

# *Our Firm* FOUNDATION

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A magazine  
for Christians  
who desire to  
be grounded  
in truth.

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Ron Spear



# WHAT ABOUT *little sins?*

**W**hosoever 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.

For many years I read this text and could not understand it. I loved the Lord. I prayed; I studied my Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. But still I was impatient—I still was sinning. Not big sins, just "little" ones—like impatience.

Why do some Christians rejoice in victory over their big sins, like smoking, drugs, or alcohol—and yet cannot have victory over the small ones? What hope has the church of attracting sinners to the church whose members acknowledge by their lifestyle that they are not overcoming sin in their lives?

God has answers to these vital questions.

Let us first ask ourselves, Have we fully surrendered our lives to Christ *without reservation*? Do we realize that our wills must be constantly surrendered to God's will?

Continual defeat in the battle against sin fills many a professed Christian's conscience with guilt. Satan's harassment and temptations are more than he can cope with on his own, so he gives up, or he is told that he cannot stop sinning until Jesus comes. Then Satan's lie "solves" his guilt-problem. He believes he is saved in his sins.

However, there are four things that are essential in the experience of every victorious Christian:

**First:** Making a continued full surrender of our wills takes time and discipline by daily study and prayer. We must search with all our heart, following the example of the Bereans as we make certain that what we hear and embrace is the truth. See Jeremiah 29:13; Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

**Second:** We must have courage. No one can be filled with courage when he is constantly conscious of defeat and self-condemnation. Courage abounds in the heart of those who know they are advancing daily in their relationship with Jesus—when they have victory over the little sins as well as over the big ones.

**Third:** We need the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul speaks of a class of Christians who have a "form of godliness" but "deny the power thereof." See 2 Timothy 3:5. The very name—Christian—implies power to live a godly life. To continue to practice sin, even small ones, means you acknowledge weakness and failure, but victory means power—a power to witness to the miracle of transformation in your daily living for Jesus. See Romans 12:1-2.

**Fourth:** The last essential is joy. It is the result of fruitfulness in the Christian life. True joy and happiness attracts the recognition of our friends, neighbors, and loved ones. How can anyone experience the overflowing joy while continually being defeated by sin?

These essentials can be fully experienced by all who are willing to be made willing to be obedient to all known truth without a compromise.

Then, dear reader, surrender your will to Jesus every day. Discipline your time. By daily prayer and study of His Word God will give you courage and power and joy in your daily walk with Jesus.

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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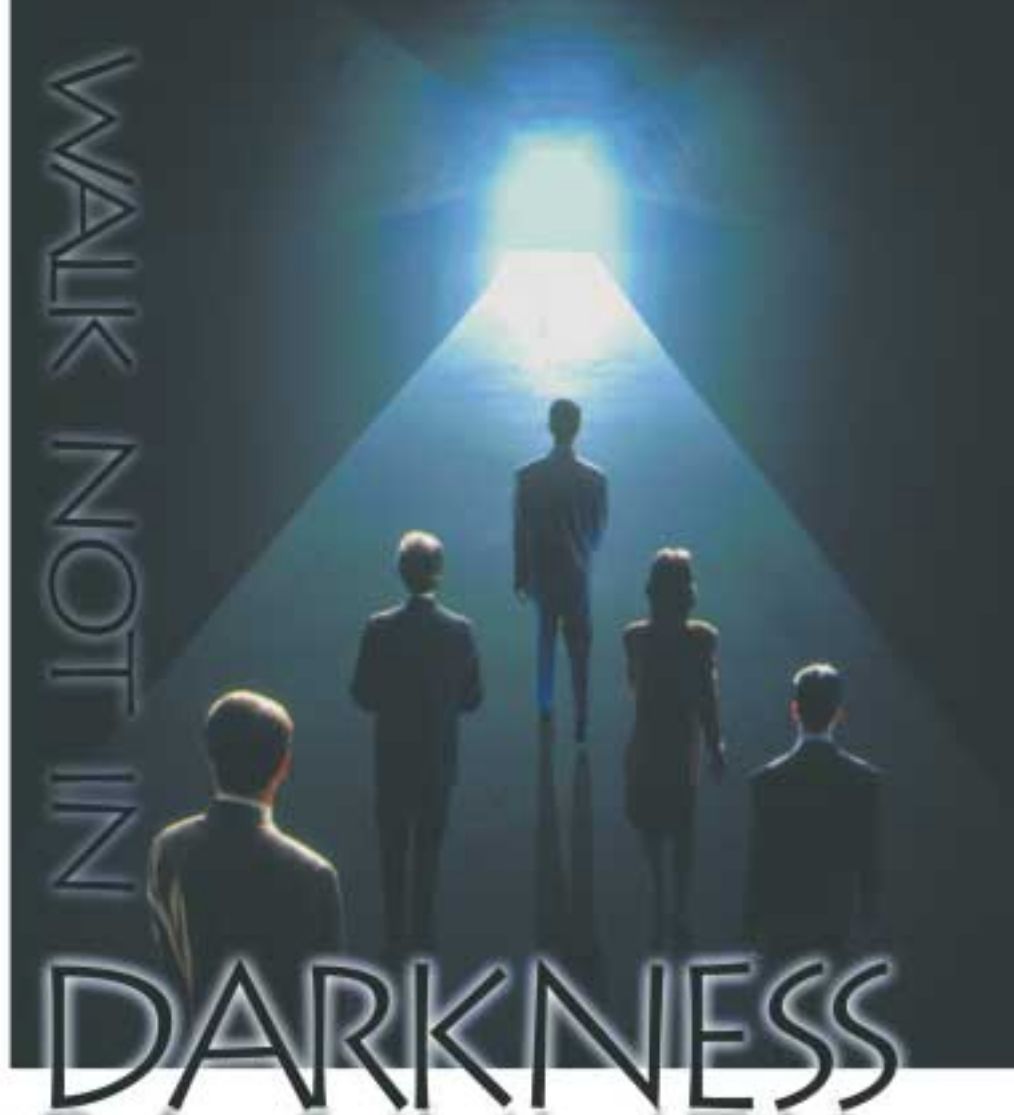
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When Satan tells you that you are a sinner, and points out this neglect and that wrong, tell him you know you are a sinner, but that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.



**H**e that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John 8:12. If we are following Jesus, we know that we are not walking in darkness, but shall be all light in—not out of, but in—the Lord. If His light illuminates the mind, and shines into the chambers of the heart, we shall be, as Christ has said, “the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14. We shall not walk in darkness. We shall see light, and shall talk of the love of Christ, talk of His goodness and marvelous mercy, and we shall always find enough to talk about on these themes, even to all eternity, when we have that life which measures with the life of God.

by Ellen G. White

The trouble with many of us is, we get our eyes fixed upon the shadow that Satan casts between our souls and God, and we fail to discover the light beyond the shadow. We talk in a kind of hopeless way, as though we were serving as a slave to a tyrant. We represent ourselves to the world as those who are having a terribly hard time of serving the Lord. We pick up things to find fault about, to mourn over, and pity and sympathize with ourselves, and fail to make a favorable impression upon those who have not tasted of the gift of God.

Instead of talking darkness, instead of having thoughts of gloom, we should remember that we have everything to make us glad, and this gladness should shine forth out of the very countenance. Let the light shine in your very faces. Do not let

the frown and the expression of gloom have place there. Take a look into the mirror of God's law, and see if you are cheerful in your service to Him. Look upon Jesus, full of forgiveness, and mercy, and peace, instead of upon that which will bring you condemnation and gloom. Brethren and sisters, are you looking toward the light— beholding the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world? When Satan tells you that you are a sinner, and points out this neglect and that wrong, tell him you know you are a sinner, but that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Tell him, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. Repeat the promise, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. If you draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh to you. Present the promise to God in the name of Jesus, and you have His pledged Word that He will let the Sun of righteousness shine upon you.

Jesus is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Will you not repent of your sins, and let Him take away your guilt? Will you not say, "Lord, you come to take away my sins, and I will let you do it"? Will you let Him take them away? Will you let Him take them upon His divine soul, and impute to you His righteousness?

Jesus stands between Divinity and humanity, and He is fully able to save you. There is all sufficiency in Him. He has not come to save partially, but to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. He came to wash away your transgression; for He forgiveth iniquity and sin. He pardoneth the guilty. He was manifested to take away our sins, to relieve our hearts of their sorrows and burdens, to put a new song into our mouths, even praise unto our God.

We are to respond to the invitations of the Spirit of God. Do we repent of our transgressions? This is an evidence that the Lord is drawing us to Himself; it is Jesus that gives us repentance. "Him

hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. Then why not believe that He forgives our sins? It is His Holy Spirit that impresses us with the necessity of emptying the soul of all selfishness; and when we give ourselves to God, He will fill the vacuum with His own divine Spirit, and give us the precious graces of His own character.

From the light that I have had for years, I know that the great lack among us as a people is the lack of love. The God of heaven looks upon you and sees that you are self-sufficient. But any soul that comes hungering and thirsting for the waters of life, will have his soul refreshed from the Living Fountain. When you thirst, you will hear the voice calling, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. Jesus points you to the Fountain opened for Judah and Jerusalem, wherein you may wash and be clean. And when we have tasted of the waters of life, we shall be constrained by the love of Christ to say to others, "Come, taste and see that the LORD is good." See Psalm 34:8. When we drink from the waters ourselves we shall echo the cry, Come. Whosoever is athirst, let him come, and take of the Water of Life freely. "Whosoever will." Tell me who is excluded from receiving the benefits of this divine invitation. "Whosoever will, let him come." All we have to do is to submit the will to God, to place the will on the Lord's side. Come and take the Lord at His Word, and drink of the Water of Life freely.

If we have Christ abiding with us, we shall be Christians at home as well as abroad. He who is a Christian will have kind words for his relatives and associates. He will be kind, courteous, loving, sympathetic, and will be educating himself for an abode with the family above. If he is a member of the royal family, he will represent the kingdom to which he is going. He will speak with gentleness to his children, for he will realize that they, too, are heirs of God, members of the heavenly court. Among the children of God no spirit of harshness dwells; for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22–23. The spirit that is cherished in the home, is the spirit that will be manifested in the church. O, we must educate the soul to be pitiful, gentle, tender,

full of forgiveness and compassion. While we lay aside all vanity, all foolish talking, jesting, and joking, we are not to become cold, unsympathetic, and unsocial. The Spirit of the Lord is to rest upon you until you shall be like a fragrant flower from the garden of God. You are to keep talking of the light, of Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, until you shall change from glory to glory, from character to character, going on from strength to strength, and reflecting more and more of the precious image of Jesus. When

you do this, the Lord will write in the books of heaven, "Well done," because you represent Jesus.

Christians should not be hardhearted, unapproachable; Jesus is to be reflected in our deportment, and we are to have a character beautiful with the graces of Heaven. The presence of God is to be an abiding presence with

**You are to keep talking of the light, of Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, until you shall change from glory to glory, . . . reflecting more and more of the precious image of Jesus.**

us; and wherever we are, we are to carry light to the world. Those around you are to realize that the atmosphere of Heaven surrounds you.

But many of you say, "How can I help sinning? I have tried to overcome, but I do not make advancement." You never can in your own strength, you will fail; but help is laid upon One who is mighty. In His strength you may be more than conqueror. You should arise and say, "Through the grace of God, I will be an overcomer." Put your will on the side of God's will, and with your eye fixed upon Him who is the Author and Finisher of your faith, you may make straight paths for your feet. When you are tempted, say, "Jesus is my Saviour, I love Him, because He has first loved me." Show that you trust Him. As you walk the streets, as you work about your house, you can communicate with your Lord. Lay hold upon Him by living faith, and believe the Word of God to the letter.

Now suppose that you put away all murmuring and complaining, and look to the Light. Let us try it for this year, and see what kind of year we shall have. When Satan suggests doubt and darkness, begin to sing of the matchless love of Jesus. Ask God to help you place your thoughts upon Jesus, and Satan cannot control your mind. Let us put away all commonness, and become a light to the world. Let our words be as choice silver; and wherever you go, those around you will realize that a precious influence goes with you. The light and love and power of God will rest upon you. Determine that through Jesus you will elevate the soul above all that is low and earthly, and let your conversation be full of hope and courage in the Lord. Say, "I will be free, I am free;" and when Satan tells you that you are a sinner, tell him, "I know it, but Jesus said, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'" Matthew 9:13."

Through the mercy of God we have been taken out of the quarry of the world by the mighty Cleaver of Truth, to be hewn, and pol-

ished, and fitted for the heavenly building. We have been brought into the highway cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. And we should go in this way with rejoicing, instead of with complaining. This way has been opened for us at an infinite cost, and we ought to manifest our joy and gratitude that we are permitted to be numbered among the children of God. Should we walk from day to day with rejoicing and gladness of heart, showing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, what effect would we have upon the minds of those around us? They would say, "Certainly they have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him."

There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port.

When I voyaged from Portland, ME., to Boston, many years ago, a storm came upon us, and the great waves dashed us to and fro. The chandeliers fell, and the trunks were rolled from side to side, like balls. The passengers were frightened, and many were screaming, waiting in expectation of death. After awhile the pilot came on board. The captain stood near the pilot as he took the wheel, and expressed fear about the course in which the ship was directed. "Will you take the wheel?" asked the pilot. The captain was not ready to do that, for he knew that he lacked experience. Then some of the passengers grew uneasy, and said they feared the pilot would dash them upon the rocks. "Will you take the wheel?" asked the pilot; but they knew that they

**As you walk the streets, as you work about your house, you can communicate with your Lord. Lay hold upon Him by living faith, and believe the Word of God to the letter.**

could not manage the wheel. When you think that the work is in danger, pray, "Lord, stand at the wheel. Carry us through the perplexity. Bring us safely into port." Have we not reason to believe that the Lord will bring us through triumphantly?

There are before me many who are old hands in the cause. I have known some of you for the last thirty

years. Brethren, have we not seen crisis after crisis come upon the work, and has not the Lord carried us through, and wrought for the glory of His name? Can you not believe in Him? Can you not commit the cause to Him? You cannot with your finite minds understand the working of all the providences of God. Let God take care of His own work. You are to hang your helpless soul upon Jesus. Commit the keeping of your soul unto God, as unto a faithful Creator. When you do this, you will have something of the love of God; for it will abound in your heart unto His glory. The meetings will be uplifting in character; for the Lord will put a new song into your mouth, even praise unto our God. You will say, "Hear what the Lord has done for my soul." Your soul will be all light in the Lord.

We have been looking on the dark side of the picture. Now let us turn to the other side. Let us turn the dark side to the wall. Let us look on the beautiful pictures of the love of God. Educate your tongue to talk of God's mercy, and speak forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Let us fulfill the purpose of God, and be indeed the "light of the world." □

*Review and Herald*, September 20, 1892.





## Never Before Told Story Concerning the Titanic

by Betty Esselbach

My stepfather was from the country of Holland—commonly called today The Netherlands. Thinking of that land immediately brings to mind pictures of windmills, people ice skating in the winter on the frozen canals, and people in quaint old costumes with wooden shoes!



Reginald deVries on the right.

His name was Reginald Cornelius Anne deVries, and he spoke with a delightful accent that I never tired of hearing. He always had a problem with the “th” sound—pronouncing it as a “da.”

His mother and father were very devout Christians who had a deep and abiding trust in our Saviour. When he attended church, he was expected to sit with his parents and be reverent and quiet, listening attentively to the sermon, as were all children in those days. After the family returned home from church, his father would

quiz him on what the sermon was about, and what he had learned from it.

However, as he grew older and attended university, and was out in society, my stepfather lost his faith in God. As a very young man, he took a job with a company that sent him as some kind of representative to other countries. On one of these planned trips, he booked passage on the Titanic for her maiden voyage to the United States of America. He was very much looking forward to this trip, for he wanted to visit America.

One night, shortly before the scheduled trip, his mother had a very vivid dream that the trip would end up in disaster and that he would die. His mother got down on her knees and begged him not to go on the Titanic. For awhile he scoffed at her pleadings, but, finally, to allay her fears and anxiety, he returned his ticket and instead booked passage on a Dutch steamer.



Mr. deVries' mother.

When he arrived in New York, he heard young boys selling special edition newspapers on the streets crying, “Extra, Extra, Titanic Sinks in Atlantic Ocean.” Many lives were lost! It is a story that will never be forgotten.

Why did his mother have that dream? She believed that it was a warning from God. What

would have happened to my stepfather if he had not listened to his mother? Probably he would have died. Only our Heavenly Father knows.

But perhaps the life of a young man who had lost his faith in God was saved by the implicit faith and trust of a godly mother.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Proverbs 3:5–6. □



## MEMORY



## VERSE

**“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”**

**Proverbs 3:5–6.**



# Satan's Ultimate Deception

by Russell Standish

As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives with His disciples late Wednesday afternoon, a little more than twenty-four hours before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, they could not help but see the beautiful temple located on Mount Zion, reflecting picturesquely the setting sun.

The disciples were amazed as they reflected upon the words Christ spoke while leaving the temple, before climbing the mount: "I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Matthew 24:2. The disciples felt a sense of foreboding regarding the temple's future, for Jesus had also pronounced to the priests and rulers, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:38. Could it be that the temple, Israel's pride and focus of identity, would soon be destroyed? They anxiously awaited further explanation from Christ.

**The disciples felt a sense of foreboding regarding the temple's future, for Jesus had also pronounced to the priests and rulers, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."**

The disciples were undoubtedly influenced by the priests of their day, who taught that God would never reject the Jewish nation as His special people. (Thirty-nine years later, in the year A.D. 70, when the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by Roman armies, the priests, ignoring precedence, boldly proclaimed that God would never permit their

temple to be destroyed.) Unable to understand the implication of Jesus' words and confused by their presuppositions, the disciples diligently questioned Christ, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Mat-

thew 24:3.

Christ's answer to their questions was prompt. While He did provide them with signs of the destruction of Jerusalem, His attention was focused chiefly upon the signs of the



Russell Standish, speaker and author, writes from Australia, where he directs Remnant Ministries.



events just prior to His Second Coming. Choosing the most important sign, the one designed to destroy the faith of devout Christians, He answered, “Take heed that no man deceive you.” Verse 4. So significant would be the sign of deception in the days just prior to the Second Coming of Christ that He emphasized it on no less than four occasions in His reply to the disciples’ questions.

He added, “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” Verse 5. Further, He warned, “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” Verse 11. Finally, emphasizing the extreme severity of the deceptions, Christ stated, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Verse 24.

In view of all of these dire warnings, we stand amazed at the lack of any fear of deception among Christians today. Most certainly we are in the day when our Lord will soon return. While we do not know the exact time of His coming, He has provided us with incredible information concerning the state of the world and the condition of mankind just prior to that event. Yet every deception of the devil is accepted by some Christians, one group or another, as if it were the truth of God. Rarely is a thought given to the question, Is this a message from God, or is it yet another effort of the archdeceiver to take us away from our eternal heritage? No wonder that Christ declared the last-day church to be “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Yet Christians today believe that they are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” Revelation 3:17. Surely it is time for Christians to arouse from their fearful slumber and rise up and serve their Lord in fidelity and truth, ever searching His Word in order to discover truth and to unmask deception.

### **Does the Devil Exist?**

Scripture has warned, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8. Incredibly, very few Christians today give even a passing consideration to this divine

warning. One of the master deceptions of Satan is to obliterate the knowledge of his existence from the minds of people who regard themselves as devout Christians. A survey of evangelical Christians in the United States, undertaken in 1997, revealed that 69% of the people denied the existence of the devil. Evangelical Christians claim to be guided

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**Evangelical Christians claim to be guided by the Word of God alone. . . . However, the survey showed that over two-thirds of such people denied the existence of Satan.**

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by the Word of God **alone**. The Latin term “Sola Scriptura” is commonly used to assert their faith in every word of the Bible. However, the survey showed that over two-thirds of such people denied the existence of Satan. Yet Satan is mentioned no less than fifty-four times in sixteen different books of the Bible. The devil, or the devils, which include Satan and his supporting fallen angels, are mentioned on one hundred and fifteen occasions in nineteen books of Scripture. Other references to Satan as the adversary, the serpent, the dragon and Lucifer, increase the number of references to the devil in Scripture. How blind can such evangelical Protestants be?

Such blindness leaves Christians to attribute every supernatural phenomenon to God. This places Satan on vantage ground. He can weave his deceptions into events and manifestations, confident that deluded Christians will attribute his deceptions to God.

For example, Christians are deceived by spiritualistic evidences. Such persons believe that they have

actually seen and spoken with their dead relatives—never considering that Satan is the master impersonator. He and his demons can impersonate any individual who has ever lived upon this earth with such accuracy that it is impossible even for their closest loved ones to distinguish the genuine from the devilish. Thus Satan is well able to weave a pattern of deception around many who genuinely believe that they are following the Word of Christ.

No wonder Jesus warned us to avoid deception in the last days! He saw that even apparent devout Christians would so discard the only basis of truth—the Bible—that they would become gullible subjects of the deceptions of Satan.

### **Communicating With the Dead**

Some have pointed to what appeared to be the prophet Samuel at the behest of the Witch of Endor as being a genuine experience from God of communicating with the dead. It will be recalled that when God ceased bringing counsel to the rebellious King Saul, he in desperation sought the assistance of this witch. This remarkable incidence is recorded in 1 Samuel 28:6–25. The reader is encouraged to read the passage in full. Some believe that because “Samuel” appeared before Saul, this figure was indeed the genuine prophet returned from heaven. However, the context of Scripture absolutely nullifies such a conclusion. We must remember why it was that Saul decided to visit the Witch of Endor. Scripture records: “And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” 1 Samuel 28:6. The only reason that Saul sought out the witch was because God had made a decision to no longer communicate with this rebellious king. Certainly God would not then choose to communicate by another means, and especially not through the Witch of Endor—who by God’s command should have been put to death because of her devilish activities.

On numbers of occasions the Scripture plainly states that no individual undertaking seances was to be permitted to live in the nation of Israel. The Israelites were specifically

commanded by God, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” Exodus 22:18. Further, they were informed, “There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.” Deuteronomy 18:10–11.

Manifestly, God would not use a medium of communication which He Himself had so emphatically forbidden His people to use. Furthermore, Samuel was dead. The Scripture on no occasion states that the souls of the dead immediately proceed to heaven. Indeed, the whole focus of Scripture in relationship to the dead is that those who have accepted the Lord, receive their reward not at death but rather at the Second Coming—when Christ will raise them from their state of dreamless sleep. Over and over again, the dead are said to be asleep. See Job 7:21; Matthew 27:52–53; John 11:11–17; Acts 7:60; 1 Corinthians 15. Thus it is little wonder that the Lord declared, “for the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.” Ecclesiastes 9:5. There was no possibility whatsoever of Samuel being able to return to Saul or to express any of his thoughts to him.<sup>1</sup>

### **Devilish Fiend or Angel of Light?**

Another deception of Satan which has pervaded Christianity is the concept that he is the most ugly being in the universe. Several years ago when I was exiting from a supermarket in the United States, I noticed one of the notorious supermarket tabloids. The headline read “Satan and Christ Seen in Clouds Over Texas.” The subheading stated, “Theologians Declare This Sign Indicates the Commencement of the Final Conflict Between Christ and Satan.” A fake photograph on the front page depicted Christ as handsome in appearance, and Satan as the ugliest creature one could imagine. Once again, such deceptions serve Satan’s purpose well. Few humans would enjoy being repre-

sented as being incredibly ugly, but Satan is no human. His deceptions are enhanced by the common expectation of those who believe that he exists, that he is a violent creature, and that his appearance is comparable to his character!

How differently the Scripture presents Satan! Speaking of him prior to his fall, the Bible states, “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee . . . . Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Ezekiel 28:13–15, 17. Thus the Bible represents Satan,

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**Here is a dramatic warning that Satan will appear in the last days—not as a being of gross appearance with two horns and a tail—but as a magnificent angel of light!**

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prior to his fall, as being an angel of immense beauty, full of wisdom and enveloped in brightness. He was perfect. His covering was of magnificent precious stones. The prophet Isaiah describes him as “Lu-

cifer, son of the morning!” Isaiah 14:12.

Now the question poses itself, Is Satan still able to display brightness and beauty, or does he appear like the devilish fiend as represented in the fictitious clouds over Texas? If Satan actually looked like those “clouds” indicated, few people would be deceived by such a being of evident evil.

Looking to the last days, Paul, writing to the believers in the Greek city of Corinth, prophesied that: “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” 2 Corinthians 11:14. Here is a dramatic warning that Satan will appear in the last days—not as a being of gross appearance with two horns and a tail—but as a magnificent angel of light! For those who have been deceived into thinking that Satan is a nonexistent being, there will be no questioning of the true identity of this being. The same survey of evangelical Protestants that indicated that 69% of the people believed in no satanic being, also indicated that almost 90% of them believed in the angels of God. In the latter case, they are correct. However, those who have discarded the Biblical evidence of a real devil will be totally deceived by the magnificence of Satan’s presence. Believing that only God and His angels exist, they will be vulnerable to believe their senses rather than the plain Word of God. They will be found not to be true followers of Christ, for His true followers will have tested everything they saw and heard by the Word of God—not by their senses.

Let it not be forgotten that Satan appeared to Christ as a glorious angel! Had Satan appeared as a diabolical entity, there is no doubt that he would have possessed no deceptive power whatsoever. But in order to deceive Christ he came as if he were an angel of light—hastening at the bidding of God to sustain Christ after His forty days of fasting and prayer in the wilderness!

It was not until Satan spoke words which contradicted the plain Word of God that his deception was unmasked. In view of the devil’s questioning, Christ did not believe His senses. Satan commanded: “If

thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." Luke 4:3. Christ faced a dilemma. His eyes told Him that the being in front of Him was a glorious angel of God! However, the evidence was that Satan's question contradicted the plain words of God. Forty days earlier Christ had heard His Father say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17. Never for a moment did Christ place the evidence of His eyes before the plainest Words of God. Had He done so, He would have been deceived.

### **Safety Only in Trusting God's Word**

Like His true followers today, the Lord knew only one criterion of truth: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20. The questioning nature of Satan's command—a doubt which no angel of God would have even considered—alerted Christ to the fact that this apparent angel of light was in fact the devil himself in a deceptive guise. Notice Christ's reply: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4. Unless Christians learn to accept every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, and that word **alone**, they will be deceived. They will have ignored Christ's earnest warnings against deceptions.

Seeing that Christ answered him with a passage of Scripture found in Deuteronomy 8:3, Satan himself decided to tempt our Lord through the use of Scripture too. Quoting Psalm 91:11–12, Satan requested of Christ after taking Him to the pinnacle of the temple, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Matthew 4:6.

Here Satan escalated his deception. He quoted the very Word of God, which he despises, in order to deceive the One of purest character. You will notice if you return to the passage which Satan quoted that he omitted

a vital portion of verse 11—"to keep thee in all thy ways." This portion of the passage was crucial. The purpose of the angels is not to care for those

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who presumptuously endanger their lives. Their work is to care for those, who taking all proper care, are placed in the most perilous of conditions through no fault or folly of their own. Here we see that the quoting of Scripture in no wise is a guarantee that we are dealing with the angels of God. The devil is a diligent student of the Bible as we have seen from this incident. He has, without doubt, searched and re-searched every portion of Scripture, seeking to misuse it to his advantage, which he attempted to do with our Lord. Christ was not deceived. His mind was so full of the Word of God, which He had been taught from His mother's knee, that He replied, using Deuteronomy 6:16: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Matthew 4:7. No Christian needs to be deceived by Satan's most subtle efforts to deprive him of his eternal heritage if only he will place his life in the hands of Jesus and diligently study the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Once more the devil attempted a new ploy. What he could not achieve by casting doubt on Christ's faith, and that which unavailed by misusing Scripture, he thought he could accomplish through an act of flattery. So ambitious are many Christians that they will sell their souls for a position in their local church. So grandiose are the desires of many pastors and priests that they will do the same thing in order to

receive ecclesiastical promotions. Pride of position is to become as common at the time of the Second Advent as it was in the days of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

On the third occasion of temptation, Satan offered Christ the entire world. The condition was a simple one—that Christ spend a moment or two bowing down and worshipping the devil. As humans, we may not have been asked to literally bow down before Satan in worship, but many of us will bow to his temptations, casting aside our convictions in order that our pride and unholy ambitions may be fulfilled and that our reputation before men will be inflated. Yet the One who "made himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7) yielded to no such evil motives. Once more the Word of God was His stay. Quoting the words of both Deuteronomy 6:13 and 1 Samuel 7:3, Christ replied, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:10.

Only those who are stayed upon the Word of God, will, in the strength and power of our Lord, resist every deception of the devil. When Satan comes to impersonate Christ, he will appear as the most beautiful creature that humans have ever seen. He will be clothed in light so brilliant that human eyes can scarcely bear the sight! He will use Scripture in order to ensure that his words are even more deceptive. Satan loves above all to unite God's holy truth with his satanic errors, for thus are people deceived. Furthermore, Satan is only too pleased to flatter the unconverted heart into accepting his deceptions. He provides the very best reasons to do wrong. Only those who day by day unite their will with the will of Christ, will be able to stand such pandering to their pride. Satan knows all about pride. It was pride which developed in his own heart and transformed him from Lucifer, the covering cherub, into Satan, the archenemy of God and His flock. □

<sup>1</sup> For an in-depth discussion on the state of man in death, we recommend "*The Mystery of Death*" by Russell R. Standish and Colin D. Standish—Hartland Publications, P.O. Box 1, Rapidan, Virginia 22733, USA.



# Study

## to Show Thyself Approved.

Part 3

All of us need God to answer important questions about our personal walk like: How do I surrender? What is conversion? What is the right action of my will?

PhotoDisc

by Sally Hohnberger

In this three-part series we have been looking at ways to get more out of our devotional time. We noted that as we study the Scriptures we are gaining spiritual nourishment, and as it is not healthy to eat our food too fast, so it is less beneficial to read quickly and superficially. I shared a color-coding system and also three little disciplines that have been a help to me. I would now like to share with you how I best benefit from topical studies.

### Topical Studies

Study topics that will be useful to you on a day-to-day basis. We need to study the topics of the problems that we find ourselves facing and struggling with every day, rather

than those areas that are comfortable to our likes, interests or personalities, but which are not life changing. For example:

All of us need God to answer important questions about our personal walk like: How do I surrender? What is conversion? What is the right action of my will? Can I overcome sin and self with Christ? How do I overcome anger, appetite or emotions ruling over me? How can God subdue my emotions? What is my part and what is God's part? How does God free me from wrong thoughts, words, habits, practices or deeds? What is true faith—a feeling, an action, or a mental assent? What are works? What is the fruit of a connected Christian? Will God save me **in** my sins or **from** my sins? What is my preparation be-



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fore I am ready to proclaim the gospel to the world? How do I deal with the erring? How does self die? Where do the timid find self-worth as it is in Jesus? How do I enter in? Does God really love me? Can I be saved? Where do I gain self-control to live the life God has asked me to live? What does it mean to hear God's voice? Can God really, personally direct me and lead me more closely than when He was with the disciples, walking this earth with them? Why must we tarry with Jesus first? We need to know the answers to these topics intellectually, but more importantly—experientially.

**A spouse** asks, "How do I become the spouse God is calling me to be?" How do I keep an objective view of the conflict when my emotions pull me strongly in the old ways of the flesh? How do I create an atmosphere of growth toward Christ for my spouse? Is continual union and communion with Christ a reality?

**A parent** needs to study, evaluate and experiment with God on how to bring his child to Christ to be changed in disposition, desires and habits. Where is the balance of justice and mercy in parental government? What is heavenly discipline? What does God mean when He says that we should command our household in righteousness? What would Jesus do were He in this conflict of wills right now? What is a parent's first work? What is true missionary work? How do we redirect a rebellious, wayward child? Where should we live? How am I to meet all the needs and duties of our home? How important is the mother's work in the home? What does the priest of the home do?

**Youth** must have surrender, union, communion, and a knowledge of Scripture to guide them in their needs. They need to come to be able to answer the question, What is my purpose in life? What practical training do I need? What occupation should I pursue? What are my talents and abilities? How do I problem solve in this world of so much worldliness? Can I be a Christian and be successful in an occupation if I practice integrity, honesty and Sabbath observance? What is proper conduct with the opposite

sex? What is appropriate in courtship and marriage? These are important questions in our day-to-day life. A practical God makes knowledge practical and useful.

**A child** needs to ask God, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" What does it mean to be a team member in the home? What is my occupation/work? How do I surrender? Why must I pray, study, read and learn to sit quietly? What is and is not proper association with others? What should be my attitude toward my parents?

These types of studies are life-changing. They give solid direction and needed structure to our study time. As we read to understand the basics, we are preparing to proclaim

the gospel message to the world. This world is in great need of Christians, followers of Christ, to help brothers and sisters learn how to be living Christians

in their homes and under all circumstances. It gives us an example of how to overcome sin and selfishness through a constant crying out to God. It teaches us how to connect with wisdom and divine power to help us in our homes—how to raise our children for Heaven now, and how to be a spouse in Christ. These are the true needs of today.

When we can personally lead people to Christ to find the power to live above the pull of the flesh, inclinations and wrong ways of life, because it is our living experience, the message will go like a wildfire in dry grass! God awaits His army to come under His Generalship and power before He can direct the finishing of the work. He must first prepare His people individually! We need the continual drawing upon divine power in our lives, giving us victory daily. We need the experience of training our children on how to come to Christ and surrender to Him so they, too, may find the gospel power over their flesh. In this

way, like none other, we will be trained to finish the work. We need to learn to live the gospel in our homes in the practical matters of life before any of our precious doctrines, or medical missionary work will be for saving good and not just a work in the world. We cannot give the message of a Saviour if the Saviour is not presently saving us. We cannot give what we do not possess ourselves. We can give knowledge, a healthier diet or lifestyle to some who are open, but without the experience of Christ as our Saviour from anger, irritation, despair and so forth, all our efforts will never *finish* the work. In Luke 4:18 we read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to

preach the gospel [power of God to save me from self] to the poor . . . to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, . . . sight to the blind, . . . to set at liberty

them that are bruised." We all need to study practical, life-changing themes, and find the balance and personal application in Christ our Saviour.

I pray that these study-helps will aid you in finding a closer, problem-solving Lord in your life as He has been in mine. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15. God be with you! □

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**We cannot give the message of a Saviour if the Saviour is not presently saving us.**

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If you would like to contact Sally Hohnberger or if you would like to receive Restoration International's newsletter, write:

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# *A Call to Prepare*

# *for the* Final Crisis

cannot sleep after twelve o'clock. I am encouraging souls to examine their own hearts and to seek counsel most earnestly from God. Now is the time for us to afflict our souls by fasting and prayer. We cannot lay out the way in which the Lord will work, but we can follow the leadings and drawings of His Holy Spirit. We shall gain nothing by lifting up our souls unto vanity and in self-confidence.

by Ellen G. White

This I am saying in the visions of the night in assemblies in Battle Creek. If ever the believers in Battle Creek needed the Holy Spirit's guidance, it is now. They need the deep moving of the Spirit of God, that they may give the trumpet a certain sound.



Read the first eleven verses of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. Present the truth in its power, as it is in Jesus. Keep the mind stayed on God and imbued with His Holy Spirit. Present the affirmative of truth. Stand on the platform of eternal truth. But do not accuse. Say nothing to arouse enmity and strife.

The truth—**present truth** for this time—will be meat in due season. Let plain, authoritative truth be presented with decided assurance and in the spirit of love and kindness, that the Holy Spirit's power may give force to the words spoken. You are surely where many souls have become confused. But Christ has promised, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." We are to claim this promise. The Lord is not asleep or indifferent to our faith, and He will give knowledge and grace to all who will humble their hearts before Him. (All emphasis added unless otherwise noted.)

Have perfect faith in the promises of Christ. "Teach them," He said, "all that I have commanded you." See Matthew 28:20. The Lord has many precious souls in Battle Creek, and they need the very words of instruction that Christ has given for them. The gospel of Christ is full of love, rich in assurance and comfort. Every soul needs now to understand the foundation of his faith. In simple language and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, present the truth. We have the Word, that wonderful Book, which contains the very instruction needed at this time.

The testing time is right upon us. We must build upon the Rock that will stand the storm of test and trial. As we see the fulfillment of prophecy, we know that the end of all things is at hand. Present the eternal principles of truth. Show what the Word of God declares is to take place on this earth. The God who gave Daniel instruction regarding the closing scenes of this earth's history will certainly confirm the testimony of His servants as at the appointed time they give the loud cry.

All the messages given from 1840–1844 are to be made forcible now, for there are many people who have lost their bearings. The messages are to go to all the churches.

Christ said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." Matthew 13:16–17. Blessed are the eyes which saw the things that were seen in 1843 and 1844.

The message was given. And there should be no delay in repeating the message, for the signs of the times are fulfilling; the closing work must be done. A great work will be done in a short time. A message will soon be given by God's appointment that will swell into a loud cry. Then Daniel will stand in his lot, to give his testimony.

The attention of our churches must be aroused. We are standing upon the borders of the greatest event in the world's history, and Satan must not have power over the people of God, causing them to sleep on. The Papacy will appear in its power. All must now arouse and search the Scriptures, for God will make known to His faithful ones what shall be in the last time. The Word of the Lord is to come to His people in power.

The signs of the end are fast fulfilling. The time of trouble is very near us now. We are to be brought into strait places in a way in which we have not been brought heretofore. The time of trouble is near, and we are to awake to a realization of this. We are to be sure that our feet are in

the narrow path. We need an experience that we have not yet had, that we may have the assurance that the God of all grace is a very present help in time of need. The time of trouble—trouble such as was not since there was a nation—is right upon us, and we are like the sleeping virgins. See Matthew 25:1–13. We are to awake and ask the Lord Jesus to place underneath us His everlasting arms, and carry us through the time of trial before us.

Let us turn our attention away from unimportant things, and give ourselves to God. We scarcely dream of the destroying angels that already are permitted to bring disaster and destruction in their path. Shall my life be spared to act a part in the closing scenes of this earth's history?

How little we know of what is going on in Heaven! What fearful indifference those on this earth show to eternal realities. Souls are unprepared for what is about to take place in our world; the warning must be given, The end of all things is at hand.

Again I say to my ministering brethren in Battle Creek, Preach the Word. The last message of mercy is to be given to prepare a people to stand in these last days. Everything is to be shaken that can be shaken, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.

This is what has been presented to me—that we are asleep, and do not know the time of our visitation. But if we humble ourselves before God, and seek Him with the whole heart, He will be found of us. See Jeremiah 29:13. □

Manuscript Releases, vol. 21, 436–437. (Written January 30, 1906, from Sanitarium, California, to Brother and Sister Farnsworth.)

**The Papacy will appear in its power. All must now arouse and search the Scriptures, for God will make known to His faithful ones what shall be in the last time.**



## Dear Reader,

We have provided this *NewsWatch* corner in order to keep you posted on headline news that relates with prophesied last-day events.

If you have a news item of interest and would like to share it with us, please send us a copy. See page 2 for our mailing address and fax number.



## TECHNOLOGY

### Whispers in the Wind—Y2K

**News Item:** “As the countdown to the year 2000 moves forward, early examples of the glitches computers may run into because of date fields reading ‘2000’ are already taking shape. . . .

“A Minnesota woman who is over 100 years old received an invitation to attend kindergarten in her hometown, following a computer error.

“In 1993 Boeing, which uses proprietary networked software to prepare parts orders seven years before filing the orders, got a flood of error messages because of misinterpretation of the date seven years out.

“Unum Life Insurance Co. deleted hundreds of records from a financial reporting database after one of the company’s computers mistook “00” in a date field for 1900.” *PC Magazine*, January 14, 1999.

“While the impact of the Y2K bug is unknown, the world seems to be surviving the Year 99 bug well. Some computer programs read the ‘99’ date as an instruction to stop working.

“There are three big days for this problem. Jan. 1, 1999 (the beginning of the year), April 9, 1999 (the 99th day of the last year), and Sept. 9, 1999 (The four nines of ‘9-9-99’).

Some doomsday watchers saw them as precursors to a Y2K catastrophe.

“On the first date, however, few problems were found.

Computerized taxi meters in Singapore went dead at noon Jan. 1 for about two hours. Police computers in three Swedish airports failed at midnight on Jan. 1 but were fixed in a few hours. And radio station KFQD in Anchorage, Alaska, was unable to receive The Associated Press’ newswire when the date changed.

“The most sensitive problem involved two medical products. A Hewlett-Packard external defibrillator and Invivo’s Millennia 3500 multiparameter patient monitor still work properly, but display the wrong time and date if not reset properly.

“These are kind of whispers in the wind for what’s going to happen in the year 2000,” said Chris LeTocq, a corporate Y2K analyst. “If you’re hearing stories of software having problems with 1999, that means Year 2000 is real.” *World*, January 16, 1999.

#### Prophetic Perspective:

“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” Ecclesiastes 7:29.

“Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.” Isaiah 2:8.

“Thus were they defiled with their own works, and

went a whoring with their own inventions.” Psalm 106:39.

“And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.” Isaiah 13:11.

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. . . . hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 1 Corinthians 1:19–20.

In man’s professed wisdom, is it not possible that God will confound the wisdom of man regarding their supposed great technical knowledge? May not God be confounding the plans of men to control the whole world?



## RELIGION

### Cuban Catholics Make Gains But Protestant Rights Limited

#### Religious Liberty Update:

“While relations are better between Fidel Castro’s government and Catholics a year after Pope John Paul II visited Cuba, Protestant pastors say they are no better off and, in

some cases, worse than before.

"Since the papal visit, the government has confiscated at least one evangelical church property. Several pastors report they have been prevented from completing parsonages and sanctuaries after authorities revoked building permits. . . .

"The pope's visit was a political maneuver to give an image to the world,' says Osmel Pérez, a Baptist pastor in the central Cuba town of Esperanza. He believes the visit served to strengthen Catholic church and state ties, to the exclusion of evangelicals. 'The pope came to represent Catholics, not us. The bishops are benefiting from his visit.' " *Christianity Today*, February 8, 1999.

**Prophetic Perspective:** "and all the world wondered after the beast." Revelation 13:3. It is interesting to note that while the pope in his recent visit to the Americas said nothing in defense of Protestants in Cuba, who are losing their freedoms, he was quite vocal in stating that Latin American Protestants should not be able to share their faith with Catholics because this act supposedly removed their own freedom of choice. Here we see the hypocrisy behind all the outward claims of the pope that he believes in true religious liberty.

## U.S. Now 3rd Largest Catholic Nation

**News Item:** New York—"Over the last year, the United States has surpassed Italy and the Philippines and become the third largest Catholic country in the world. Ahead of it are Brazil and Mexico, both with about 88 million Catholics. . . .

"At present, 22.7% of Americans call themselves Catholics, which means the total number is around 61 million." *National Catholic Register*, January 24–30, 1999.

"There are 153 Catholics among the members of the 106th Con-

gress, representing 37 states and two territories. Of those, 25 are in the Senate and 128 in the House of Representatives—with 95 coming from the Democratic party and 58 from the Republican. Catholics have the highest representation in Congress of any church." *National Catholic Register*, January 17–23, 1999.

**Prophetic Perspective:** "Catholicism is gaining ground upon every side. See the increasing number of her churches and chapels in Protestant countries. Look at the popularity of her colleges and seminaries in America, so widely patronized by Protestants. Look at the growth of ritualism in England and the frequent defections to the ranks of the Catholics. These things should awaken the anxiety of all who prize the pure principles of the gospel." *The Great Controversy*, 566.

"There are many who are disposed to attribute any fear of Roman Catholicism in the United States to bigotry or childishness. Such see nothing in the character and attitude of Romanism that is hostile to our free institutions, or find nothing portentous in its growth." *Ibid.*, 564.

But as the writer goes on to say, "The pacific tone of Rome in the United States does not imply a change of heart. She is tolerant where she is helpless. Says Bishop O'Connor: 'Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world.' " *Ibid.*, 565.

## Mass Defections Angers the Pope

**News Item:** "In Mexico, which has the second-largest Catholic population of any country, evangelical churches and other faiths have siphoned off as much as 10 percent of Catholics in recent decades." *Washington Post*, January 24, 1999.

"The 78-year-old pontiff used his five-day Mexico visit to outline church strategy throughout the Americas for the start of the new millennium.

"He signed a declaration containing that strategy.

"He urged Catholics to more vigorously defend their faith against Protestant sects that have made inroads in Latin America. . . ." *The Associated Press*, January 26, 1999.

"The document acknowledged the success Protestant evangelicals have had in winning over converts in the traditional Catholic bastion of Latin America, home to nearly half the world's 1 billion Catholics.

"It also criticized the evangelicals' proselytizing activity, suggesting coercion was involved." *CCN*, January 23, 1999.

**Prophetic Perspective:** When the early Christian church was spreading the truth of the gospel, they had to meet the same attitude as was manifested by John Paul II. The rulers of the Jews counseled together and said regarding the gospel, "But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:17–20. (For further study read *The Great Controversy*, 197–210.)



## Brazilian Currency Crisis

**News Item:** "If nothing else, Brazil has shattered the soothing notion that the world economy is slowly but surely on the mend.



What happened last week (the surprise devaluation of Brazil's currency) suggests that the recent months of economic calm—when the U.S. stock market raced to new highs—may resemble the 'phony war' of 1940: a period when people falsely reassured themselves that calamity would, somehow, be avoided. This is, to be sure, a charged analogy; but the parallels are unsettling. . . .

"Nor is Brazil the only problem. Japan's recession is still deepening; Europe's economy is weakening; China's outlook is murky. Until now, the U.S. economy has seemed immune to the turmoil, and feverish buying by confident American consumers has cushioned the impact of the foreign slowdown. But the threats are multiplying, and the immunity is not infinite. Americans see this crisis as phony, when—even if we muddle through—it is genuine and menacing." *Newsweek*, January 25, 1999.

**Prophetic Perspective:** "There are not many, even among educators and statesmen, who comprehend the causes that underlie the present state of society. Those who hold the reins of government are not able to solve the problem of moral corruption, poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime. They are struggling in vain to place business operations on a more secure basis. If men would give more heed to the teaching of God's Word, they would find a solution of the problems that perplex them." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 13.



### American Morality On Trial in the Senate

**News Item:** "The impeachment debate reveals the conservative vs. liberal struggle about our behavioral boundaries

Washington— "Anyone who thinks the impeachment trial is just about William Jefferson Clinton should think again. What actually is under way is one of the great morality plays of our century: a contest for the moral soul of the United States." *The Sunday Oregonian*, June 24, 1999.

"America Faces A Moral Test, The Pope Warns.

"Pope John Paul II urged Americans to choose a higher moral course.

St. Louis— "Ignoring the moral lapses of President Clinton, Pope John Paul II flew into St. Louis on Tuesday and addressed the broader moral failings of the nation." *The News Tribune*, Wednesday, January 27, 1999.

**Prophetic Perspective:** Jesus said: "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:37. "Lawlessness, dissipation, and corruption are sweeping in upon us like an overwhelming tide. . . .

"Rulers are actuated by a desire for gain and love of sensual pleasure." *The Great Controversy*, 585–586. All the while "the man of sin" as "an angel of light" is "speaking great things" calling this nation to a moral test. See 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Corinthians 11:14; and Revelation 13:5.

### Proud Russia on its Knees

**News Item:** "The question for the country now is whether it can survive at all as a coherent state, still less as a civilized society. The statistics are staggering: At least 70 percent of Russians live near or below the subsistence level. . . .

"Russia's annual government revenues are less than what the U.S. Treasury collects in a single week. . . .

"With runaway inflation and no jobs, great masses of Russians have lost everything, including faith. They boil with anger and cynicism—and not just because they are poor. Their country has been stolen from them. The small group of men who have corruptly seized the assets of the state flaunt their wealth as unthinkingly as any czar. These men are the oligarchs. . . .

" 'I've told them that if they don't work out an arrangement for fair shares with someone like me, there will be an explosion,' Yavlinsky adds. 'And sooner or later they will lose everything.'

"But nobody believes the oligarchs and the big companies will take heed.

"The foreboding in the air in the badly demoralized Russia today is a commonplace of the left, the right, and the center, but it was most dramatically summed up for me by the ultranationalist

Vladimir Zhirinovsky. 'The conditions in Russia are now as ripe for a revolution,' Zhirinovsky said, 'as they were in October 1917.' " *U.S. News and World Report*, February 8, 1999.

**Prophetic Perspective:** Jesus has foretold the signs and events to precede His coming. He has said, "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled." Mark 13:7. We should realize that we are nearing that great event—the Second Coming of Christ!



FACSIMILE OF THE ORIGINAL 1843 CHART

## REGAINING THE VISION, RENEWING OUR CONSECRATION

**P**aul A. Gordon in his excellent book, *The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers*, quotes the testimony of Brother Washington Morse who participated in the early Advent movement. Brother Morse's testimony is very moving. It gives us a taste of the vision and consecration that he and his contemporaries experienced.

The message that stirred their soul was the sanctuary message. It was a message about the judgment and the cleansing from sin. It was a message about time, and by their reckoning October 22, 1844, was the day they believed Christ would return to earth. As a result, they desired to be free from sin. They began such a study and search of God's Word as had not been seen since apostolic days. They brought their lives into conformity to the truths they found and gave their wholehearted obedience to Jesus. They waited for the Lord to return, and in that most blessed waiting time they made themselves ready by the blood of the Lamb and the grace of God.



by Jeff Wehr

Jeff Wehr writes from Rice, Washington. He is a co-editor of *Our Firm Foundation* and regularly serves as an author and speaker for Hope International.

Let us now read his testimony:

“‘And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’ Daniel 8:14

“Much ink has been spent in commenting on this text. Perhaps there is not another verse in the Bible that has been so widely discussed as this one, and perhaps no other passage has proved, and will prove, the downfall of so many nations who reject its plain teachings. The Saviour pronounced the most severe woe upon the Jews, because they knew not the ‘time’ of their visitation.

“That time was the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24, cut off from the two thousand three hundred days, or years, and was the first four hundred and ninety years of that period. As we came down to that generation where is seen the end of the longest prophetic period in the Bible, and the only one for which we have a Bible date. God, through His servants, sent forth the message of Revelation 14:6–7, announcing, ‘The hour of his judgment is come.’ The *time* was the moving principle. It was a searching test to those living in that generation.

“I was permitted to take part in that blessed work from its beginning. In great power God set His seal to it by His Holy Spirit. The doors of the churches were thrown open for Brother Miller and others to preach the coming of Christ; and thus when this truth was preached, a great harvest of converts was added to the churches. This work continued until January 1, 1844. At that time a change took place, as the majority believed that the prophetic periods all ended there. From that time until spring, we had no freedom nor liberty with our former brethren in the churches to which we belonged. But we understood that the twenty-three hundred days did not end until the spring of 1844; and it was with great solemnity that we came to that period.

“Some of our brethren could not go forward, and put in their crops, while others did so reluctantly. We felt sure our reckoning was correct, and that the Saviour

would come at that time. While standing in that waiting position, the light of the second angel’s message flashed upon us; and a voice came like a rushing mighty wind, ‘Come out of her, my people.’ No one knew who raised the cry first; but as we heard from our brethren north, south, east, and west, all had the same experience, and immediately left their respective churches. Yes, and we all left our creeds, or what had before been our differences. Right there we formed the Philadelphian state of the church—a church of brotherly love.

“Probably from sixty to one hundred thousand persons came out from the Protestant churches within a month; and O, how God blessed this act! Right there we ran out of all our published time, practically went to sleep on time, according to Matthew 25:5. This we saw was the *tarrying time*. We read, ‘Though it [the vision] tarry, wait for it.’ In this position we continued until about the middle of July, 1844. Here we discovered a discrepancy in our reckoning, and found that the decree of Artaxerxes for the restoration of Jerusalem, which formed the starting point for the twenty-three hundred days, went into effect in the autumn of the year 457 B.C., and not at the beginning of the year, as had been formerly believed. Reckoning from the autumn of 457, the twenty-three hundred years terminated in the autumn of 1844.

“A r g u m e n t s drawn from the Old Testament types also pointed to that autumn as the time when the event represented by the cleansing of the sanctuary must take place. Under the Mosaic system the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the great day of atonement, occurred on the tenth day of the Jewish seventh month, when the high priest, having

made an atonement for all Israel, and thus removed their sins from the sanctuary, came forth and blessed the people. So it was believed that Christ, our great High Priest, would appear to purify the earth by the destruction of sin and sinners, and to bless His waiting people with immortality, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the great day of atonement—the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary—which in the year 1844 fell on the 22nd of October.

“This was regarded as the time of the Lord’s coming. This position was in harmony with the proofs already presented that the twenty-three hundred days would terminate in the autumn, and the conclusion seemed irresistible. In the parable of Matthew 25, the time of waiting and slumber is followed by the coming of the bridegroom. This was in accordance with the arguments just presented, both from prophecy and from the types. They carried strong conviction of their truthfulness, and the ‘midnight cry’ was heralded by thousands of believers. It went from city to city, from village to village, and into remote country places.

“None knew where it started. It arose simultaneously. There was fervent prayer and unreserved consecration to God. At the call, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him,’ we all arose and trimmed our lamps. We studied the Word of God with greater interest than we ever had studied it. It was not the most talented, but the most humble and devoted, who were to hear and obey the call. Farmers left their crops standing in the fields, mechanics laid down their tools, merchants left their merchandise; and all went forth with tears and rejoicing to give the warning. Here is where the ‘midnight cry’ came in to give power to the second message. Those who

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had formerly led out in the cause were among the last to give the warning.

“As *time* was the moving principle, we did proclaim, with all that *positiveness* brought to view in Revelation 10:5–6, that time should be no longer. We had no ‘ifs’ in our faith: we believed God’s Word just as He de-

signed we should. If we had seen the third angel’s message then, we could not have given the first angel’s message. We gave up the world, with all its pleasures and charms—our property, our reputation, our all. No one whose faith was genuine could do any other way. The world saw that we believed just what we preached. We gave it all; yes, we consecrated all we had and were, to God. We were the happiest people that ever lived this side of the apostolic days.” *Review and Herald*, March 7, 1899.

What a testimony! They were the happiest people that ever lived since the time of the twelve disciples! They were happy because they had made themselves ready to see Jesus. They were so conse-

**No one can be said to wait until he is ready. Now is the time to watch, lest coming to our cases suddenly, He find us not prepared.**

crated that for them the world and the things of this world had lost their allure-ment. They embraced a message that changed their whole lives—a message about the cleansing of the soul temple—a message about seeing Jesus—a message about time—namely, October 22, 1844!

Here now are the concluding words written by Brother

Morse:

“It is through the light upon the sanctuary question that we know and understand the work of the judgment that has been going on in heaven since the end of the twenty-three hundred years of Daniel 8:14. And as we near the time when the cases of the living will come up, there will be a corresponding work going forward upon earth. Hence this is a time of supreme importance to every living soul. We do not know just when our names will be called. Now is the time for us to be free from sin, let Jesus have the whole heart, make no reserve. We are to be like ‘men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding.’ Luke 12:36. No one can be

said to wait until he is ready. Now is the time to watch, lest coming to our cases suddenly, He find us not prepared.”

The questions for us today are: Have we made the necessary preparations for the Saviour’s return? Do we believe that truth? Do we believe that the judgment is come? Do we believe that Jesus is coming soon? Do we believe that we have a special message to proclaim to the world—namely, the three angels’ messages? Are we willing to be used of God to take part in the finishing work of the gospel? If we are, then it is time that we go to work for the Saviour in His vineyard today.

Soon the great crisis will break upon us! Satan will continue to cast a shadow over the three angels’ messages, so that many people both inside and outside of the church will not clearly discern their import—their time and place. However, this threefold message will suddenly exert a powerful influence upon millions of men and women around the world.

The time has come for us to make sacrifices, We must do all that we can to help the work go forward. The investigative judgment will soon come to a close. Each case will be decided for eternal life or eternal death. Let us now go forth in faith knowing that victory is at hand. □

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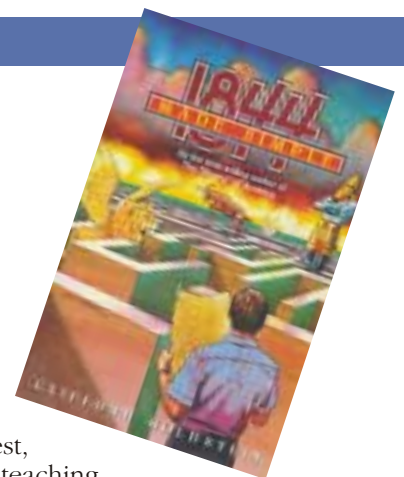
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*In a recent papal bull entitled "Incarnationis Mysterium" (dated Nov. 29, 1998), Pope John Paul II declared that indulgences are the center of the Grand Jubilee 2000 celebration. In light of this decree, we sense an urgent need to educate our readers in regard to the history of indulgences so that we might be able to respond to this unscriptural doctrine intelligently.*  
—THE EDITORS.

# INDULGENCES

**"Through indulgences, the foolish man of wealth is betrayed into a false hope. . . ."**

by William Cathcart

In the primitive Church transgressors were condemned to long penances; they had to appear either in front of the house of God, or in a part of it specially appropriated to the fallen, for two, five, and ten years, begging the forgiveness of the Church, and soliciting restoration to her communion. This situation inflicted the greatest disgrace, and continued the most grievous distress of mind. The ecclesiastical laws which governed religious delinquents were marked by singular severity. But wiser and kinder counsels crept in, and penitents, who showed undoubted sorrow, were relieved of their penance earlier than old

usage demanded. This abridgment of the long sentence of penance was called an **indulgence**, and really was the commencement of that system which reached its scandalous maturity under Leo X, and in the preaching of the immortal Tetzel.

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(All emphasis supplied by the author.) In that age no Christian knew anything of purgatory, or the treasury of merits acquired by the saints, and dispensed by the pope; or even of a supreme bishop at Rome, with authority over all the churches and clergy elsewhere. Pope Vigilius, writing to a bishop about certain penitents, said,<sup>1</sup> that it was left to his judgment, and that of the other bishops throughout their dio-

This article was taken from pages 270–279 of the book *The Papal System*, by William Cathcart, published in Philadelphia, 1872.



ceses, if they approve the quality and devotion of a penitent, to grant him the benefit of an **indulgence**: that is, to remove him from the prostrators before the end of the time appointed in his sentence.

It would seem that among the Arians, as early as the fifth century, their presbyters were accustomed to recommend fines for penances; and instead of seeking from transgressors such tears as procured pardon for Peter, they were only anxious to levy a tax upon the delinquent.<sup>2</sup>

In England this practice, with some additions and variations, was very common. The money was not given directly for an indulgence, but it was bestowed upon the poor as an atonement for iniquity; and along with it psalms were repeated, and forms of prayer; and a number of days was devoted to fasting personally, or by a *hired deputy*, with a view to secure remission without any protracted penance. In A.D. 747, a council of bishops was held at Cloveshove in England; and a wealthy man applied to this synod for the pardon of a heavy crime, on the ground that he had given so much alms, and secured so many to sing psalms and fast for him, that he had ample compensation for the sins of a hundred years, if his life should be continued that long. The council decided that alms were not to be given as a license to commit sin; that they could relieve no transgressor from his appropriate ecclesiastical penance, and that the singing of psalms was without meaning except as the expression of the heart.

The same custom obtained in France, and had to be denounced by the provincial council of that country, meeting at Chalons, A.D. 813. This synod condemned the folly of those who expected to secure freedom from Church penances by charitable contributions.<sup>3</sup>

At first indulgences were limited exclusively to church penances, but in process of time they embraced all the *temporary* punishments due the soul on earth and in purgatory. Christ, it was said, had endured and removed the *eternal* penalties of sin; but the suf-

ferings, short of everlasting continuance, must be borne in purgatory or be removed by an indulgence.

The earthly sufferings could be endured by deputy. Any amount of fasting, flagellation, or pilgrimage work could be discharged by substitute, and throngs of monks in times of papal darkness were competitors for the repulsive service.<sup>4</sup>

### Works of Supererogation

When a hired man performs his allotted task for the day, he deserves additional reward or credit for any farther services he may render. Such labors are beyond what his agreement demands; they are works of supererogation. So when a Christian leading a blameless life is persecuted, and killed; as his sins did not draw down his sufferings, these pains, it was argued, were meritorious, they were higher than the measure of the man's deserts: these were the works of supererogation. It was supposed that millions of saints in heaven had left a legacy of such merits to the Church, and that in it she had a treasury of good deeds of immense value, incapable of exhaustion, no matter how many drafts, through indulgences, the Holy Mother might make upon it. Then sometimes it was said that one drop of the Saviour's blood was sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that all the rest went into this treasury, which the Church might give to souls in purgatory, or rich men on earth who had money to buy it; or men not so wealthy who had some means. This was the **paid-up capital of the bank of indulgences**.

It is commonly agreed that Thomas Aquinas, in the thirteenth century, was the inventor of this doctrine. His description of it, from his

distinguished position in the Catholic Church, and from his remarkable talents, must be interesting:<sup>5</sup> "Moreover the unity of the mystical body is the reason why they prevail, in which many, in works of penitence, render more than their debts, and many bear patiently unjust tribulations also,

through which a multitude of punishments may be expiated, if such were owed; of whose merits the supply is so great that it exceeds every penalty incurred by those now living, and especially on account of the merit of Christ. . . . Thus the aforesaid merits are the common possession of the whole Church." Such was the grand foundation of the system of indulgences: first and chiefly the meritorious sufferings of the saints, in bearing more than was de-

manded by justice from them, and secondly, the merits of Christ beyond those which were needed to save from the *eternal* punishment.

In A.D. 1343, Clement VI issued a bull beginning with the words *Unigenitus Dei filius*, in which he proclaimed a jubilee, which was to commence in 1350; and which was to be celebrated every fiftieth year. In this constitution the merits of all the elect, and of the Virgin Mary, are said to fill up a vast treasure, which is increased by the merits of Christ not needed to remove the *eternal* punishment of sin.<sup>6</sup> This wonderful aggregate of soul-riches Jesus gave to the popes for distribution, a liberal disbursement of which is promised in the coming jubilee.

In A.D. 1411, John XXIII issued a bull against Ladislaus, King of Naples, in which after pronouncing the most hideous curses upon the king, living and dead, he proclaimed a crusade against him, offering the same indulgence to those who enlisted to fight him,

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as was given to the armed pilgrims who assumed the cross, and went to fight the infidels in Palestine. He promised heaven as the immediate reward of all who died fighting for Christ and his Church, with, of course, the full pardon of all their sins.<sup>7</sup> This bull offered the same indulgence to those who contributed money equal to the sum they would have expended in one month's campaigning.

John Huss denounced the bull, and especially the indulgence portion of it, and was led by it to a thorough examination of priestly or papal powers to pardon sin, and to a complete rejection of all created authority to absolve iniquity committed against God. He expatiated with honest indignation against the indulgence merchants, and especially against the language which they used in conducting their traffic, of which the following is a specimen: "By the

apostolical power entrusted to me, I absolve thee from all the sins which to God and me thou hast truly confessed; if thou art not able personally to take part in this enterprise, but if thou wilt furnish help according to thy ability, I bestow on thee the most perfect forgiveness of all thy sins, both from the guilt and punishment of them, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Said Huss: "Through indulgences, the foolish man of wealth is betrayed into a false hope; the law of God is set at nought; the rude people give themselves up more freely to sin; grievous iniquities are lightly thought of, and men are robbed of their property." A profound sensation was created throughout Prague by the eloquence and principles of Huss. Jerome fired the enthusiasm of the students by the same sentiments. The people sympathized with righteousness, and hated the vile frauds of Rome; and to express their

contempt for the indulgence iniquity a procession was formed, the papal bulls were suspended from the necks of certain lewd women, and, surrounded by a great throng of people, they were driven through the chief streets of Prague. The carriage occupied by the women was attended by men with arms, shouting: "To the stake with the letters of a heretic and rogue." The documents were formally taken to a large fire and publicly burned.<sup>8</sup>

**Tetzel . . . had been predestinated by the Prince of Darkness for the indulgence trade, and had given all diligence to make his calling and election, and success sure; he lacked no qualification for his position.**

### Leo X, Tetzel and Indulgences

Leo X was a pope of extravagant tastes and expensive habits. And in A. D. 1517 he issued a bull for the sale of indulgences. That act was the most eventful one that had happened in a thousand years, or that should occur in the next millennium. It was destined to bring Protestantism from heaven to rouse up a slumbering world. That bull stirred up saints and heroes to

shiver the tyrannical sceptre of "the man of sin;" to behold the adorable Saviour in His woes as the sole Redeemer of the sons of men, whose blood cleanses from all sin; to pursue the idolatries of saint and angel worship, prayers to dead men and living seraphs, the filth of the confessional, the festering follies of human merit, the wafer-worship of the mass, and the unclean system of celibacy in convents and churches over the nations and down the ages. And these **true crusaders** will never stop in their efforts until they drive the paganism of the Papacy into the abyss where it was born. That bull, under God, was the instrument in raising up men of apostolic faith and zeal, who will never rest till they overturn the ignorance, degradation, heathenism, and apostasy of mankind, and enthrone the life-giving cross, with its healing blood, in the wounded souls of our lost race.

### John Tetzel

This man belonged to the Dominican Friars. When he began the business of peddling indulgences for Leo, he was over sixty years of age; he had a voice of great strength; in his way he was a man of moving eloquence; his tact and facility for meeting all objections were never surpassed; he had been predestinated by the Prince of Darkness for the indulgence trade, and had given all diligence to make his calling and election, and success sure; he lacked no qualification for his position. It needed a man without shame, and Tetzel had no such impediment; it required a man destitute of truth, and John regarded falsehood as a daily pastime; it demanded a man without fear, and the agent of Leo was no coward; it was indispensable that the preacher of indulgences should have no heart, and John Tetzel had no pity, and no love except for himself. John Howe speaks of the human soul being the temple of God in ruins:<sup>9</sup> his idea prompts the thought that all over the soul there are fragments of columns, cornices, and sculpture of rare beauty—that is to say, that there are good thoughts, desires, affections, and purposes—broken and defective, strewed all over the soul. Cromwell's chaplain, with the most charitable inclination, and after the most careful and protracted scrutiny, could discover none of these beautiful and broken remains in the heart of Tetzel. He was a monk and an adulterer, a sot and a preacher; a man without any tinge of decency, and without one worthy quality. Such was Leo's indulgence commissioner.

### His Mode of Conducting Business

He and his companions appeared in a gorgeous carriage, followed by attendants finely equipped, before a city; immediately the magistrates were informed that, The grace of God and of St. Peter was at their gates. Forthwith the whole population, of all ages, sexes, and ranks, with lighted tapers, went out to meet the monk; and such a welcome greeted him as few men have ever received. Soon John was

installed in the principal church; the pope's bull was spread out on a velvet cushion, a great red cross was erected near the altar, above which the papal arms were hung; John ascended the pulpit and began: "Indulgences are the most precious and sublime gift of God; this red cross has the very same efficacy as the actual cross of Christ; come and I will give you letters under seal, by which the sins which you may desire to commit in the future shall be forgiven you; I would not exchange my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven, for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than he converted by his sermons; there is no sin too great for indulgence to remit. If it were possible for any one to have committed an outrage on the mother of God, let him pay, let him pay well, and it will be forgiven him; indulgences not only save the living, they save the dead also; priest, noble, merchant, wife, young girls, young men, hear your departed parents and your friends crying to you from the bottom of the abyss: *'We are enduring horrible torments! a little alms would deliver us; you can give them and yet you will not!'* At the very instant the piece of money chinks on the bottom of the strong box, the soul comes out of purgatory, and flies upward into heaven. Oh, imbecile and brutish people, who perceive not the grace that is so richly offered to you. . . . Now heaven is everywhere open; now you can ransom so many souls! Hard-hearted and thoughtless man, with twelve pence you can ransom your father out of purgatory, and you are ungrateful enough not to save him. I declare to you that though you had only a single coat, you would be bound to take it off and sell it, in order to

obtain this grace. The Lord God is no longer God; he has committed all power to the pope."

Kings, queens, princes, and bishops, had to pay twenty-five ducats for an ordinary indulgence. Abbots paid ten. All with an income of five hundred florins, paid six. Those who had two hundred florins a year, paid one; others only a half. A still smaller sum might be taken from poorer persons.

There was a tax for particular sins. Polygamy paid six ducats; theft in a church and perjury nine ducats; murder eight ducats, and magic two ducats. For thirty crowns Tetzel sold a Saxon gentleman an indulgence giving him pardon for a nameless sin which he was about to commit. The Saxon flogged and robbed him, and was discharged by Duke George without penalty when he showed his indulgence.

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pain which thou shouldst have to endure in purgatory. I render thee anew a partaker of the sacraments of the Church. I again incorporate thee into the communion of saints, and re-establish thee in the inno-

cence and purity in which thou wert at the hour of thy baptism; so that at the moment of thy death, the gate of entrance to the place of pains and torments will be shut to thee, and, on the contrary, the gate which leads to the heavenly paradise, will be opened to thee. If thou art not to die soon, this grace will remain unimpaired till thy last hour arrive. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"Friar John Tetzel, commissary, has signed it with his own hand."<sup>10</sup>

Tetzel was alone among mortals. As a man he was beneath any known priest or human being; Judas would have shrunk, however great the bribe, from signing a document so full of falsehood and soul-murder. A more wicked instrument never was written by human hands. And yet, such were the indulgences sent forth by Leo X, through Tetzel, Samson, and others.

This infamous traffic brought money in heaps to Leo, to Cibo, his brother-in-law, and to the Archbishop of Mentz. And if it rebuilt St. Peter's, it erected, under God, the great temple of Protestant Christianity, in which fervent piety glows, and from which science, liberty, literature, and prosperity have gone forth, in the grandest earthly exhibitions, to bless the nations of the world.

One of the most popular modern historians of Germany says: "The sale of indulgences was let out for entire provinces, to the highest bidders or farmers-general, and these again appointed several sub-farmers, who, for the sake of gain, committed the most shameful abuses. They selected men of eloquence and impudence to excite the minds of the people, and induce them to purchase by wholesale. They sold indulgences for the heaviest crimes committed; for pillage of churches, perjury and murder; nay, the promise of indulgence could even be obtained *before* the commission of the contemplated crime."<sup>11</sup>

And such was the universal outcry against indulgences all over Europe that the Council of Trent, while approving of the practice, had to recommend restraints upon their issue, and prohibit the receipt of all evil gains from them.

## The Decree of the Council

“Since the power of conferring indulgences was given by Christ to the Church, and she has used the said power, divinely granted to her, even in the earliest times, the sacred and holy synod teaches and commands that the use of indulgences, most salutary to Christian people, and approved by the authority of sacred councils, be kept in the Church; and it condemns with anathema those who assert that they are useless, or deny that the Church has the power of granting them. Yet, in granting them, it desires that moderation be observed according to the ancient and approved custom of the Church, lest by too great facility ecclesiastical discipline be weakened; and desiring that the abuses be amended and corrected which have crept into them, and by the occurrence of which the excellent name of indulgences is blasphemed by heretics; it appoints generally by this decree, that all evil gains for procuring them be altogether abolished, from which a very fruitful cause of the abuses among Christian people has been derived. . . .”<sup>12</sup>

Indulgences in some form exist still, the pitiable, decrepid skeleton of the burly, insolent demon that flourished everywhere in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and excited abhorrence and indignation in the sixteenth. □

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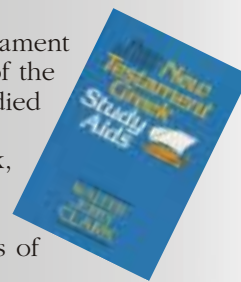
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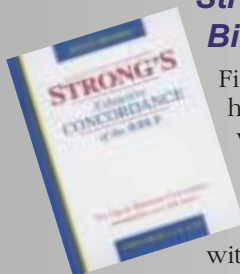
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Art: Joe Maniscalco

**An attack has been made on the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary. Is there enough evidence in the Bible to support such a belief?**

# *The Sanctuary Doctrine: Cultic Or Biblical? Part 3*

**I**n our previous articles we examined the core argument of a recent book by one Dale Ratzlaff, entitled *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*.<sup>1</sup> This book represents yet another attack by one who has left the faith, against the Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment. His argument, reviewed in our last article, is that the investigative judgment as taught by Seventh-day Adventists, is contrary to what Ratzlaff calls the “new covenant gospel of grace.”<sup>2</sup> Our last article concluded, based on the Biblical evidence, that it is Ratzlaff’s own theology—not that of historic Adventism—which contradicts the gospel of grace found in the Bible.

The present article will examine Ratzlaff’s arguments against the sanctuary doctrine as they relate to the book of Daniel. We state again that while the arguments in Ratzlaff’s book are neither new nor likely to cease any time soon, we believe that it is essential that faithful Adventists provide answers for those with honest questions about these issues.

## **Issues in the Book of Daniel**

As with the “gospel” arguments examined in our last article, Ratzlaff’s assertions regarding the book of Daniel follow closely the Desmond Ford script.<sup>3</sup> Like Ford, Ratzlaff levels a series of challenges to what Adventists have historically found in Daniel regarding the heavenly sanctuary. He insists:

“The SDA doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment cannot be found or proved logically anywhere in Scripture. It is dependent upon a proof-text, context-denying, reading-into-Scripture-what-is-not-there method of interpre-



by **KEVIN PAULSON**

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tation which uses a tenuous string of assumptions, most of which are contrary to the biblical evidence.”<sup>4</sup>

For those not familiar with the evidence of Scripture and history, Ratzlaff’s assertions can sound intimidating. The fact is that what Ratzlaff calls the “proof-text” method of Bible study is really the Bible’s own self-interpretive method, which—as our last article demonstrated—is founded on three Biblical assumptions:

1. All Scripture is inspired by God and IS profitable for doctrine. See 2 Timothy 3:16.

2. Scripture consists of the speech of holy men of God moved by the Holy Spirit. See 2 Peter 1:20–21.

3. What the Holy Spirit inspires is to be spiritually discerned, by “comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” 1 Corinthians 2:12–14; see also 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

Our study will demonstrate, in contrast with the above claim by Ratzlaff, that the use of Bible verses to prove the Adventist sanctuary doctrine true, is in perfect accord with the context of the verses used. We will also demonstrate that the basic problem with Ratzlaff’s views, like those of other evangelicals, is his failure to permit the consensus of Scripture to determine what he believes on the doctrinal points in question.

We will now address the major challenges voiced by Ratzlaff against what Adventists have historically found in the book of Daniel:

## Antiochus Epiphanes

Ratzlaff maintains, as do others, that the little horn of Daniel 8 refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid monarch who persecuted the Jews in the second century B.C.<sup>5</sup> Ratzlaff claims that “evidence that this has reference to Antiochus is overwhelming.”<sup>6</sup>

In fact, the evidence is quite overwhelming that this prophecy has nothing whatsoever to do with Antiochus!

The little-horn power of Daniel 8 is described as one that “waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.” Verse 9.<sup>7</sup> Far from waxing “exceeding great,” Antiochus Epiphanes met with consistent failure when he advanced in *each* of the above directions! When Antiochus marched into Egypt in 169 B.C., the Roman consul Gaius Popilius Laenus demanded that he leave Egypt

at once, which he did.<sup>8</sup> Laenus next went to Cyprus, then occupied by Antiochus’ army, where he again ordered them to leave, which they did.<sup>9</sup> Antiochus’ efforts to subject the Jews to the Hellenistic religion were also rebuffed, sparking the Maccabean revolt, which in three years ended Antiochus’ rule in Palestine. Later Antiochus led a failed expedition eastward, in the midst of which he died.

The angel Gabriel, interpreting the vision of Daniel 8 to the prophet, declares that the little horn “shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper.” Daniel 8:24. Far from destroying “wonderfully,” the historical record indicates that Antiochus was little more than a short-term nuisance to his neighbors, and that he enjoyed precious few moments of prosperity in any line.

Rome, by contrast, waxed “exceeding great” in every direction, as described in Daniel 8:9. Rome did indeed “destroy wonderfully,” and prospered for centuries. Verse 23 of Daniel 8 states that the little horn would arise “in the latter time” of the Hellenistic kingdoms which succeeded Alexander the Great. When Antiochus Epiphanes ascended to the Seleucid throne in 175 B.C., the period of Hellenistic rule was not even half over. Rome, by contrast, did rise to prominence during the latter time of these kingdoms. Moreover, verse 23 also states that the little horn would arise “when the transgressors are come to the full.” The following chapter is clear that this was to happen at the close of the seventy-week prophecy, which extends to the time of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. See Daniel 9:24–25. While it is true that the last Hellenistic kingdom fell sixty years before the close of this prophecy, the general time frame of Daniel 8:23 still places the little horn’s rise far later than the period in which Antiochus Epiphanes lived.

The parallel between the sweep of empires in Daniel 7 and that of Daniel 8 is obvious even to the casual reader. The bear in chapter 7, who “raised up itself on one side”

**Our study will demonstrate . . . that the use of Bible verses to prove the Adventist sanctuary doctrine true, is in perfect accord with the context of the verses used.**

(verse 5), parallels the two-horned ram in chapter 8, of whom “one (horn) was higher than the other” (verse 3). The leopard with the four wings and four heads in chapter 7, verse 6, is parallel to the goat with the four horns in chapter 8, verse 8. Chapter 8 specifically identifies the ram as “the kings of Media and Persia” (verse 20), and the goat as “the king of Grecia” (verse 21). Ratzlaff himself acknowledges that Adventists and evangelicals are

in agreement in their understanding of this part of Daniel 8.<sup>10</sup>

The evidence is plain that the little horn of chapter 7 is the same as the one in chapter 8. Antiochus Epiphanes was part of the Greek kingdom, symbolized by the leopard with four heads in chapter 7 and the goat with four horns in chapter 8. Verse 23 of chapter 7 states that “the fourth beast [after Greece] shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth.” This fourth kingdom was followed by the ten horns, representing the ten barbarian kingdoms which succeeded pagan Rome. The little horn comes to power *after* both the fourth kingdom (pagan Rome) and the ten barbarian kingdoms. The sequence of history in chapter 7, and its parallel with chapter 8, makes it obvious that the little horn in both chapters symbolizes Rome (both pagan and papal in chapter 8), and cannot possibly refer to Antiochus Epiphanes.

Ratzlaff claims: “It is also true that Christ, in Matthew 24:15, and Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12, see Antiochus as a type of the coming antichrist.”<sup>11</sup> But neither Jesus nor Paul say *one word* about Antiochus, nor do they offer the slightest hint that he is the subject of these passages. Rather, these verses offer powerful evidence that the “abomination of desolation” described by Daniel was yet future even in Jesus’ time, and had nothing whatsoever to do with the Jewish

Maccabean experience. (All emphasis by author unless otherwise noted.)

A most serious threat to Ratzlaff's understanding is his own reference to the account of Antiochus' desecration of the Jewish temple in the apocryphal books of Maccabees.<sup>12</sup> As the first "link" in what he calls the "broken chain" of the Adventist sanctuary message, Ratzlaff suggests that the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 are really 2300 individual morning and evening sacrifices, totaling instead 1150 days.<sup>13</sup> Yet, if we read First Maccabees, to which Ratzlaff refers us, we find a passage which expressly contradicts Ratzlaff's claim that this 1150-day period belongs in the reign of Antiochus:

"Then, early on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, the month Kislev, in the year 148 [164 B.C.], sacrifice was offered as the law commands on the newly made altar of burnt-offering. On the anniversary of the day when the Gentiles had profaned it, *on that very day*, it was rededicated, with hymns of thanksgiving, to the music of harps and lutes and cymbals." 1 Maccabees 4:52–54, NEB, emphasis supplied.

In First Maccabees 1:54, 59, we read that pagan sacrifices began in the Jewish temple on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev in 167 B.C. In other words, the defilement of the temple by Antiochus lasted exactly three years, *to the day*. By contrast, 1150 days equals three years and two months—to say nothing of 2300 days!<sup>14</sup> It is doubtful that Jewish record-keeping, which was known to be very exact, would have missed two months in recording an event of this magnitude.

But the strongest evidence that the little horn cannot be Antiochus Epiphanes is found in the latter part of Daniel 7:

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his [the little horn's] dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Verses 26–27.

These verses, together with the deliverance of the saints described in Daniel 12:1, are thus clearly placed in an end-time setting. In explaining to

Daniel the vision of chapter 8, the angel Gabriel declared, "Understand, O son of man: for the time of the end shall be the vision." Daniel 8:17. In other words, the events foretold by the vision of Daniel 8 extend to the end of time, the final event of which is the cleansing of the sanctuary. This obviously cannot be the sanctuary polluted by Antiochus, since that sanctuary ceased to exist two thousand years ago, and has no relevance whatever to the end of time.

In short, the little horn is a power that will exist at the close of human history, when its dominion will be taken away, the saints will possess the earth, and all nations will serve the Lord. The dominion of Antiochus Epiphanes (which was not much) vanished over 2,000 years ago, and thus cannot be removed at the end of time. The Roman Papacy, by contrast, is very much alive in today's world, with ever-increasing power and global prominence. Nor did Antiochus' defeat in Palestine result in the saints' possessing an "everlasting kingdom," with all nations serving the Lord thereafter. See Daniel 7:27. Without question this is end-time language, and the little horn is an end-time power.

Now that we can safely conclude that the evidence of both Scripture and history rules out any fulfillment of Daniel's little-horn prophecy by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, let us examine the issue of whether the 2300 days in Daniel 8 can rightfully be divided by half, as the critics often claim.

### "Evenings and Mornings"

Ratzlaff describes what he calls a "chain" of "twenty-two assumptions" regarding the Adventist sanctuary doctrine, each of which he tries to demolish.<sup>15</sup> The first of these is as follows:

"1. That Daniel 8:14 speaks of 2300 days. (While Daniel 12 repeatedly uses the Hebrew word for days, it is not to be found in 8:14. Instead, we have the ambiguous 'evening-morning' which most apply to the evening and morning burnt offerings. Thus instead of 2300 days, if these exegetes are correct, only 1150 days are in view)." <sup>16</sup>

Ratzlaff seems to forget that the vision of Daniel 8:14 was deliberately withheld from Daniel's understand-

ing, causing a wonderment which for a time made him feel sick. See verses 26–27. It is therefore understandable why the heavenly beings described in this vision (see verse 13) would use cryptic language.

But if we let the Bible interpret itself, this language can be easily deciphered. The expression "evening-morning" calls our minds to Genesis 1, where this expression is repeatedly used to describe twenty-four-hour days (see verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; see also Exodus 20:11). The idea that this phrase refers to the morning and evening sacrifices offered in the temple is utterly without support. In the first place, the morning and evening sacrifice is consistently described in both the Old Testament and the post-Biblical Jewish literature as a single daily offering, not as one offering brought in the morning and another brought in the evening.<sup>17</sup> Also, the morning and evening sacrifice is consistently described in the sequence of "morning and evening," never as "evening and morning." No exception to this rule can be found, either in Scripture or the extra-Biblical Jewish documents.<sup>18</sup> The phrase "evening-morning" cannot, therefore, refer to daily sacrifices but to a measure of time, as Genesis 1 makes clear.

### "Cleansed"

Ratzlaff echoes Ford's insistence that the word "cleansed" in the King James Version of Daniel 8:14 is a mistranslation,<sup>19</sup> and states that "the context of the 'cleansing' of Daniel 8:14 . . . deals with the restoration of the temple services after Antiochus Epiphanes had desecrated them."<sup>20</sup>

While we will not further belabor the issue of Antiochus Epiphanes, the evidence of Scripture is clear that the word "cleansed" is not at all a mistranslation in Daniel 8:14. The word translated "cleansed" in this verse is *nisdaq*, a form of the Hebrew word *sadaq* which means "to justify." In a number of poetic Old Testament passages, where rhyme is one of common meaning rather than sound, the word *sadaq* is used synonymously with *taber*, the word for "cleanse" used in describing the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary in Leviticus 16. See also Job 4:17; 17:9; Psalm 19:9; Ecclesiastes 9:2.<sup>21</sup> This point is clarified further by the Greek Old Testa-



ment, the Septuagint, which uses the same Greek word for cleanse in Daniel 8:14 and Leviticus 16 as is used in Hebrews 9:23, which speaks of the heavenly sanctuary being “purified [cleansed] with better sacrifices.”<sup>22</sup>

## The Year-Day Principle

The second “link” in what Ratzlaff alleges to be a “chain of error” is the following:

“2. That these 2300 ‘days’ equal 2300 years. (Though it is quite impossible to prove that the year-day principle is a Biblical datum, and even if we could, ‘days’ are not mentioned in either 8:14 or 9:24, so there is no basis to apply the principle in these instances.)”<sup>23</sup>

However, not only is the year-day principle clearly sustained by Scripture, but it also has broader support than even some of its defenders realize. Most Adventist prophetic students can recall the two key texts—Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6—on which this principle is founded. Yet the relationship of these verses to the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is not often appreciated.

Numbers 14:34 speaks of a time during which God’s people experienced exile in the wilderness and persecution by their enemies, only to emerge victorious over their enemies when the forty years were over and Israel entered the Promised Land. Ezekiel 4:6 describes another period of oppression and foreign conquest in Israel’s history—symbolized by the days in which Ezekiel lay on his side—at the end of which Israel returned to Palestine and rebuilt Jerusalem. During both of these periods God’s church was seen by the world as going into eclipse and defeat. However, at the end, it emerged triumphant!

Each of the great time prophecies of Scripture moves in a direction similar to the time periods described in Numbers and Ezekiel. This is true of the 2300 days, the 1260 days, the seventy weeks, the 1290 days, and the 1335 days, and the “ten-day” prophecy of Revelation 2:10, which history indicates was fulfilled in the ten-year persecution of the Christian church by the Roman emperor Diocletian.<sup>24</sup> During each of these periods God’s people experienced either apostasy

or persecution, but they emerged (or will emerge) victorious at the end. In each of these cases the world viewed the church as undergoing the worst of times; yet the resulting purity and character development of God’s people made, and will make, their final triumph all the greater.

## The Seventy Weeks

Perhaps the strongest evidence for the year-day principle is the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27. Ratzlaff’s claim that Daniel 9:24 does not mention days, and cannot therefore be used to support the year-day principle,<sup>25</sup> is simply wrong. The word translated “weeks” in Daniel 9:24–27 is repeatedly used in the Old Testament to refer to a seven-day period. See Genesis 29:27–28; Exodus 34:22; Numbers 28:26; Deuteronomy 16:9–10, 16; 2 Chronicles 8:13; Jeremiah 5:24; Ezekiel 45:21; Daniel 10:2. Thus, while the precise word “days” may not be found in Daniel 9:24–27, the use of the word “weeks” makes it clear that days are being used to symbolize years.

Ratzlaff tries very hard to debunk the key dates for this prophecy—most importantly 457 B.C. as the prophecy’s starting date, A.D. 27 as the date of Christ’s baptism, A.D. 31 as the date of the crucifixion, and A.D. 34 as the date for the stoning of Stephen.<sup>26</sup> But Ratzlaff and his fellow critics face two insurmountable challenges. First, only if this time period begins with the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. does it finish anywhere near the time of Jesus, to which Daniel 9:25 clearly extends it. If one starts the prophecy with either the decree of Cyrus or Darius, more than half a century earlier, one cannot possibly trace the prophecy to Jesus’ time. Second, only if the “weeks” in this passage are understood as seven-year periods can the prophecy be extended to the time of Christ. No one could possibly claim that sixty-nine or seventy literal weeks extend from *any* of the decrees restoring Jerusalem until the time of Christ. The year-day explanation for this passage is thus the only one that makes any sense.

Once the date 457 B.C. is established—as evidenced by the reference in Ezra 6:14 to the authority of the combined decrees of Cyrus, Darius,

and Artaxerxes—we have no problem establishing the other dates for this prophecy. To haggle over exact proof for each of these dates is beside the point once we acknowledge that no date but 457, and no method but the year-day principle, has any hope of connecting this prophecy to the time of the Messiah as stated in Daniel 9:25. □

In our next article, we will examine the questions, Do the seventy weeks and the 2300 days begin together? Who is the focus of the judgment? And what are the books of judgment?

## REFERENCES:

- <sup>1</sup> Dale Ratzlaff, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists: An Evangelical Resource/An Appeal to SDA Leadership* (Sedona, AZ: Life Assurance Ministries, 1996).
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 210, 215, 319, 325, 333, 340, 345, 352, 353.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 167–181.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 65, 89, 169–172.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.
- <sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are from the King James Version.
- <sup>8</sup> Michael Grant, *From Alexander to Cleopatra: The Hellenistic World* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1982), 102, 279.
- <sup>9</sup> Colleen McCullough, *The First Man in Rome* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1990), 304–307. (For a more colorful, yet historically accurate account of these events, some might wish to read this book, in which the encounter between Laenus and Antiochus is described in detail.)
- <sup>10</sup> Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 169.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 65, 169.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 65, 171–172.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.
- <sup>14</sup> See Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Little Horn, the Saints, and the Sanctuary in Daniel 8,” *The Sanctuary and the Atonement* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1981), 196.
- <sup>15</sup> Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 175–181.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.
- <sup>17</sup> See Hasel, *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, 195.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 88–89.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.
- <sup>21</sup> See Hasel, “Christ’s Atoning Ministry in Heaven.” 270.
- <sup>22</sup> Hasel, *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, 227.
- <sup>23</sup> Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine* 176–177.
- <sup>24</sup> Stephen Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery* (New York: Methuen Inc, 1985), 175, 203–204.
- <sup>25</sup> Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 176–177.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 177–178.

# LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR



I have been in prison for almost 8 years now. My main joy is reading God's Word, and truth-filled books! A friend shared with me some copies of your excellent magazine—*Our Firm Foundation*. I love that magazine! Your magazine does not give the warnings an uncertain sound. The Bible says "Preach the Word"—even if at times it shakes people up!

My request is that I might receive a gift subscription to this enlightening magazine. Also, could you send me a list of your books and tapes? I especially like books by the pioneers of our church. Why are these books not found in the Adventist Book Center catalog?

*MB, Tennessee*

I received the tapes you sent me—"Forum 2000"—regarding the Y2K problems. After I heard the tapes, I realized how far I am from the path of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only am I not ready, but neither is my family.

My Lord has been calling me back. I can feel Him and I can hear Him. My disobedience frightens me. I ask you to please pray for my family and for me.

*LN, Florida*

Your entire magazine is *much* appreciated and read in this household month after month, and has been since it first began. May God bless you as you continue to publish until there is no

longer a need. I believe it cannot be very much longer now until Christ returns—that is, if each of God's "elect" rises to the levels to which He has called us. We must not repeat the follies of 1888!

*VB, Virginia*

I am a student and have great interest in the Word of God and in my school and in my church. (My future aim is to preach the gospel, if it is the will of God.)

I am teaching my brothers and sisters as much as possible, but we have one problem: We don't have much spiritual books, especially the Spirit of Prophecy, so please, would you send me books of the Spirit of Prophecy. I think if we get these books we can go more and succeed. Dear brothers and sisters, though you can't come to our region, you can preach the Word of God through this way. Also, remember us in your prayers.

*TA, Ethiopia*

Our working has been fruitful, though we lack a lot of things. The first need is for books to refer to. So I therefore write to seek your help if possible to send us some spiritual books. This will enhance our working and make it successful.

Sometimes we venture into areas where the Word has not been preached. Hence, people in those areas are thirsting for truth. Other people need booklets to read, but we lack them.

Therefore I am kindly

appealing to you to try your level best to assist us in this field. May God crown your work with success, and may He pour His benedictions on your efforts as you prepare to assist us.

*KD, Kenya*

Hello once again! I hope this letter finds you in good health and fine spirits. We have just completed an evangelistic campaign about 50 kilometers down the road. We invited a retired SDA pastor to do the preaching in the Fijian language. It resulted in six baptisms! We are now preparing for our next project, which is a one-month campaign on the other side of this island. I will take over a team of street-preachers and door-knockers for the outreach.

The movement is growing stronger here in Fiji, with more people waking up to the urgency of the hour. I noticed the same thing in Papua-New Guinea and the Solomons when I visited them two months ago.

Thank you for the good work in the *Firm Foundation*. The articles have been very helpful to my faith.

*GS, Fiji*

I am a Fijian by nationality and am a member of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. I have been searching for the true light. Having read *Behold He Cometh*, I would be most grateful if you could send me a more complete study of these subjects.

*MT, Lebanon*

Thank you once again for the parcel which had the ever-reviving and inspiring material. It is helping me reach out to souls without the fold with the everlasting Gospel and awakening the souls within the fold to the realities of our time. It is a regrettable fact that the burden of the closing work in terms of time, labor and material resources is still being borne by a few people. With this realization, I am in partnership with some brethren intending to organize an outreach group. The group's main focus is twofold in nature:

(1) Presenting the revival and reformation messages—"present truth"—to starved souls within the fold; and (2) reaching out to souls without the fold with an unadulterated everlasting Gospel as contained in Revelation 14 and 18.

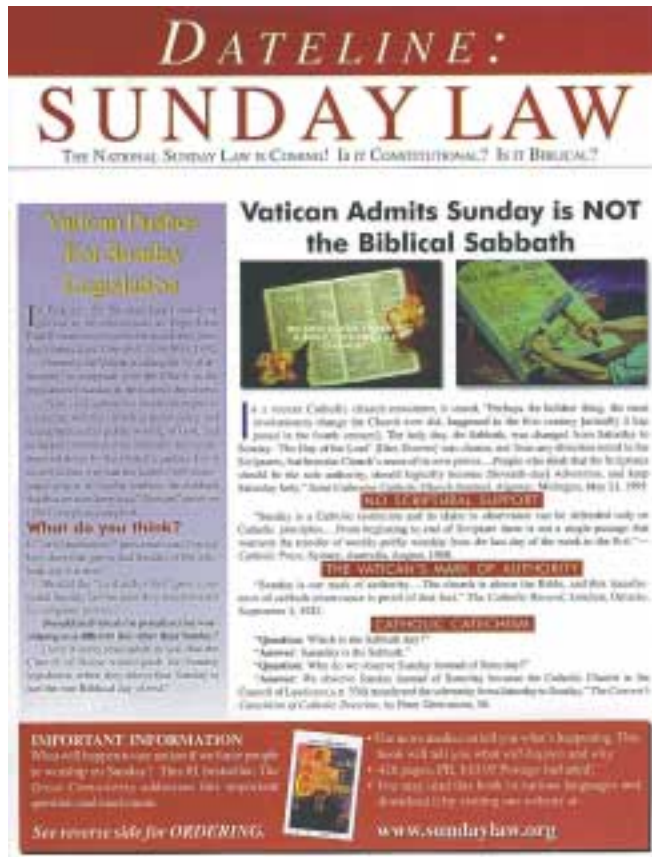
This, we believe is a matter of grave importance in this age where heresies and half truths have become fashionable. Though we do not have the material resources, we have time and labor which we believe can be expended to the advancement of the kingdom. I wish therefore, to ask you to assist us with any relevant material in this respect.

Finally, I pray that our mighty Father may abundantly bless and keep you in His everlasting love and peace.

*FP, Zambia*

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