us to come into harmony with His Word.

science, I met the one I was to marry someday, and together in later years we would seek God in a deeper way. Jim and I began dating again, but then we went away to different colleges about 400 miles apart. However, five years later we renewed our relationship and were married.

The next five years we chose to get our lives financially established, buy a home and integrate our lives with each other before starting a family. Most people thought we were amiss not to start a family right away, but we were following God’s plan for our lives. Although we didn’t fully understand it at that time, years later we saw the wisdom of God directing us in this way. Then came our first son, Matthew. Oh what a delight to have our boy! Many trials began in this little one’s life—his liver was overtaxed; he was jaundiced, but he came home at last weighing only five pounds. I’m so thankful we were studying prayer at the time of his birth! God likes us to be practical with the knowledge we are learning, doesn’t He? Matthew also had severely crooked, turned-in feet. The doctor prescribed a brace for his feet which he expected would correct this problem within three to five years.

Trials are a call to prayer, you know. Well, I hadn’t read that as yet, but this situation brought me to my knees, asking God to heal my son’s feet—if it was His will, of course. We had worked with the

to repent from serving self, and give fruits unto repentance like the Bible says. See Matthew 3:8. I did all that I understood to be right at that time. I wanted to be united with Christ and no longer be separated from, and independent of Him.

One day after a couple of weeks of prayer and repentance, I put Matthew into the little swing, and then amazingly I noticed that his feet hung straight! I couldn’t believe it! It couldn’t be, or could it? It was! Excitedly, I telephoned Jim and told him what God had done for us. Jim couldn’t believe it until he came home and saw it for himself. God does answer prayer. Miracles happen today as in the days of the disciples! God continued to call us to trust Him more.

Returning to the doctor was another test of our faith. He said that Matthew was not healed! One touch of his hand on my son’s knees and feet, and they returned to their deformed position. Our hearts were crushed, and we were confused as we returned home.

Jim and I sought our heavenly Father to help us sort out this development. Subsequently we got a second doctor’s opinion, and then we made our decision on what we saw. His feet were straight now! He was healed! We were determined to trust God, and so we threw away the brace! Over the years I have been thrilled to see Matthew skip, run, jump and become very athletic and nimble on his feet, for I knew that God

Spiritism

Engulfing

the Seventh-day Adventist Church

THE *Washington Post* of September 13, 1997, featured an article that resulted from an interview with a sixteen-year-old Seventh-day Adventist East Indian girl from Takoma Park, Maryland, who had spent some time during a summer as a volunteer in Calcutta at the headquarters of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic Order started by Mother Teresa in 1946. In the interview the young lady talked of her deep feelings for Mother Teresa and the emotions stirred by her death.

The *Washington Post* clearly identified this young lady as “a Seventh-day Adventist and a Takoma Park native,” but the alarming quotation in the paper records the young lady as saying, concerning the funeral of Mother Teresa: It is “a celebration of what she has done and whom she has touched, but it is also a celebration of her spirit going on to a better place.”

Six days later in the *White Mountain Independent* paper of Arizona, a seventeen-year-old girl was reported as strongly supporting the concepts of immediate life after death. According to the paper, this girl is a student at Northern Arizona Academy in Show Low. It was stated in the article that she was nearly killed in a traffic accident on August 11, 1997, and that she had what is called a near-death experience. Quoting from the young lady, the article says, “I saw Jesus. He has dark hair, dark eyes and a full beard. He was made of light.” “Angels don’t have wings.” Then the article says, naming the young lady, that she “was raised in the Seventh-day Adventist faith.” It also said that “she experienced incredible peace and love in the place she visited, which was like a garden full of trees, flowers, and had a stream flowing through it.”

She said “there was a white tiger on the other side of the river. Even the tiger had love in his heart. There was beauti-

ful music of the universe. It was awesome. I could feel it going through me.”

The young lady said that she did not want to come back to the earth, and that she was disappointed when her friend, who had been killed in another recent traffic accident, told her that she could not stay in heaven. She had to go back, for her time had not yet come, although she would be healed.

She also talked freely about it as being an astral-projection experience when she said, “I saw myself lying on the bed. I realized I was floating near the ceiling. I saw my mother sitting in a chair crying. Then I went into a black tunnel. It was warm and loving in there. I saw a point of light and went into it.”

What makes this experience so convincing is that this young lady says that all the hate and anger she had felt beforehand had gone. She believes that Jesus has given her a great gift.

Most of the readers of *Our Firm Foundation* will be familiar with these kinds of stories, for they have been repeated many times by different individuals. However, it is alarming that both of these teenagers—who are apparently Adventists—seem to have no concept of the understanding of the Biblical principles of the state of the dead.

Let us analyze in the light of the infallible Word of God the statements of these two young ladies: First, the Takoma Park young lady said that the spirit of Mother Teresa was going to a better place. Many have rushed to use the following text to support the idea that the “spirit” goes to heaven:

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit [*ruach*] shall return unto God who gave it.” Ecclesiastes 12:7.

Is this spirit a living, conscious entity that goes to God in heaven though the body dies and returns to dust? Search as

we may from Genesis to Revelation, never do the Scriptures state or even imply that man’s spirit is eternal or is the conscious element of life. The term *spirit* is used in a number of ways, although its most common meaning is the breath or spark of life bestowed by God, and this is the basis of all other meanings. The word *spirit* is translated in the Old Testament from the Hebrew word *ruach* and in the New Testament from the Greek word *pneuma*. That this latter word has the essential meaning of breath or wind is evidenced by a number of English words related to breath or air which have been derived from it. Such words include pneumatic, pneumonia and pneumonic.

On no occasion is there the least indication that the spirit is an intelligent entity capable of existing outside of the body. The spirit or breath [*ruach*] of humans and animals is identical:

“For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath [*ruach*]; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.” Ecclesiastes 3:19.

No one suggests that the *ruach* of animals has any eternal existence. Quite explicitly, God’s Word reveals that the *ruach* [breath] leaves the body at death, and that this leads to the loss of all mental activity:

“His breath [*ruach*] goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Psalms 146:4.

This point is so emphasized that we would be forgiven for wondering how any Bible-believing Christian could accept the notion that the spirit is a thinking entity outside of the body. Thus when Ecclesiastes 12:7 says that the spirit returns unto God who gave it, it is simply talking about the breath. It has nothing to

do with any conscious entity of life. Almost every physician—and many lay people—have observed this sad event; the expulsion of an individual's last breath on earth. Thus the words of this Takoma Park teenager concerning Mother Teresa cannot be sustained from Scripture. If by her spirit going on to a better place she meant the breath of life, that would be one thing. However, it seems clear that the intent of the statement is to indicate that some living, conscious entity has gone on to a better place—presumably referring to heaven.

Now we shall go on to the experience of the Show Low Seventh-day Adventist teenager who almost lost her life in a car wreck. We do not question the fact that some people have seen Jesus. An account from the Bible of a human being meeting Jesus is recorded in Genesis 32 when Jacob wrestled with a person he thought at first to be another man. But it is clear that he saw Jesus:

“And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” Genesis 32:30.

not a revelation from God or from heaven. For example, she reports that angels do not have wings. That is in deep contrast to the Word of God. For example, the angels that were represented over the mercy seat had wings:

“And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.” Exodus 25:20.

When Isaiah had a vision of heaven he saw that the seraphims had wings: “Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.” Isaiah 6:2.

But Seventh-day Adventists also have the confirmation of the Testimonies of Sister White. Note how plain the words are:

“I saw angels over the saints with their wings spread about them. Each saint had an attending angel.” *Early Writings*, 39.

“But the angels of God wafted their wings over the persecuted ones, while

“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 9:5-6.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Verse 10.

“What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?” Psalm 30:9.

“The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.” Psalm 115:17.

“For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.” Isaiah 38:18-19.

“When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.” Proverbs 11:7.

In reviewing these texts we discover that the entire thought processes, including our hopes, our fears, our concepts, our joys, our sorrows, our knowledge, our praise and all other brain activities cease at death, for death is death!

The Bible teaches that God alone possesses immortality:

“Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting.” 1 Timothy 6:15-16.

If the angels had possessed immortality, it would be impossible for God to destroy Satan and his rebellious angels. Thus God would never be able to cleanse the universe. But Jude declares that they will suffer judgment. See Jude 6. Further, Scripture states quite emphatically that the judgment will result in the death and destruction of Satan:

“Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee.

On no occasion is there the least indication that the spirit is an intelligent entity capable of existing outside of the body.

However, there can be no question that it was not true in this case. If all that the newspaper report said was that she had seen Jesus, and that He had hugged her and told her that He loved her, then we would not be able to be sure of the situation. But note her description of Jesus, “He has dark hair, dark eyes.” Compare this with the Biblical description of Jesus:

“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire.” Revelation 1:13-14.

There are other events that she records that make it plain that the experience had to come from the archdeceiver, and was

Satan and his angels were seeking to press their darkness around them, to lead them to reject the light from heaven.” *Early Writings*, 242.

Thus it will be seen that the declaration of this seventeen-year-old girl is inconsistent with divine instruction. Therefore, though she believes that she was placed in the very presence of Jesus, and that she saw the beauty of heaven, indeed that is false. But the clearest evidence that this young lady had no contact with heaven is shown in her claim that she met her friend who had been killed a little earlier in a traffic accident.

Let us review again the words of Scripture:

“His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.” Job 14:21.

And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. For thus saith the Lord God; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee." Ezekiel 26:16-19.

The apostle Paul, in his first letter to the believers in Corinth, emphatically states that the attainment of immortality is only bestowed upon the righteous at the Second Coming:

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." 1 Corinthians 15:42.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Verses 51-54.

Scripture is so precise in this matter that no Christian need have the least doubt that there will be no immortality for humans until Christ's return. If this were not so, then God's warning to Adam and Eve would have had a hollow ring:

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17.

Nor would the wages of sin be of any meaning:

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

If death does not mean death then perhaps we would question the reward of eternal life as being equally fictitious. However, here we note that death is contrasted with eternal life—rather than simply indicating another form of eternal life. It is very important that we do not come to the study of God's Word with preconceived notions, and then ignore

that which it plainly teaches. God did not dare grant immortality to created beings while sin was a prospect in the universe. To have done so would have led to an eternally sin-polluted universe—with no resolution of the sin problem and thus to continuous misery throughout God's creation.

We have been very concerned about the rapid erosion within our church on the issue of the state of the dead and the threat of the deception of spiritism within the ranks of God's people. More than a decade ago Colin was speaking on the

alarmingly, the same response came. His next series of meetings were in Norway. There he asked the same question again. Only one woman put her hand up, and she told him she had heard it from her husband who was the evangelist for the East Norwegian Conference. A little later Colin went to Australia and New Zealand, and there twice he got positive responses—once in Brisbane where four people, all from the same church, said that they had recently had a sermon on the topic, and also in Melbourne where two said that they had heard a sermon in

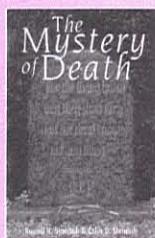
Scripture is so precise in this matter that no Christian need have the least doubt that there will be no immortality for humans until Christ's return.

topic of the state of the dead and spiritism in Florida. At least a dozen churches were represented in the congregation, and he asked how many had heard a sermon on the topic of spiritism or the state of the dead in the last twelve months. Not one hand went up out of the more than two hundred people present! Indeed, one or two called out such things as "It must be five or ten years since we have heard any sermons on this topic."

A week later Colin was in Central California where he asked the same question. Once again, many churches were represented by the congregation, and yet,

the last twelve months on that topic. Praise God for the pastors responsible! Yet all other locations where the question was asked, no one could recall such a sermon.

The Scripture says our people perish for lack of knowledge. Spiritism is the final deception of God's people. How we need to be warning them and fortifying them and helping them to study earnestly the principles of deception that Satan is going to use at the end time to deceive the whole wide world and, if possible, the very elect! □



The Mystery of Death

by Russell R. Standish and Colin D. Standish

This book is a fascinating look at the various ideas on death in our world, including various pagan religions. It looks at the statements of atheists just before their death. It brings forward the clearest evidences of the Bible's unified presentation on this topic. It also brings forward the answers that Seventh-day Adventists look for concerning some of the more difficult passages that have been used against the truth on the state of the dead. The authors have prepared this book to be a comprehensive and practical resource for all readers.

123 pages. Available from Hope International for only 8.95!



The Test of Doctrine

I feel thankful that it is the privilege of everyone to do as we have just sung, "Tear every idol from Thy throne, and worship only Thee." I am thankful that it is not too late for wrongs to be righted; it is not too late to examine our own hearts, and prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith or not; it is not too late to assure ourselves that Christ is abiding in our heart by faith. If we compare ourselves with the great moral standard, we shall understand what are our defects of character. But whatever our defects and shortcomings, we should not be discouraged. We must see our sins, and put them away; for Christ cannot abide in a divided heart.

Our greatest sins which separate our souls from God are unbelief and hardness of heart. Why is it that we are so unbelieving and unimpressible? The reason for it is, we are filled with self-confidence. We feel self-sufficient. If we receive some token of God's blessing, we take it as a guarantee that we are all right; and when reproof comes, we say, "I know that God has accepted me, for He has blessed me, and I will not accept this reproof." What a terrible condition we would be in if the Lord did not bless us! We must study Christ, the Pattern of Character that God has given us. If we have a garment to cut, we study the pattern. And in the Christian life, we

must give up our own ideas and plans, and go according to the Pattern. But instead of this, we work away from the Pattern. We should not be full of self-conceit. We must say as did John, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30.

The more you study and copy the Pattern, the less confidence you will have in self. How the enemy has brought his own spirit into our work! We do not love one another, as Christ has enjoined upon us, because we do not love Christ. If your track is crossed in any way, if anyone differs in opinion from you, then in place of feeling humility of mind, in place of carrying your burden to Christ, and asking Him for wisdom and light to know what is truth, you draw from Him, and are tempted to present your brother's views in a false light, that they shall not have influence. We know that this manner of spirit is not of God, no matter by whom it is manifested. When you see your case as it stands before God, you will have different ideas in regard to your own defects of character than you now have. When views are presented that do not seem in harmony with your own, it should drive you to study your Bible, and investigate it to see if you yourself hold the right position on the subject. That another holds a different opinion, should not stir up the very worst traits of your nature. You should love your brother, and say, "I am willing to investigate your views. Let us come right to the Word of God, and prove by the law and the testimony what is truth."

We should feel the necessity of searching the Scriptures for ourselves. We should study God's Word until we know that our foundation is on the Solid Rock. We should dig for the gems of truth. We are to test every man's doctrine by the law and the testimony; for, says the prophet, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20. John says, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4. Those who claim to have light from God, and yet turn away their ear from hearing the law, are under great deception. Those who understandingly reject the fourth commandment are in darkness. Says James, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10. It is vain

Ellen G. White

for us to think that we are prepared for the finishing touch of immortality, while we live in willful transgression of any of God's holy precepts.

Suppose a brother should come to us, and present some matter to us in a different light from that in which we had ever looked at it before, should we come together with those who agree with us, to make sarcastic remarks, to ridicule his position, and to form a confederacy to misrepresent his arguments and ideas? Should we manifest a bitter spirit toward him, while neglecting to seek wisdom of God in earnest prayer—while failing to seek counsel of Heaven? Would you think you were keeping the commandments of God while pursuing such a course toward your brother? Would you be in a condition to recognize the bright beams of Heaven's light should it be flashed upon your pathway? Would your heart be ready to receive divine illumination?—No; you would not recognize the light. All this spirit of bigotry and intolerance must be taken away, and the meekness and lowliness of Christ must take its place before the Spirit of God can impress your minds with divine truth. We should come right down to the root of the matter presented, and should not be in a position where we shall have no love for our brother because his ideas differ from our views. If you do take this position, you say by your attitude that you consider your own opinion perfection, and your brother's erroneous.

When a doctrine is presented that does not meet our minds, we should go to the Word of God, flee to the Lord in prayer, and give no place to the enemy to come in with suspicion and prejudice. We should never permit that spirit to be manifested that arraigned the priests and rulers against the Redeemer of the world. They complained that He disturbed the people, and they wished He would let them alone; for He causes perplexity and dissension. The Lord sends light among us to prove of what manner of spirit we are. We are not to deceive ourselves. In 1844 when anything came to our attention that we did not understand, we knelt down, and asked God to help us to take the right position, and then we could come to a right understanding and see eye to eye. There was no dissension, no enmity, no evil-surmising, no misjudging of our brethren. If we only understood the evil of this spirit of intoler-

ance, how we would shun it! We join ourselves to the enemy of God and man when we accuse our brethren, for Satan was an accuser of the brethren. We bear false witness when we add a little to our brother's words, and give them a false coloring; and in the sight of God we are not doers, but transgressors of the law. We are not on the Lord's side; we are on the side of him who hurts, destroys, and tears down the cause of truth. We should pray for one another, instead of drawing apart.

the most holy faith. We are to be holy in all manner of conversation. Are your minds broad enough to take in all the circumstances, perplexities, and trials of the brother you condemn?

There are many whose religion consists in criticizing habits of dress and manners. They want to bring everyone to their own measure. They desire to lengthen out those who seem too short for their standard, and to cut down others who seem too long. They have lost the love of God out of their hearts; but

Let us love one another. Let us have harmony and union throughout our ranks. Let us have our hearts sanctified to God.

He who keeps the Word of Truth abides in Christ; in Him is the love of God perfected. We should be ready to accept light from God from whatever source it may come, instead of rejecting it because it does not come through the channel from which we expected it. When Jesus opened the Word of God at Nazareth, and read Isaiah's prophecy of His work and mission, and declared that it was fulfilled in their hearing, they began to doubt and question. They said, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him." Matthew 13:55-57. They did not expect light from Him, and they rejected the message of God. When he who had been born blind, received his sight, and came to the Pharisees and told them of Jesus, they said, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out." John 9:34. They settled themselves in unbelief, in rejection of Christ, though they professed to believe in God.

God has commanded us to love one another. If you see defects in a brother, do not say, "I have lost all confidence in him." Have you any right to speak in that way of another? The Scripture commands us to build one another up in

they think they have a spirit of discernment. They think it is their prerogative to criticize, and pronounce judgment; but they should repent of their error, and turn away from their sins. Peter asked of the Lord concerning John, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus answered, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." John 21:21-22. We are to follow the Example. A flood of light shines upon us, and all jealousy should be put away; for jealousy is cruel as the grave. Purge out the old leaven; for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Let us love one another. Let us have harmony and union throughout our ranks. Let us have our hearts sanctified to God. Let us look upon the light that abides for us in Jesus. Let us remember how forbearing and patient He was with the erring children of men. We should be in a wretched state if the God of heaven were like one of us, and treated us as we are inclined to treat one another. Thank the Lord that His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways. He is full of compassion and love, long-suffering, and abundant in tender mercy. If we have the love of Jesus, we shall love those for whom He has died. □

Review and Herald, August 27, 1889

Isaiah and the Remnant Church



THAT the following prophecy has an application today may be hard for some to accept, but it was indeed proclaimed by our last-day prophet. Let us now look at the condition of the church in Isaiah's day, according to his recorded words:

"For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water. . . . And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. And the people shall be op-

pressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable. . . . For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory. . . . Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy

paths. . . . In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers. . . . And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war." Isaiah 3:1, 4-5, 8, 11-12, 18-19, 24-25.

Our last-day prophet tells us that we, the Seventh-day Adventist people, will repeat the tragedy of the rebellious people in Isaiah's day:

"The prophecy of Isaiah 3 was presented before me as applying to these last days, and the reproofs are given to the daughters of Zion who have thought only of appearance and display. Read verse 25: 'Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.' I was shown that this scripture will be strictly fulfilled. Young men and women professing to be Christians, yet having no Christian experience, and having borne no burdens and felt no individual responsibility, are to be proved. They will be brought low in the dust and will long for an experience in the things of God, which they have failed to obtain." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 270.

Will we accept our prophet's prediction? Again she tells us the tragic course the church will take in this final hour of her probation. See *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 440-444.

Ron Spear

“But very few of those who have received the light are doing the work entrusted to their hands. There are a few men of unswerving fidelity who do not study ease, convenience, or life itself, who push their way wherever they can find an opening to press the light of truth and vindicate the holy law of God. But the sins that control the world have come into the churches, and into the hearts of those who claim to be God’s peculiar people. Many who have received the light exert an influence to quiet the fears of worldlings and formal professors. There are lovers of the world even among those who profess to be waiting for the Lord. There is ambition for riches and honor. Christ describes this class when He declares that the day of God is to come as a snare upon all that dwell upon the earth. This world is their home. They make it their business to secure earthly treasures. They erect costly dwellings and furnish them with every good thing; they find pleasure in dress and the indulgence of appetite. The things of the world are their idols. These interpose between the soul and Christ, and the solemn and awful realities that are crowding upon us are but dimly seen and faintly realized. The same disobedience and failure which were seen in the Jewish church have characterized in a greater degree the people who have had this great light from Heaven in the last messages of warning. Shall we, like them, squander our opportunities and privileges until God shall permit oppression and persecution to come upon us? Will the work which might be performed in peace and comparative prosperity be left undone until it must be performed in days of darkness, under the pressure of trial and persecution?” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 456–457.

We are told that the same disobedience and failure to carry out the gospel commission of the Jewish church will be repeated in the remnant church in the end time. However, because of the greater light that has shown upon us through the Spirit of Prophecy, we are more guilty than they:

“I saw that many who profess to believe the truth for these last days think it strange that the children of Israel murmured as they journeyed; that after the wonderful dealings of God with them, they should be so ungrateful as to forget what He had done for them. Said the angel: ‘Ye have done worse than they.’ I saw that God has given His servants the truth so clear, so plain, that it cannot be

resisted. Wherever they go, they have certain victory. Their enemies cannot get round the convincing truth. Light has been shed so clear that the servants of God can stand up anywhere and let truth, clear and connected, bear away the victory. This great blessing has not been prized, or even realized. If any trial arises, some begin to look back and think they

idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.” Ezekiel 14:1–5.

“Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.” Ezekiel 13:10.

The people who claim to obey the truth are asleep. They could not be at ease as they are if they were awake. The love of the truth is dying out of their hearts.

have a hard time. Some of the professed servants of God do not know what purifying trials are. They sometimes make trials for themselves, imagine trials, and are so easily discouraged, so easily hurt, self-dignity is so quick to feel, that they injure themselves, injure others, and injure the cause. Satan magnifies their trials and puts thoughts into their minds that if given way to, will destroy their influence and usefulness.” *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 129.

The prophet tells us that very few of those who have accepted the light have been faithful to the light of the third angel’s message. We have not vindicated the Holy Law of God, by our unswerving fidelity and obedience. See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 75–78.

Therefore the sins that have controlled the world, have come into our churches. There is now a terrible amount of guilt for which the church is responsible. Listen to the words of Ezekiel:

“Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his

“There is a terrible amount of guilt for which the church is responsible. Why are not those who have the light putting forth earnest efforts to give that light to others? They see that the end is near. They see multitudes daily transgressing God’s law; and they know that these souls cannot be saved in transgression. Yet they have more interest in their trades, their farms, their houses, their merchandise, their dress, their tables, than in the souls of men and women whom they must meet face to face in the judgment. The people who claim to obey the truth are asleep. They could not be at ease as they are if they were awake. The love of the truth is dying out of their hearts. Their example is not such as to convince the world that they have truth in advance of every other people upon the earth. At the very time when they should be strong in God, having a daily, living experience, they are feeble, hesitating, relying upon the preachers for support, when they should be ministering to others with mind and soul and voice and pen and time and money.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 457.

The evangelical gospel has insidiously crept into our thinking and preaching, leading us to believe that we will be saved by churchgoing and tithe paying, and just being “good” people. However, these things we must do spontaneously from converted hearts, because of our love for the sacrifice that Christ has made to redeem us.

The doing of these things has no saving power unless there is a daily and

continual conversion experience. The same spiritual blindness that prevailed in Isaiah's day that lead the people into apostasy, and then into Babylonian captivity, is now overwhelming our leaders, pastors and laity:

"I have been shown that God here illustrates how He regards sin among those who profess to be His command-keeping people. Those whom He has specially honored with witnessing the remarkable exhibitions of His power, as did ancient Israel, and who will even then venture to disregard His express directions, will be subjects of His wrath. He would teach His people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to Him and are not to be lightly re-

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" Isaiah 5:13, 20-21.

"For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." Chapter 9:16.

"The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation, and is applicable to the people of God at the present time." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 252.

"I have been shown that the greatest reason why the people of God are now found in this state of spiritual blindness is that they will not receive correction. Many have despised the reproofs and warnings given them. The True Witness condemns the lukewarm condition of the

beautiful pattern is spoiled. Of them Christ says: You boast of being rich and increased with supposed spiritual attainments. In reality you are neither cold nor hot, but are filled with vain conceit. Unless converted, you cannot be saved; for you would mar heaven with your unsanctified wisdom. I cannot endorse your spirit and your work. You do not act according to the Divine Example. You are following a pattern merely of your own invention. Because you are lukewarm, I must spew you out of My mouth.

"Let us thank the Lord that while this class is so numerous, there is still time for repentance. Jesus says, I, your Redeemer, know your works. I am familiar with the motives that prompt you to declare boastfully in regard to your spiritual condition, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Revelation 3:17." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 963.

"There is hope for our churches if they will heed the message given to the Laodiceans." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, 39.

Listen to the plea from God through His prophet:

"I have tried in the fear of God to set before His people their danger and their sins, and have endeavored, to the best of my feeble powers, to arouse them. I have stated startling things, which, if they had believed, would have caused them distress and terror, and led them to zeal in repenting of their sins and iniquities. I have stated before them that, from what was shown me, but a small number of those now professing to believe the truth would eventually be saved—not because they could not be saved, but because they would not be saved in God's own appointed way. The way marked out by our divine Lord is too narrow and the gate too strait to admit them while grasping the world or while cherishing selfishness or sin of any kind. There is no room for these things; and yet there are but few who will consent to part with them, that they may pass the narrow way and enter the strait gate.

"The words of Christ are plain: 'Strive [agonize] to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' Luke 13:24. Not all professed Christians are Christians at heart. There are sinners in Zion now, as there were anciently. Isaiah speaks of them in referring to the day of God." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 445-446.

When the people realize that darkness is settling upon them, and they do not know the cause, they should seek God earnestly, . . . until the wrongs which grieve His Spirit are searched out and put away."

garded. He shows us that when His people are found in sin they should at once take decided measures to put that sin from them, that His frown may not rest upon them all. But if the sins of the people are passed over by those in responsible positions, His frown will be upon them, and the people of God, as a body, will be held responsible for those sins. In His dealings with His people in the past the Lord shows the necessity of purifying the church from wrongs. One sinner may diffuse darkness that will exclude the light of God from the entire congregation. When the people realize that darkness is settling upon them, and they do not know the cause, they should seek God earnestly, in great humility and self-abasement, until the wrongs which grieve His Spirit are searched out and put away." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 265.

Again we read the dreadful words of Isaiah which apply to us today:

"Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. . . . Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

people of God, which gives Satan great power over them in this waiting, watching time. The selfish, the proud, and the lovers of sin are ever assailed with doubts. Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 255.

We are Laodicea—the last-day church. What is the condition of this church as revealed in the book of Revelation?

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Revelation 3:15-16.

Christ foresaw our spiritual blindness and revealed it 2,000 years ago to John, yet now the spiritual blindness of Isaiah's day is about to overwhelm us: "There are a large number of professing Christians who do not really follow Jesus. They do not bear the cross by proper self-denial and self-sacrifice. Although making a great profession of being earnest Christians, they weave into the fabric of their character so many of the threads of their own imperfections that the

Please read the 33rd chapter of Isaiah for further spiritual clarification of the message.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” Matthew 7:13-15.

Ellen White comments on Isaiah 5 with these inspired words: “Men may seek to strengthen their forces by confederating together, making, as they suppose, strong societies to carry out the plans they have formed. They may lift up their souls in pride and self-sufficiency; but the One mighty in counsel does not plan with them. Their unbelief in His purposes and work, and their confidence in man, will not permit them to receive the messages He sends.” *Review and Herald*, December 22, 1896; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1138.

“The lips that have uttered perverse things of God’s delegated servants and have scorned the message they have borne, have put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Instead of watching, as did the Pharisees, for something to condemn in the message or the messengers, something to scoff at and deride, had they opened their hearts to the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness, they would have been offering grateful praise rather than watching for something which they could misinterpret or twist so as to find fault.

“Men may possess capabilities given them in trust of God, but if they are not humble men, daily converted men, as vessels of honor, they will do the greater harm because of their capabilities. If they are not learners of Christ Jesus, if they do not pray and keep their natural hereditary and cultivated tendencies under control, traits of character that God abhors will pervert the judgment of those who associate with them.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1138.

Praise God, there is still hope for Laodiceans! If we look by faith into the Holy of Holies, we will see Jesus. We must humble ourselves in this day for our final atonement, for the judgment is set and the books are open—the judgment of the living will soon begin. And like Isaiah, may we see our sins, confess and repent. May we see our self-righteousness as filthy

raggs that our iniquity will be taken away, and our sins purged. Then we can respond to the call, “Here am I, send me.” Isaiah 6:8. God demonstrated what He can and will do in fallen human beings in the Seventh-day Adventist Church when we are willing to be made willing to be obedient to all known truth.

Then, as repentant sinners, we will gaze at the glory of the Holy of Holies and the King of kings, our High Priest. “The atonement will be better understood; and by living, active faith, we shall see that whatever of virtue humanity possesses, it exists only in Jesus Christ, the world’s Redeemer.” *Review and Herald*, December 22, 1896.

Let us—each individual—study very prayerfully the first six chapters of Isaiah and understand that they apply to us

now—the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its final hour. See Isaiah 9:16.

Let us not forget our prophet’s prediction regarding this passage in the book of Isaiah. Consider the condition of our young people in the remnant church. It reveals much worldliness—such as involvement in the women’s rights movement, and worldliness in dress and jewelry. It tells us that they will call evil good and good evil, and they will refuse to be corrected. Yet His hand is still outstretched to save. Praise God!

“Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.” Isaiah 5:25. □

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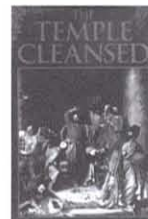


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Walking in the Spirit

THIS I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Galatians 5:16-18.

If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law, because "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14. As sons of God, these have the mind of the Spirit, the mind of Christ, and so with the mind they "serve the law of God." Romans 7:25. Accordingly, whosoever is led of the Spirit of God and thus has the mind of Christ, fulfills the law, because by that Spirit there is shed abroad in the heart the love of God, which in itself is the fulfilling of the law, in whomsoever has it.

On the other hand, whosoever is led of the flesh and so has the mind of the

flesh, does the works of the flesh and so serves the law of sin.

And the two ways—the way of the Spirit and the way of the flesh—are always open before every man. As certainly as the flesh is there, it "lusteth against the Spirit" and as certainly as the Spirit is there it "lusteth against the flesh." Whosoever is led of the flesh cannot do the good that he would. He serves the law of sin and so is under the law. But whosoever is "led of the Spirit" is "not under the law."

And every man is always free to choose which shall be his way—the way of the Spirit or the way of the flesh. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Romans 8:13.

Note that, in the text of Galatians now under consideration, and its kindred texts in Romans and also in Colossians, it is stated in words and constantly held in view that the flesh, in its true fleshly sinful nature, is still

present with him who has the Spirit of God and that this flesh is warring against the Spirit.

That is, when a man is converted and is thus brought under the power of the Spirit of God, he is not so delivered from the flesh that he is actually separated from it with its tendencies and desires so that by the flesh he is no more tempted and that with it he has no more contest. No, that same degenerate, sinful flesh is there with its same tendencies and desires. But the individual is no longer subject to these. He is delivered from subjection to the flesh with its tendencies and desires and is now subject to the Spirit. He is now subject to a power that conquers, brings under, crucifies, and keeps under, the flesh, sinful as it is, with all its affections and lusts. Therefore, it is written that "ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body." "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which

A. T. Jones

is idolatry.” Colossians 3:5. Note that all these things are there in the flesh and would live and reign if the flesh were to rule. But since the flesh itself is brought into subjection to the power of God, through the Spirit, all these evil things are killed at the root and thus prevented from appearing in the life.

This contrast between the rule of the flesh and the rule of the Spirit is clearly shown in Romans 7:14–24 and in 1 Corinthians 9:26–27. In the seventh chapter of Romans is pictured the man who is under the power of the flesh, “carnal, sold under sin,” (Romans 7:14) who longs to do good and wills to do good, but is subject to a power in the flesh that will not let him do the good that he would. “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” Verse 19. “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Verses 21–24. That describes the man who is subject to the flesh, “to the law of sin” that is in the members. And when he would break away from the power of the flesh and would do good, that power still brings him into captivity and holds him under the dominion of the flesh, the law of sin, which is in his members.

But there is deliverance from that power. Therefore, when he cries out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” there is given instantly the answer: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Verse 25. There is the way of deliverance, for Christ alone is the Deliverer.

And now this man, though he is thus delivered, is not delivered from a contest; he is not put into a condition where he has no fighting to do with the flesh. There is a fight still to be carried on, and it is not a make-believe fight. It is not the fighting of a phantom. Here is the man of 1 Corinthians 9:26–27: “So fight I, not as one that beateth the air.” What does he fight? What does he beat? Read: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Thus, in the battle that the Christian fights in his body, is the flesh with its

affections and lusts. The body is to be, by the Christian, kept under and brought into subjection by the new power of the Spirit of God to which he is now subject and to which he became subject when delivered from the power of the flesh and the law of sin.

This is made yet more expressive by the fuller rendering of the Greek word translated “keep under,” in 1 Corinthians 9:27: “I keep under my body.” It means, literally, “to strike under the eyes, hit and beat the face black and blue.” Ac-

tation exactly where they are to conquer all the temptation.

If men were to be saved by being delivered utterly from the flesh just as it is, then Jesus need never have come to the world. If men were to be saved by being delivered from all temptation and set in a realm of no temptation, then Jesus need not have come into the world. But never, by any such deliverance as that, could man have developed character. Therefore, instead of trying to save men by delivering them utterly from the

Instead of Jesus trying to save men in a way in which they would be limp and characterless by setting them in a realm of no temptation, He came to man just where man was—in the midst of all his temptations.

cordingly, Conybeare and Howson translate this passage thus: “I fight not as the pugilist who strikes out against the air, but I bruise my body and force it into bondage.”

Thus the seventh chapter of Romans shows the man subject to the power of the flesh and the law of sin that is in the members, but longing for deliverance. The ninth chapter of first Corinthians shows the flesh subject to the man through the new power of the Spirit of God. In the seventh chapter of Romans, the flesh is ruling and the man is under. In the ninth chapter of first Corinthians, the man is ruling and the flesh is under.

And this blessed reversal of things is wrought in conversion. By conversion the man is put in possession of the power of God and under the dominion of the Spirit of God so that by that power he is made ruler over the flesh with all its affections and lusts and through the Spirit he crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts in his fighting “the good fight of faith.” 1 Timothy 6:12.

Men are not saved by being delivered utterly from the flesh but by receiving power to conquer and rule over all the evil tendencies and the desires of the flesh. Men do not develop character (in fact, they never could) by being delivered into a realm of no temptation, but by receiving power in the field of temp-

flesh just where they were, Jesus came to the world and put Himself *in the flesh* just where men are. He met that flesh *just as it is*, with all its tendencies and desires. By the divine power which He brought by faith, He “condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3) and thus brought to all mankind that divine faith which brings the divine power to man to deliver him from the power of the flesh and the law of sin, just where he is, and to give him assured dominion over the flesh, just as it is.

Instead of Jesus trying to save men in a way in which they would be limp and characterless by setting them in a realm of no temptation, He came to man just where man was—in the midst of all his temptations. Jesus came in the very flesh such as man has, and in that flesh He met all the temptations known to that flesh and conquered every one of them, and by that conquest brought victory to every soul in the world. Bless His name.

And every soul can have in its fullness that victory, who will receive and keep the faith of Jesus. For “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4. □

Review and Herald, September 18, 1900

Do We Really Believe in Creation?



I am sure this seems like a startling question! Why, of course, I believe in Creation! Why, of course, we, as professing Christians, believe in Creation! Genesis, chapter one, shows us clearly that God spoke and it was done. Our world didn't just evolve over millions and billions of years. He spoke and it was done!

He said, "Let there be light: and there was light"—immediately! Genesis 1:3. He said, Let the earth bring forth the grass, flower, and tree—and they were all there at that very instant in perfect form, in delicate and intricate beauty, in lush verdure, and in full stature! The Creator called for birds in the air and

fish in the sea. Immediately, as soon as He spoke the words, the skies were filled with birds of all sizes and colors with their songs bringing joy! At that same instant, fish of every shape, color and size began swimming through the pure waters!

Our family had the opportunity to spend two days at the Great Barrier Reef while we were in Australia. What a tremendous experience! I told my family that I could have stayed for a month—just enjoying all the beauty of God's created underwater world that I had never seen before. We saw thousands of fish in many varieties of shapes, sizes, and colors. At one time we snorkeled for over

two and one-half hours, captivated by the beauty and peacefulness of God's creation, but we just couldn't take it all in.

I love the beauties of creation. I love to work in the flower beds and gardens. I love to sit on our porch and look out over the trees and mountains, listening to the birds sing. I am learning to predict the weather and seasons just by watching the birds and listening to their songs of praise. I love to feed the wild deer from my hand, to see the occasional bear or moose meander through the yard, or to watch the determined squirrel at the bird feeder. I enjoy hiking into the back country or up to a mountain top. But mostly, I love watching my children enjoy all the fun, beauty, and simplicity of these things too.

God truly is a God of Creation, and He did all this for us—for our enjoyment! He wanted it to be a constant reminder to us that **He is the God of heaven and earth—the Creator of all!**

And now, dear friends, I want to share with you why I asked the question at the beginning of this article—"Do we really believe in creation?" We have no difficulty believing in God's creative power from the things around us in nature, but what about that same power—His creative power—for you and me? Isn't this where we start to have doubts? The same God who spoke and it was done, speaks to our hearts today in love, calling us to a better way—His way.

How sad it is to hear many express doubts when God speaks to their hearts! When truth and duty come to them, they say:

"You don't understand. . . ."

"I came from a divorced family. I never really had a father figure."

"I was raised where my mother did everything, and I never really learned how to work."

"My parents weren't Christians, so I wasn't raised with the values you had."

"I am a single parent."

"I was an only child."

"My father and mother never got along."

"We never really had anything as kids."

"If you only knew my father and mother."

And the newest one which pretty much covers it all:

"I came from a dysfunctional family."

Alane Waters

It is true that these or other factors all helped to develop us into what we are, but our Creator bids us, "Take up thy bed, and walk." Mark 2:9.

Have any of us come from a family in which everything was perfect in God's way? But these expressions of doubt lead to the next step:

"And that is why. . . ."

"I can't. . . ."

"It is too hard."

"It will never work for me."

And so we begin to list all our **excuses and reasons** why the power of the gospel of Christ is not powerful enough for us. We have created terms to put onto wrong behavior and attitudes that become "an excuse or justification" to let self continue to rule and be miserable, sour, unhappy, discouraged, stressed, and complaining. Our excuses, our "I can't's," show we are faithless, graceless, and in actuality, evolutionists. We are stuck in the dungeon of a "Doubting Castle" because "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7.

I know from experience how this works! I have said some of these same things, and others like them, in the past. I had become conditioned by society, and even in Christianity, to excuse myself, or to justify myself as to why I couldn't, or why it was too hard, instead of taking hold of the raw promise of God—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13.

Friends, **we can't because we won't!** We won't let go and let God have us. We won't give Him time in the morning to strengthen and fortify us through study and prayer for what lies ahead of us in the day. We won't listen to His still small voice that speaks to our hearts—"Don't say that" or "Don't do that." We won't say No to our appetites and passions. We won't consult His will in His Word before making our decisions. We just **won't!** We often do not come right out so boldly and say "I won't," but we live out the "I won't" experience. We want to manage ourselves, and, when we get into difficulty or a mess, we immediately begin to rehearse all our reasons and excuses why we cannot overcome.

Are we, in our homes and in our family relationships, showing ourselves to be evolutionists or creationists? Let me illustrate. I have sat on the couch, and said to myself, "I'm too tired." "It's too hard." "I'm just not a good mother." "I've blown it again." "I'm just never

going to make it." "I don't know how." "They would be better off without me." "I just can't do it." And, friends, that is true! I can't do it alone, and neither can you! I have proved that all too many times! I **need God to recreate** me—my heart, my mind, my attitudes, my opinions—**everything!** And He has; He is, and He will—for me and for you! He is

And it doesn't stop there! When God creates a new spirit within me, it has a rippling effect much like throwing a stone into a lake. It begins to influence and have an impact on those around me. I have seen a change come over my child through God's creative power working in my heart. I have seen a change in my husband by the

Friends, when the Creator of the universe calls to our hearts—our thoughts—and we choose to let Him have His will in our lives, we can have complete peace, even if the circumstances of the trial haven't changed.

the God of Creation. He does not leave us in our frail, miserable condition. He speaks to our hearts through our conscience and reason, and invites us to take hold of Him to be created anew—**now**, at this very moment!

Every time I have had the "I can't" attitude, He speaks to me saying, "**I can, will you let Me?**" Will I cooperate and respond? Here is where the real question lies. Will I let Him do for me what I cannot do for myself? Will you? I wonder sometimes at our stubbornness to allow God to change our misery into peace and joy.

I have had to make the choice many times to let go and let God have me. I have gotten up off the "couch of despair" and had a new desire, energy, and the wisdom to do what just a moment before I couldn't do! He spoke to my heart, and by my choice and cooperation, He did what He said He would do in me. A new attitude is created toward the circumstances, the person, my husband, my child, whomever, or whatever I have un-Christlike feelings about. I see them in a new light! A love—a heaven-born love—is created in my heart for them. A new hope and confidence takes hold, and I see that my heart has been touched—has been recreated—Christ doing in me that which was and is impossible for me to do for myself. Not only does my heart change, which means my attitude and disposition, but there is a physical change also. My body relaxes and has renewed energy to do that which the Creator has asked me to do.

influence of the Spirit working in me. They too experience the joy of letting go of self and letting God's creative power change them. And it has worked in reverse. When I have been in doubt and despair I have felt the power of God in me through my family.

It isn't always instantaneous because we have learned to let go by degrees, which doesn't bring the real peace and the full joy until we **let go entirely**. This is what we as Christians can be mistaken in—an "evolutionary" experience! We give a little and see a little change, but we hold out on the full and complete surrender and become conditioned to think that we will evolve into being Christlike without any further effort. Surely the Christian experience is a growing one, but we can have the full peace, joy, and rest all along the way. This is what Jesus taught in Mark 4:28, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

Friends, when the Creator of the universe calls to our hearts—our thoughts—and we choose to let Him have His will in our lives, we can have complete peace, even if the circumstances of the trial haven't changed. This is why David has entreated us, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed [happy] is the man that trusteth in him." Psalm 34:8. When something tastes good we want to eat it again and again. So it is with Christ. Once we experience His re-creative power, it gives us an appetite—a desire—for more and more of that which is holy, right, and good. **Everything begins to change!**

One of the first areas in which the Lord called to my heart was in that of appetite. I used to love chocolate-covered peanuts. I would buy a small bag of them everyday at work. There were times when I thought that I really didn't need them, but I found myself making the excuse in thinking that, since I didn't have a weight problem, it would be okay. Then one day I realized that the real truth was that I had no control over my appetite—that candy had the control! In

the foolishness, the jesting, the flirtatiousness, the joking and the self-aggrandizing comments—all of which are foreign to His character. I say changing, not because it is an evolutionary process, but because, as I recognize God's voice speaking to my heart, and I choose to let go and let Him have me, new thoughts and words are created in my mind with a new way of responding being cultivated. But, if at any time I take the management of myself back, instead of abiding in

cuses, reasons, or rationalizations to separate us from receiving His creative power to make us new creatures in Him; it is simply our choice. We will evolve into His likeness, into oneness with Him; it is a moment-by-moment decision in the littlest of things. Oh, that each one of us would allow His power of love—His re-creative power of love—to fill us fully and completely in all things and at all times! Oh, that we will become new creatures in Him who has **given all for us!** Are we willing to go to Him and ask, "What must I do to be saved"—to be created anew? □

God has helped me to see that His re-creative power must first work in my attitudes, feelings and thoughts in order to bring about a true heart change.

my heart I knew what God was asking me to do, but I thought I would just eat them occasionally. However, in reality I found that those occasions came more frequently. I had fallen into the "evolutionary process of thinking" trying to obey just a little—but not completely. I remember the day when I was willing to surrender them totally without excuses, justifications, or rationalizations! From that day forward by the **power of the Creator** I have never had another piece of those candies. But, more importantly, when temptation came, I knew my only safety was in the Christ who would empower me to say "No" to my clamoring appetite. At first it was a struggle—the flesh versus the Spirit. However, as I have learned that I am **hopelessly helpless without a Saviour**, the old habits as they are surrendered to Him are overcome, and a new way is created that brings real peace and happiness.

This victory over the chocolate-covered peanuts was the beginning of what has become a deeper understanding not only in the area of appetite but in all areas of my life that the Creator wants to make anew. He not only wants to change how we live on the outside, but, more importantly, He wants to change our motive action in our hearts and minds. As I am willing to surrender, He is changing my words from the exaggerations and overstatements that come all too easily when I am trying to make a point—my point. He is also changing the cutting remarks,

Him, I will, like all of us do, begin to rehearse the reasons and excuses and fall right back into the old ways which are miserable and disastrous.

God has helped me to see that His re-creative power must first work in my attitudes, feelings and thoughts in order to bring about a true heart change. He has deepened my love and commitment to Him as my Creator and Saviour, and this in turn has deepened my love and commitment to my husband, children, and others, including having an earnestness for their souls. I realize more than ever before that only as I am willing to let Him have all—and be All to me—can I find real joy, peace, and rest.

Paul asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . .

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35, 37-39. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

Are we really persuaded that there is nothing—absolutely nothing—that can keep us from the full and complete life in Jesus? We must allow no ex-

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It Is Best to Be Christians

A solemn responsibility rests upon everyone to engage in the work of saving souls. We cannot afford to fold our hands, and engage in interesting nothings, gratifying our tastes and inclinations. We are to win souls for the Master. We should be constantly growing in the knowledge of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. If men loved God supremely, they would dedicate themselves unreservedly to His service; they would devote their means and their talents to the upbuilding of His cause; they would train up their children for Heaven.

It brings agony to my heart to see how few know how to deal with their children. Mothers need a great amount of patience and love. The mother who looks with compassion upon her own children, who conscientiously seeks to educate them for God and Heaven, will look with compassion upon the children of others. She will love others because she loves her own. She will be a blessing to her family and to the neighborhood. The same ability that fits her to be a wise mother will fit her to be a wise mission-

ary for God. The greatest missionary work that is done is in the home circle. To educate and develop the best and highest faculties of your children's minds is to do a work that will have a molding influence upon society. If you have educated one in the fear of the Lord, you may say you have educated one hundred. There is an atmosphere that surrounds every soul, an influence, either conscious or unconscious, that emanates from every person for good or evil; and to discipline a family so that the members shall meet the high claims of Heaven is a work that is counted of highest value in the sight of God.

It is of great importance to know how to keep the affairs of home in running order without friction. The oil of patience must be poured in when things go hard, and our children must be bound to our hearts by the silken cords of love. Parents should know how to sympathize with their children in their little troubles, that look as large to them as older people's trials look to them. We should not neglect our children. It is in the early years that we have the best opportunity

for sowing good seed in their hearts. If we neglect to do this work in their childhood, we shall find that Satan will pre-occupy the field. Why not pre-occupy the field yourself, and before the evil one has a chance to plant his seeds of evil, fill the mind with that which is good and pure? The angels of God will help you in the work of forming your child's character, if you will work in harmony with the plan of God. Do not let impatience control you. Be patient, be forbearing, and may God help you to realize your accountability to Him.

When you become weary, go to Jesus with all your care. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30. If you are bearing a yoke of your own manufacture, just lay it aside, and take the yoke of Christ, and nothing will disturb your peace, for you will have the peace of Christ that passeth all understanding.

Your children should not be driven off, and shut away from your sympathies. They should be encouraged to make confidants of father and mother. I have known children who had been so trained that even when they were grown men and women they counted it a privilege to counsel with their parents, though they were old and feeble. Is it not best, brethren, to be Christians? Is it not best to bring all the happiness possible into your life here, and prepare yourselves for the eternal world?

Each one of us will have to engage in the battle for good or evil, and we desire that you should battle on the Lord's side, and know how to come off victorious in your own behalf through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. Divine power will unite with human effort. God will co-operate with you in your struggle against evil, and when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. We must look to the Source of our strength. We cannot afford to lose eternal life. We want to be missionaries for God. We want to know how to minister to the necessities of others. Christ is our Example. Let us follow in His steps.

We should know how to direct the minds of friends and neighbors to Christ when they are in trouble. We should know how to lead repentant souls to "the

Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. How many go to human friends to pour out their griefs and sorrows, instead of seeking Christ, who alone can heal the broken in heart. There are many who do not know how to come to Jesus with their burden, and, feeling their need of support, they turn to human hearts for comfort. But they are only leaning on broken props. God is the One to whom the troubled soul should go. Why put man in His place? We should seek to direct souls to the open door of Heaven, where we can see within the veil our Substitute and Surety. In every trial and perplexity, we should look to Him; for in Him is help for the fallen sons of men. Christ is the Star of Hope that illumines our darkness. The serpent may bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, but Christ will bruise the serpent’s head and take away his power at last.

The plan of salvation was revealed to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were made to understand how the Son of God would come and bear their sin, and redeem them from the curse of the law. But when Christ came into the world, how few recognized His divinity or comprehended the nature of His work! He was not acknowledged as the Prince of Life. The earth was the battlefield where the Prince of Light and the prince of darkness met to contend for the fallen race. Christ had laid aside His crown and His royal robe, He had stepped down from His throne, and had clothed His divinity with humanity. For our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He came into a world all marred and scarred by the curse. He took upon Him humanity that He might know the infirmities and temptations of humanity, that He might know how to help and save men. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. Was He not perfect before?—Yes. But He was made a perfect Saviour, learning obedience by the things which He suffered, that humanity might have a perfect character and be fitted for the society of the angels of Heaven. Man was not able, in his own behalf, to meet and overcome the prince of darkness; but Christ overcame him in man’s behalf and broke his power over the human race, so that through His merits they might be overcomers in their own behalf. □

Signs of the Times, May 20, 1889.

Saving Grace

Continued from 6

We knew we needed a Saviour from sin as well, but as yet we did not understand “self” as being the true enemy of our souls. Self needed to be turned away from entirely, and placed under the control of Jesus. We felt the need to learn how to overcome getting irritated and giving way to anger toward each other, thus obtaining the mastery over self in the weak areas of our life. God wants to save us from all of “self” which may be manifested as habits learned in the world—our thinking, our speaking, our eating, our dress and our deeds. If self

dependent of God—rather than being dependent upon Him, working with Him.

Then I began to talk to the Lord: “I will try, God! What shall I do, Lord?” I put away the cookies, but I couldn’t stay in the kitchen. I walked away from the kitchen, keenly aware of my desire for those cookies in the cupboard. Distraught I cried out to God again saying, “What do I do now, Lord?” I took my vacuum cleaner out and began vacuuming my living room, yet still distraught with the temptation. After a time the thought came “Do you still want those cookies?” My reason thought, “Of course I do!” Such a temptation usually takes a long time to

The real battle is to surrender my heart to God and go forth cooperating in resisting after this union and choice is made.

rules over me in any area of life, then I have a special need of a Saviour. God wants to save me from self and sin in all its forms.

One day while I was doing the dishes in my kitchen, I reached for another cookie. In my mind came the thought, “You have had enough. Say ‘No’ to those cookies.” This was God speaking to me through my reason, intellect and conscience. I understood clearly later, and at the time I sensed it was God. However, I wasn’t sure. A struggle then ensued because my tastes and former habits said “Do it—you like it!” What would I choose?—To follow God or self’s former ways? The battle with self is the greatest battle we will ever fight.

In the past I had resisted the cookies or candy and chosen self-denial for a few minutes, or hours—until it became such heavy drudgery! Then sooner or later I would yield to the pull of my fleshly desires. My promises, true in heart though they were, became as ropes of sand. With failure comes frustration, guilt, despair, and despondency! “Why is the Christian life so hard?” I often asked myself. Later I discovered it was because I was doing the warfare against self **in human willpower alone**, but every such effort must fail. I was indepen-

dent of God, if it goes away at all! But I looked to my tastes to find if the longing remained. To my surprise, it was gone! My wrong desires, tastes, and even the feelings, were gone! My flesh was subdued. What made the difference?—I called out to God for help and cooperated with Him in obedience. I had surrendered the temptation to God—instead of resisting it myself. As a result God changed me on the inside. What a joy was this experience! Jesus is able to subdue my flesh when I give it to Him and follow His will.

Oh, Satan still tempts me to fall back into my old ways, but by following the counsel of James 4:7-8, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded,” I find that Satan, and even wrong feelings, must flee from me. It is Jesus who subdues the feelings and from whom Satan flees. The real battle is to surrender my heart to God and go forth cooperating in resisting after this union and choice is made. Success is guaranteed, even over the pull of appetite, **in Christ Jesus** and as long as I remain in this dependent, obedient position. Going against my feel-

ings at that time was a battle. This connection did not take long, but it did take a decision to depend upon Christ and not to depend upon myself alone.

Friends, I saw a need to master this basic discipline of seeking and surrendering to the will of God in my Christian life. When I cooperate, success is sweet. Are you gaining success in this way? We all can be living, walking Christians but only in Christ Jesus. Despair is the devil's ploy to keep us separated from Christ and from experiencing such victory.

I had another habit which was a bondage to me. I had no control over it; it had control over me. My struggle here was different than just eating a cookie. I needed a Saviour to change my wrong habit to keep on eating and eating. God may be dealing with you in other issues of life, but please take the principle I am illustrating from my experience and apply it to your area of difficulty. You may need to deal with lust, pride, gossip, an unrestrained tongue, gluttony, anorexia, bulimia, alcoholism or any other perverted taste. Any of these could be habits or addictions that possess us. We then need to come to our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in Him we can find the power over these habits!

Saving grace is not just something we claim in Jesus, but it is also being set free from the wrong thoughts, emotions, tastes and desires, when we reach out to ask our Father to help us—to give Him permission to change us into His image. When I ask and cooperate, God is able to change **even me!** Do you long for freedom from these habits too? God is calling you!

Jesus wants to be our Saviour from self. Jesus personally wants us to filter our every thought, every habit, every step of our lives through Him, so that we can live above the pull of the flesh. Have you discovered the path upon which the Saviour leads us—to take us out of self? **First**, He leads us to cry out in our helplessness to Him for help. **Second**, He wants us to know His will. He tells us we can obey and serve Him through His Word as His still small voice suggests this freedom to our conscience. **Third**, we have to choose whom we will serve—God, or sin and self. Our choice placed even timidly on God's side, will often begin the battle with self. God calls us into a life of self-denial, and self-control **as it is in Jesus**. The flesh resists restraint—that is its nature. However, thank God, we have the power of choice to

choose which master we will serve! **Fourth**, we must willingly enter the battle, leaning heavily upon Jesus as our General to direct us in the warfare. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." John 2:5. The battle can be short or long, depending upon our willingness to surrender to God. If we remain surrendered, connected, and in union and communion with Him, the victory is guaranteed. We will enter into a life above the pull of the flesh—a life of mastery over self!

What then is a Saviour for? A Saviour saves us from serving sin and selfishness. A Saviour leads, directs, communicates and guides us to the right hand or to the left. A Saviour is a Shepherd who leads His sheep in the path that is best for them. He protects them from all danger and feeds them with the truth. He lovingly corrects and rebukes. The sheep hear and recognize the Shepherd's voice. See John 10:27. Do you know this kind of a Saviour?

We moved to Montana fourteen years ago to seek God. We desired to walk with Christ as Enoch did. Once here, we began to wonder who would teach us the way? We thought we might have to go to a special school or institution to understand such a life, but all of God's providences said, "No."

God said, "**I will instruct thee** and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." Psalms 32:8. Both of us were deeply impressed that **God wanted to teach us personally**. Jesus wanted to be our Principal, and our personal Teacher, right in our own home. We didn't need to go

anywhere else to obtain the education of God's planning. He wanted to teach us how to cooperate with Him, and be saved from serving self—right in our own home! As we discussed our thoughts with each other we felt so unworthy of having God as our personal Teacher! How awesome is the love of God to erring mortals that He wants to associate that closely, that personally, in order to teach us how to have mastery over self as it is in Christ! Friends, we tried God. He is the best Teacher, Friend and Saviour—always giving the right counsel whenever we sought Him. He longs to lead you and me in the path of righteousness today. It is up to us to daily choose to abide with and in Him. Won't you let God teach and lead you?

We can all enter into God's saving grace and be saved from self—from our inclinations, passions or appetites that are opposed to God. Whenever we cry out to God, and then cooperate by following Him out of the old paths and into the new paths of life, He will personally lead us aright. With Christ all things are possible! Will you abide in Him supremely? Taste and see God's salvation from self-serving—which you can find in Christ Jesus for yourself. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. Let Jesus save you **from** your sins. He cannot save you **in** your sins. May God bless and lead you aright in gaining an ever greater experience in saving grace. □

Happiness is the result of holiness, and conformity to the will of God. Those who would be saints in heaven, must first be saints upon the earth; for when we leave this earth, we shall take our character with us, and this will be simply taking with us some of the elements of heaven imparted to us through the righteousness of Christ.

Review and Herald, August 19, 1890



The Prophetic Gift in the Gospel Church, Part 1

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." Hebrews 1:1-2.

The above text clearly shows that the Lord has had various ways of speaking to His people in different periods of time. In the earliest record of the human race found in Biblical history, before sin entered the world, man had communion with God face to face. We learn also that after man had sinned the Lord instructed His people in an audible voice. In this manner He addressed Adam (see Genesis 3:8-18); Cain (see Genesis 4:6-15); Noah (see Genesis 6:13-22; 7:1-5; 8:15; 9:8, 12,

17); Abraham (see Genesis 17:1-6); Isaac (see Genesis 26:2-5); Jacob (see Genesis 28:13); Moses (see Numbers 12:6-8); and Samuel (see 1 Samuel 3:4).

Angelic Instruction

The Lord spoke also to men through the agency of angels. These holy beings are not, as some suppose, the spirits of dead men, but are beings of a higher order than men, as man was made "a little lower than the angels." Hebrews 2:7. In those ancient times Satan transformed himself into an angel of light, sought to lead men into a false worship of their dead friends and heroes, and represented himself and angels as being the spirits of their dead. The Lord plainly

said of such worship and transactions that what was professedly offered to the dead was in reality sacrificed to devils—fallen angels. See Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:28, 35-37; 1 Corinthians 10:20. Under the Mosaic dispensation He strictly forbade any such "consulting with familiar spirits," specifying a death penalty for such an offense. See Leviticus 17:7-9; 19:31; 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:10-13. The pure, holy angels are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:7, 14); but they never come to represent dead persons. Through the instrumentality of angels the Lord has often communicated His will to men. In this manner He spoke to Abraham (see Genesis 18:1-3); to Lot (see Genesis 19:1); to Joshua (see Joshua 5:13-15); to Gideon (see Judges 6:11-22); and to Manoah (see Judges 13).

Ancient Prophets

Another mode of communication was by prophets, through visions and dreams. Of these the Lord said, "If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." Numbers 12:6.

Of the visions given to God's servants, the prophets, there seem to have been two kinds—one called "open visions," or those given where the individual could be seen while in the vision, and the other called "night visions." Reference is made to the former visions in 1 Samuel 3:1, where is found the experience of the child Samuel in these words: "The word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision." There were prophets in those days who had instructions from the Lord, but their visions were not given to them openly before the people. In the previous chapter, at the same date of Samuel's vision—1165 B.C.—there came "a man of God"—a prophet—to Eli, and told him of his wrongs, and predicted the fate of his two sons, that they should both die in one day, and so forth. See 1 Samuel 2:27, 30, 33. In the same chapter where it is said, "There was no open vision," is the record of the vision given to Samuel. It was not an open vision. Not even did Eli see Samuel in the vision. The Lord taught him the tidings he was to bear to Eli. The record of the following morning says, "And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision." 1 Samuel 3:15. Samuel at this time had a vision from God, al-

J. N. Loughborough

though it was not an open vision. His vision then must have been of the same character as that called in other portions of the Scripture—a “night vision.”

Night Vision

“God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night.” Genesis 46:2. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar was “revealed unto Daniel in a night vision.” Daniel 2:19. So also Daniel himself had a view, “in the night visions,” of Christ coming to the Father to receive His kingdom. Daniel 7:13. On another occasion he was taken in vision in the midst of Chaldeans. Had they remained, they might have seen him in the vision (an open vision); but instead “a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.” Daniel 10:7.

On turning to the New Testament we find that in Paul’s experience a vision appeared to him in the night. See Acts 16:9. And again it was in the night season that he received that valuable instruction in reference to the shipwreck at Melita. See Acts 27:23–24. He was also encouraged in a night vision at Corinth. See Acts 18:9. So also in a night vision the Lord showed him that he must bear witness for Him in Rome. See Acts 23:11. In Ezekiel 8:1–3 is a record of one of Ezekiel’s visions, before the elders—an “open vision.” The vision of Cornelius (Acts 10:3, Revised Version) was “a vision openly.” It occurred “the ninth hour”—“the hour of prayer” (Acts 3:1), when his family was assembled for prayer. From the above texts it will be observed that these night visions are treated in the Scriptures as of the same force and origin as the “open visions.”

The following statement in reference to dreams and night visions is found in the book of Job: “For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.” Job 33:14–17. See also Job 4:13–17.

This mode of communication by prophets was not a matter of rare occurrence in those olden times, for the Lord said of it, “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.” Hosea 12:10. He thus tes-

tified to them “by all the prophets.” 2 Kings 17:13. This He did “betimes” (“continually and carefully,” margin). 2 Chronicles 36:15. Through these prophets He pleaded with the people to flee from idolatry, saying, “Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.” Jeremiah 44:4. The masses, with their rulers, continued in their wickedness, “belied the

I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not harkened; then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.” Jeremiah 26:4–6.

Disregarding the admonition of the Lord, the people were brought into a position at last where they could see the force of the words of Solomon, when he

While Uzziah, king of Judah, gave heed to the word of the Lord by His prophets, prosperity attended him.

LORD,” and their prophets became wind. Jeremiah 5:12–13. “They set up their ensigns for signs,” and there was “no more any prophet.” Psalm 74:4, 9. Then they sought “a vision” from the Lord, but they found none, because the law perished from the priest. See Ezekiel 7:26. When the people were thus left without a prophet it was a source of great loss to them, as shown by the words of Azariah, the son of Oded, to Asa, king of Judah, when he said: “Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.” 2 Chronicles 15:3–4.

While Uzziah, king of Judah, gave heed to the word of the Lord by His prophets, prosperity attended him. The record says: “He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.” “But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense.” “And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death.” 2 Chronicles 26:5, 16, 21.

Notwithstanding all these tokens of God’s favor, this people fell again into idolatry, and the Lord testified to them by the prophet Jeremiah: “If ye will not harken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to harken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom

said, “Where there is no vision, the people perish [cast off restraint, R. V.]: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” Proverbs 29:18. Still, however, they persisted in following their own way, walking in the imaginations of their own hearts, until their city was laid in ruins. Then came the lamentation of the prophet Jeremiah: “Her gates are sunk into the ground; . . . the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD.” Lamentations 2:9.

Women As Prophets

In Old Testament times the Lord not only used men as prophets, but also devout women were favored with this gift. In the days of the judges of

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Israel we have the record of Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, who was not only a prophetess, but served in the position of judge. Through instructions given by her, their enemies were overthrown, as seen in Judges 4:4; 5:31. Then again, mention is made of Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, in the days of Josiah, the good

Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26. Again, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." John 15:26.

shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1:4-5.

Prophecy of Joel

This promise which the Father had made, and to which our Saviour here refers, must be the promise recorded in the book of Joel; for when, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out, Peter recognized it as the beginning of what was predicted by Joel. We read: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:1-4.

The mocking ones among the multitude who came together on seeing and hearing of this wonderful manifestation, said: "These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and harken to my words; for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. [The force of Peter's plea is more fully realized when we consider that in all their feasts they were forbidden to drink anything but water, until the fourth hour.] But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy; and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." Acts 2:13-20; see Joel 2:28-32.

In Joel's prediction of what should result from the outpouring of the Spirit, nothing was said about tongues. This is, nevertheless, one of the operations of the Spirit of God, as well as those directly

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."

king of Judah. She seems to have been connected with the school at Jerusalem, and was sought for counsel, as recorded in 2 Kings 22:13-20; 2 Chronicles 34:22-28.

At the time the Saviour was taken to the temple to have made for Him the required offering, the devoted Simeon recognized Him as the promised Messiah. And there was also present upon that occasion Anna, a prophetess, who dwelt in the temple—probably in the "college," or "school," as did Huldah. Thus it is evident that when Peter on the day of Pentecost—in harmony with Joel's prophecy—declared that as a result of the outpouring of the Spirit, the "handmaidens" and "daughters" should prophesy, it was not a strange thing to the church to learn that women should share in the prophetic gift in the gospel age.

The Son Speaking

He who spoke in divers manners in old time, "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Hebrews 1:2. This of course includes Christ's personal teaching when on the earth, as we have it in the four Gospels of the New Testament. That was not, however, the whole of His teaching for the "last days;" for when He was about to leave the world, He said to His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." John 14:16. Respecting this Comforter, He said, "But the Comforter, which is the

Of the special work of the Comforter, which was to "abide forever," the Saviour said: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16:7-12.

All that was to be spoken by the Son was not accomplished when He was here in person; for He said: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John 16:13-14.

Of the coming and work of the Spirit, our Lord further spoke to the disciples: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49. A record of the same conversation is also given in these words: "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise [fulfillment of the promise] of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye

specified in Joel's prophecy, and all were to be seen in the work of the Spirit. The time covered by this prophecy of Joel reaches down to the close of probationary time—even to the "great and terrible day of the Lord." The "last days" must include the very last day of the last days, which would take in the last day of probationary time. Hence this prediction of Joel relates to the work of the Spirit of God—the Comforter—as it should please the Lord, "forever," even through the entire gospel dispensation.

Promise of the Spirit

That Peter understood this promise to cover the Lord's working to the end of time, is set forth in these words: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:38-39. Then as long as the Lord calls people to His service, so long is the promise of the Holy Spirit extended to them.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, says, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Corinthians 12:7. The manifestation of the Spirit must refer to its manner of working. The Spirit may and does come to the sinner in his sins, as a Reprover; but after he yields to the Lord, and it leads the mind to the blessed assurance of God's promises, it is an Approver. See Ephesians 1:13. Then it is that "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." Romans 8:26.

Men, in their fallen state, are infirm, "being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Ephesians 4:18. "Alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works." Colossians 1:21. There "are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4. After yielding to God and becoming partakers of the divine nature, we are recognized as "the sons of God," being "led by the Spirit of God." Romans 8:14. That Spirit dwelling in us quickens (gives life—even the life of God—to) our mortal bodies. See Romans 8:11. It then "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," and seals us as His. Romans 8:16; see 2 Corinthians 1:22.

Then the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:4.

The Temple of the Spirit

The church of Christ on earth is really a place prepared for the indwelling of the Spirit. The apostle says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16. To the individual members of the church He says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" 1 Corinthians 6:19. Again, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will

dwell in them, and walk in them." 2 Corinthians 6:16. And once more, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are build together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:21-22. Standing thus, we are "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." Ephesians 3:16. "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." Colossians 1:11. Thus we may labor, "striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Colossians 1:29. □

The Prophetic Gift in the Gospel Church, 5-17

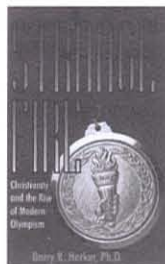
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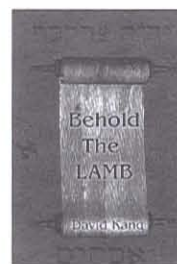
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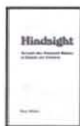


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Living by Faith

THE just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17. This statement is the summing up of what the apostle has to say about the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but only “to every one that believeth.” Verse 16. In it the right-ousness of God is revealed. The righteousness of God is the perfect law of God, which is but the transcript of His own righteous will. All unrighteousness is sin or the transgression of the law. The gospel is God’s remedy for sin; its work, therefore, must be to bring men into harmony with the law—to cause the workings of the righteous law to be manifested in their lives. But this is wholly a work of faith—the right-ousness of God is revealed from “faith to faith”—faith in the beginning and faith to the end—as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17.

This is true in all ages since the fall of man and will be true until the saints of God have His name in their foreheads and see Him as He is. It was from the prophet Habbakuk that the apostle quoted the statement. See Habbakuk 2:4. If the prophets had not revealed it, the first Christians could not have known of it, for they had only the Old Testament. To say that in the most ancient times men had but an imperfect idea of faith in Christ is to say that there were no just men in those times. But Paul goes right back to the very beginning

and cites an instance of saving faith. He says, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.” Hebrews 11:4. He says of Noah also that it was by faith that he built the ark to the saving of his house, “by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Verse 7. We say that their faith was in Christ, because it was faith unto salvation and besides the name of Jesus “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

There are too many who try to live the Christian life on the strength of the faith which they exercised when they realized their need of pardon for sins of their past life. They know that God alone can pardon sins and that He does this through Christ, but they imagine that having once been started, they must run the race in their own strength. We know that many have this idea, first, because we have heard some say so, and, second, because there are such multitudes of professed Christians who show the working of no greater power than their own. If they ever have anything to say in social meeting, besides the ever-recurring formula, “I want to be a Christian, so that I may be saved,” they tell only of a past experience—the joy they had when they first believed. Of the joy of living for God and of walking with Him by faith, they know

nothing, and he who tells of it speaks of a strange language to them. But the apostle carries this matter of faith clear through to the glorious kingdom in the following most forcible illustration:

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Hebrews 11:5-6.

Note the argument to prove that Enoch was translated by faith: Enoch was translated because he walked with God, and had the testimony that he pleased God; but without faith it is impossible to please God. That is enough to prove the point. Without faith not an act can be performed that will meet the approval of God. Without faith the best deeds that a man can do will come infinitely short of the perfect righteousness of God, which is the only standard. Wherever real faith is found, it is a good thing, but the best of faith in God to take away the load of the sins of the past, will profit a person nothing unless it is carried right through in ever-increasing measure until the close of his probation.

We have heard many people tell how hard they found it to do right. Their Christian life was most unsatis-

E. J. Waggoner

factory to them, being marked only by failure, and they were tempted to give up in discouragement. No wonder they get discouraged! Continual failure is enough to discourage anybody. The bravest soldier in the world would become faint-hearted if he had been defeated in every battle. Sometimes these persons will mournfully tell that they have about lost confidence in themselves. Poor souls. If they would only lose confidence in themselves entirely, and would put their whole trust in the One who is mighty to save, they would have a different story to tell. They would then "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:11. Says the apostle, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4. The man who doesn't rejoice in God, even though tempted and afflicted, is not fighting the good fight of faith. He is fighting the poor fight of self-confidence and defeat.

All the promises of final happiness are to the overcomer. "To him that overcometh," says Jesus, "will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Revelation 3:21. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things," says the Lord. Revelation 21:7. An overcomer is one who gains victories. The inheriting is not the overcoming; that is only the reward for overcoming. The overcoming is now. The victories to be gained are victories over the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life—victories over self and selfish indulgences. The man who fights and sees the foe give way may rejoice; nobody can keep him from rejoicing, for joy comes spontaneously as the result of seeing the enemy give way. Some folks look with dread upon the thought of having to wage a continual warfare with self and worldly lusts. That is because they do not as yet know anything about the joy of victory. They have experienced only defeat. But it isn't so doleful a thing to battle constantly, when there is continual victory. The old veteran of a hundred battles, who has been victorious in every fight, longs to be at the scene of conflict. Alexander's soldiers, who under his command never knew defeat, were always impatient to be led into the fray. Each victory increased their strength, which was

born only of courage, and correspondingly diminished that of the vanquished foe. Now how may we gain continual victories in our spiritual warfare?

Listen to the beloved disciple: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth

Well, our Captain is the Lord of hosts. He has met the chiefest foe of all and has vanquished him single-handed. Those who follow Him invariably go forth conquering and to conquer. Oh, that those who profess to be His followers would put their trust in Him! And then, by the re-

Here is the secret of strength. It is Christ, the Son of God, the One to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, who does the work. If He lives in the heart to do the work, is it boasting to say that continual victories may be gained?

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." Galatians 2:20.

Here is the secret of strength. It is Christ, the Son of God, the One to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, who does the work. If He lives in the heart to do the work, is it boasting to say that continual victories may be gained? Yes, it is boasting; but it is boasting in the Lord, and that is allowable. Says the psalmist, "My soul shall make her boast in the LORD" Psalms 34:2. And Paul says, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." Galatians 6:14.

The soldiers of Alexander were reckoned invincible. Why? Was it because they were naturally stronger and more courageous than all their enemies?—No, but because they were led by Alexander. Their strength was in his leadership. Under another leader they would often have been defeated. When the Union army was fleeing panic-stricken before the enemy at Winchester, the presence of Sheridan turned their defeat into victory. Without him the men were a quaking mob. With him at their head, they were an invincible army. If you had listened to the remarks after the battle of the soldiers who served under those and similar leaders, you would have heard the praises of their general mingled with all their rejoicing. They were strong because he was; they were inspired by the same spirit that he had.

peated victories that they would gain, they would show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

John says that he that is born of God overcomes the world through faith. See 1 John 5:4. Faith lays hold of the arm of God, and His mighty power does the work. How the power of God can work in a man, accomplishing that which he could not possibly do for himself, no one can tell. It would be as easy to tell how God can give life to the dead. Says Jesus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. How the Spirit works in a man to subdue his passions and to make him victorious over pride, envy, and selfishness is known only to the Spirit. It is sufficient for us to know that it is done and will be done in everyone who wants that work wrought in him, above all things else, and who trusts God for the performance of it.

We cannot tell how Peter was enabled to walk on the water when the waves were rolling about him, but we know that at the command of the Lord he did it. So long as he kept his eye fixed on the Master, divine power enabled him to walk as easily as though it were solid rock underneath, but when he looked at the waves, possibly with a feeling of pride in what he was doing, as though he himself was doing it, fear very naturally took possession of him, and he began

to sink. Faith enabled him to walk on the waves; fear made him sink beneath them.

Says the apostle, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." Hebrews 11:30. Why was that written? For our learning, "that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4. Why, is there any prospect that we shall ever be called upon to fight armed hosts and to take fortified cities?—No, "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12. But the victories which have been gained by faith in God over visible foes in the flesh

are placed on record to show us what faith will accomplish in our conflict with the rulers of the darkness of this world. The grace of God, in answer to faith, is as powerful in these battles as in those, for says the apostle:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

It was not physical foes alone that faith enabled the ancient worthies to conquer. We read of them that they not only "subdued kingdoms," but "wrought righteousness, obtained

promises," and, most wonderful and most encouraging of all, "out of weakness were made strong." Hebrews 11:33-34. Their very weakness became strength to them through faith, because the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness. Who then shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? since it is God that justifieth, and we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Romans 8:35, 37. □

Signs of the Times, March 25, 1889.

Pioneer

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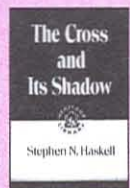


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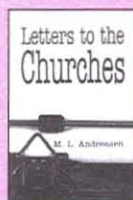


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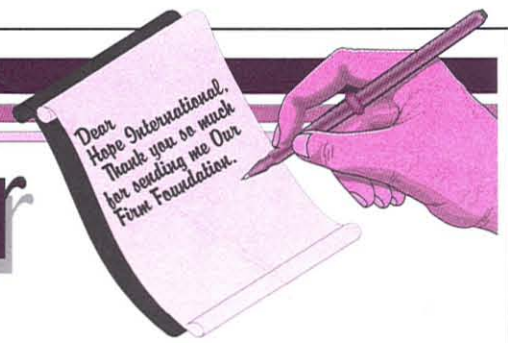


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Letters to the Editor



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to thank you in a special way for the best sermons you gave me through your books and magazines, which you sent me.

The books have not only helped me and my family, but my other relatives and friends as well, who were lost like me. I am trying my level best to preach to my fellow people about the truths of the Bible. And I hope through the grace of the Lord we will win many souls. May you please help to pray earnestly for our poor continent Africa, so that we may understand the last calling and accept the Holy Spirit to open our hearts for the truth.

Yours in Christ, *BN, Zimbabwe*

Dear Sir,

I really am enjoying the magazine [*Our Firm Foundation*]. These historical sermons of our church, and articles from the pen of Ellen G. White and other authors are very inspiring, especially for this time.

God bless, *VC, Florida*

Dear Hope International,

I used to receive *Our Firm Foundation* in 1995 and 1996. The messages in these magazines are like food and water to me. I feel I can't do without them, as they have caused me to grow spiritually and have spiritual stamina because of the seriousness of the writers. The magazine is informative, timely, with well researched messages awakening true godliness. They have helped me with sermons, Bible studies and personal evangelism, as I am a lay preacher.

KG, Africa

Dear Brethren,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and lots of thanks to you for the books I received in late December 1997. I don't know how I can thank you!

The books are so nice to me that I am using them very greatly in spreading the gospel and testimony of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

With the aid of these books I preached very great sermons in the three Efforts that I held. I saw in my first 'Effort' nine souls

were saved; and the second 'Effort' 18 souls were saved; and in the third 'Effort' 26 souls were made known unto the Lord. Thank you for your great support!

Yours sincerely, *KM, Zimbabwe*

Dear Sirs,

I want to thank you very much for sending some educational material, it helps me a lot, mainly in prophecy of Daniel and Revelation. Surely we near home above.

Yours in Christ, *LS, Malawi*

Dear Brethren:

We appreciate *Our Firm Foundation* magazine and the tapes very much!

Your editors are certainly doing a remarkable job of exposing the deceptions of Satan in these closing hours of earth's history. If there was ever a time when every individual needed to examine himself in the light of God's Inspired Word, it is NOW.

Sincerely, *ES, Virginia*

Dear Sir,

Thanks so much for your inspired magazine *Our Firm Foundation*.

I am grateful for the books you sent which are very much educative to us. How could we as poor family receive these books and Bible had it not been for your kind and generous assistance?

Yours in His hope, *CA, Africa*

Greetings:

I appreciate your publications. They convey the message for this hour and time. At first I thought you were too critical of the church, but now I see that you are giving the trumpet a certain sound, which we as SDAs need so badly.

Thanks, *KC, Colorado*

Dear Sir,

I thank the Lord for giving me this opportunity to write to the editor of a magazine that is preaching the present truth. I hope God will continue to bless and prosper the ministry which I believe is God's means of spreading this gospel at this end time.

I am a youth of twenty years old and I graduated from Secondary School and I am a born Adventist, but I did not know anything about our doctrines. I was baptized in 1993 but I did not experience any change in my life until when I started reading some of your magazines. From there I came to the knowledge of the Spirit of Prophecy given through Sister White. I was then rebaptised last year at camp meeting!

I need your prayers to help me stand for the accusation I am facing now. The leaders of our church have warned the people not to even listen to me or read any material I give them. Thank you and God bless.

Yours faithfully, *IS, Nigeria*

Dear Sirs,

I would like to express my profound gratitude for your gifts of Books, Magazines, Pamphlets and Tracts you have posted me.

Sirs, with these books on hand, I hope to bring others to the Light, which shines from the Cross, so that we may all follow the footprints of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

Sirs, once again I say thank you, Sirs, and may the Lord bless you abundantly to continue sending out the message of good news.

Yours In Christ, *MN, Ghana*

Dear Friends in Christ,

It gives much pleasure to write you this letter. If I have ever experienced the joy in heart since I came to this earth, it is on the day I did receive the goods you all have sent to me. In fact, I am so excited, glad, delighted and much appreciated about what you people have done for me. You have actually shown that the Divine Spirit of love and sympathy is still working.

As I explained to you in my first letter that I am a Muslim it is even difficult for me to get such amount of dollars to pay for books.

I'm very sad to tell you my parents have driven me away from their house and now I live with a Christian friend.

Thank you, *I, Ghana*

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