

Our Firm Foundation

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

Volume 15, Number 3

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The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Heart Worship,
Hero Worship

Genuine Conversion

What's Wrong With
Perfection?

We must come to grips with an inevitable crisis that is now developing and is soon to break upon the world and the church as an overwhelming surprise. Ellen White revealed it to us: "My heart is filled with anguish when I think of the tame messages borne by some of our ministers, when they have a message of life and death to bear. The ministers are asleep; the lay members are asleep; and a world is perishing in sin. May God help His people to arouse and walk and work as men and women on the borders of the eternal world. Soon an awful surprise is coming upon the inhabitants of the world. Suddenly, with power and great glory, Christ will come. Then there will be no time to prepare to meet Him. Now is the time for us to give the warning message."¹

Ministers, leaders, and lay members, we are all asleep. The greatest moment in the six thousand years of the great controversy is before us now, and most of us are living as if we still have one hundred years to prepare the church and the world for the loud cry of the third angel.

Are we as God's remnant people, saying by our lifestyle, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." 2 Peter 3:4.

Is our condition comparable to the words of Jesus in Matthew 13:15? "For this people's heart is

waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Our probation will end suddenly and unexpectedly.² "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." Matthew 24:42-43.

The world is possibly in a worse sin condition today than existed at the time of the antediluvian world, and in Sodom and Gommorah. TV newscasts, newspapers, and magazines bear daily witness to the fulfillment of last-day prophecies. Wars, terrorism, AIDS—all are multiplying the signs before the eyes of the world.

"The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world

is on the verge of a stupendous crisis."³

God has lengthened our probationary time; praise the Lord for it. But the moment is fast approaching when our Mediator, our High Priest, will cast down His censer, and the destiny of the world and of the church will be forever fixed. Brothers and sisters, pastors and leaders, let us take inventory of ourselves. Let us turn this church back to the great heavenly design God made for it. "God's people should make mighty intercession to Him for help now. And they must put their whole energies into the effort to proclaim the truth during the respite that has been granted."⁴

The great standard of righteousness must again be placed before God's people. "To disregard light is to reject it."⁵

"Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth hardens when it does not save."⁶

Have we disregarded the precious gospel God has given our remnant church to preach to the world? Let us examine ourselves while probation still lingers. ✝

Ron Spear — Editor

References:

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 37.
- ² See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 989.
- ³ *Evangelism*, 703-704.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 704.
- ⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 680.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 681.

About Hope International . . .

Hope International is a special ministry assisting in the God-given work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe this Remnant Church of Bible prophecy has been brought into existence by the calling of the Lord, and we look for its final triumph in purity at the second coming of Christ. That the church does not now perfectly reflect the will of our Lord is cause for sorrow, but not for discouragement. The Word of God stands pledged that all within her borders will be sifted and tried, and though the greater portion will fail the test, there will yet remain a remnant to honor the Lord by their obedience to all His commands. Therefore, Hope International urges upon all the duty of supporting the Seventh-day Adventist Church in every way possible, insofar as is consistent with the principles of the government of God and the leading of His Holy Spirit upon the heart.

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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Heart Worship,



Hero Worship

Dave Fiedler

Consider for a moment: what is worship? As Christians, we are familiar with the injunction “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,” (Matthew 4:10) but what does it mean? Are “worship” and “serve” the same? Are they the same in your life? Should they be?

I fear that we sometimes live as though they were. Desiring to faithfully follow all the light we have, our eyes become focused on “service,” and “worship” seems to suffer. For, you see, there is a difference. While worship certainly

generate true service in order to demonstrate that our worship *is* true. The similarity with the well-known relationship of faith and works is obvious, but please read on; we’ll be looking at it in a different, more practical light.

If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that some aspects of “true service” just are not very appealing. This fact should be no surprise; even Christ prayed “Not my will, but thine be done.” The question of importance is not whether it is *initially* appealing, but whether or not we can learn to

effortlessly from within. Such teaching is obviously wrong—consider again the prayer of Christ.

On the other hand, there are those who practice (and even some who advocate) a continual drudgery of imagined “obedience” to exacting requirements in which they find no real appeal. Unrelieved by even an occasional glimmer of “the joy of the Lord,” they press on. Meanwhile, their liberal-minded brethren take note of their “progress,” and gather evidence to support their own choice of the other extreme.

The answer lies somewhere in the middle, but we will go back to the beginning to identify the problem and then work through to the solution.

“When truth is working only upon the conscience, it creates much uneasiness; but when truth is invited into the heart, the whole being is brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. Even the thoughts are captured, for the mind of Christ works where the will is submitted to the will of God.”¹

“When the truth is held as truth only by the conscience, when the heart is not stimulated and made receptive, the truth only agitates the mind. But when the truth is received

“When truth is working only upon the conscience, it creates much uneasiness; but when truth is invited into the heart, the whole being is brought into captivity to Jesus Christ.”

includes service, true worship comes before true service—indeed, without it there is no true service.

The difficulty, of course, is testing the quality of our worship without falling into the trap of trying to

appreciate the appeal which is always a part of true service.

Here we walk a fine line. There are those who teach that we should never seek to obey if obedience does not spring forth spontaneously,

by the heart, it has passed through the conscience and captivated the soul by its pure principles.”²

The problem so many of us face is that certain points of truth and duty have never found their way to our hearts. Our consciences trouble us, we suffer from uneasiness and our minds are agitated, but our hearts too often remain unaffected.

Even those whose lives are completely surrendered to their Lord in the morning may find by evening that He requires something new of them. A duty never before presented, or a test of character pressed closer home perhaps. In this they may find no appeal, but they need not fail. Their love for Christ, though not yet extended to a love for this requirement, can carry them through. They can choose, as did Christ before them, “Thy will, not mine, be done.”

But the good news is that they need not pass on forever placing such a continual strain upon their relationship with Christ. They too, as Christ before them, may *truthfully* say “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:8.

“Within my heart.” Isn’t it amazing how inspired sources agree? Ah, but the question remains, how does it come about that the love of an unappealing, self-denying duty should find its way into an individual’s heart? The Lord promises to put His law “in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,” (Jeremiah 31:33) but again we must ask, what does this mean? How, and when, does He do this? Is it done all at once? What part does the individual play in the process? Does it happen without his knowledge? with his knowledge, but without his cooperation? or with both knowledge and cooperation?

Great scholarly debate on this point has filled many more pages than available here. Some people honestly seem to be confused on the matter. Two key texts, and three simple quotations should be enough to resolve the question:

“Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I

will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:12–13.

“As men, women, and children proclaim the gospel, the Lord will open the eyes of the blind to see His statutes, and will write upon the hearts of the truly penitent His law.”³

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our



hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest

ter, and submit the whole heart to the sanctification of the truth.”⁵

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

The Case Thus Far

1. The writing of God’s law upon our hearts is not done without our knowledge; the individual has sought Him, and He has opened his eyes to see the law.

2. Further, the individual must “consent” and “submit” to this work. While these terms both suggest a secondary rather than a primary role, they do require intelligent cooperation.

3. Obedience can indeed become “pleasant,” even producing the “highest delight.”

4. The whole process is tied to “finding,” “seeing,” “beholding” and “knowing” Christ.

The Real Problem

Now we are ready to deal with the real problem which so many Adventists, and especially young Adventists, face: Christ Himself is not appealing to us.

No! That’s not true! we may tell ourselves, but Inspiration says so, and in our hearts we know it *is* true. We feel somewhat more comfortable acknowledging that *certain duties* are not to our liking. But to admit that we really do not like Jesus Himself—why, that would almost make us

What he needs is—dare I say it—a hero. And this he may easily find by looking first at Christ’s exemplification of a virtue which he can easily admire.

delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience.”⁴

“Those who love God do that which is pleasant for them to do, and that is to reveal God in charac-

non-Christian, or worse yet, apostates.

Still the fact remains that Inspiration ties the two so closely that they can never be separated. Christ is the embodiment of Christian duty, and if we knew Him “as it is our privi-

lege," we would find our highest delight in obedience.

Do you, in your inmost heart, know this to be true? Do you see the impossibility of truly knowing Christ while He "stands at the door and knocks"? Do you find Jesus disturbingly unattractive? Take heart, there is a balm for your agitated mind, a cure for the uneasy soul.

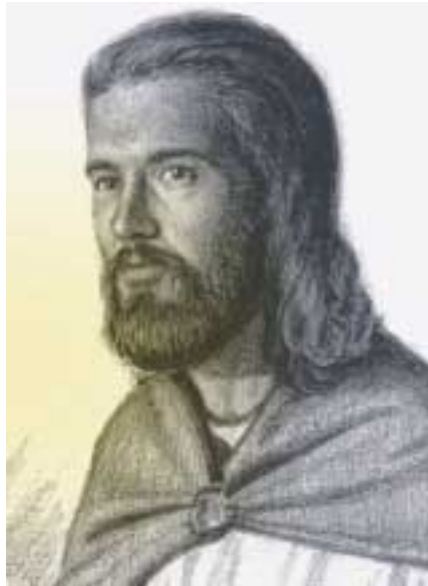
Of course, the answer is Christ—not a Christ of the mind and the conscience alone, but a Christ of the heart—which leads us back to a consideration of "true worship."

Our worship services, be they in church or at home, as a group or as individuals, too often are adapted only to appeal to the mind. Sensing this problem, we sometimes turn to emotionalism to fill the void, but emotionalism is not what we need. Rather, we need to appeal to what the heart finds attractive.

Traditional Christian virtues are not necessarily appealing to all. Some, their minds and hearts influenced by the prevailing drift of our worldly society—through television, for example—may find little to admire in the character of Christ. But just that little is all that is needed to begin.

Imagine, for example, a hardened man. Long years of coarseness and crudity have driven from him all appreciation of refinement and tenderness. These virtues, so much a part of the life of Jesus, awaken no response in his heart. But there is yet

looking first at *Christ's exemplification of a virtue which he can easily admire*. He turns to the gospels and reads of a Man who was always one step ahead of His mortal foes—a Man whose self-possession and personal demeanor were enough to silence His enemies. He sees One wiser than "learned doctors" of the day—one always able to detect and defuse their subtle plots. He reads of attempt after attempt to entrap and humiliate this Man called Christ, but not once could His enemies get the best of Him.



These qualities he can admire; they strike a chord of appreciation in his darkened heart. He hears notes of strength, an uninterrupted melody of perfect control amid the

long he realizes that the Christ of strength could never have existed apart from the Christ of love. And a heart in which the gentler virtues found no place is slowly, almost imperceptibly opened for the first time to their influence.

This hardened man—or, *perhaps*, this hardened teenager—has found his Lord and Master. He has found his Hero. As surely as the teenager with green and orange hair naturally conforms to the pattern of evil held constantly before his admiring eyes, so will this man come to reflect the image of Christ.

The perfect life of Christ is Source enough for admiration from any heart. And the perfect blend of all good exemplified there is sufficient to soften the rough and hardened, to give firmness and strength to the naturally weak and vacillating, to work the perfect restoration of every soul who will allow his admiration for *some* good to lead him to a love for *all* good.

We have had enough of uneasiness and agitation, and far too little of true heart worship. We have distanced ourselves too far from the reality of Christ, and have seen Him only as Teacher, Master, Lord. It is time now that we learn to hold Jesus Christ close to both mind and heart as our Hero of Holiness.

Do not seek to generate a heart love for One barely known to you. Instead learn of Him as the highest exemplification of the qualities appealing to your heart. If you do not find your ideals portrayed in His life, allow mind and conscience to teach you your error. But neglect not your heart. Search again the pages of the gospel—you will find there the full display of whatever true virtue you admire. Let His example fill your mind. Choose Him as your Hero and be done with agitation and uneasiness. ✿

References:

¹ *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, 324.

² *Ibid.*, 325.

³ *Review and Herald*, October 13, 1904.

⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, 668.

⁵ *Review and Herald*, October 8, 1895.

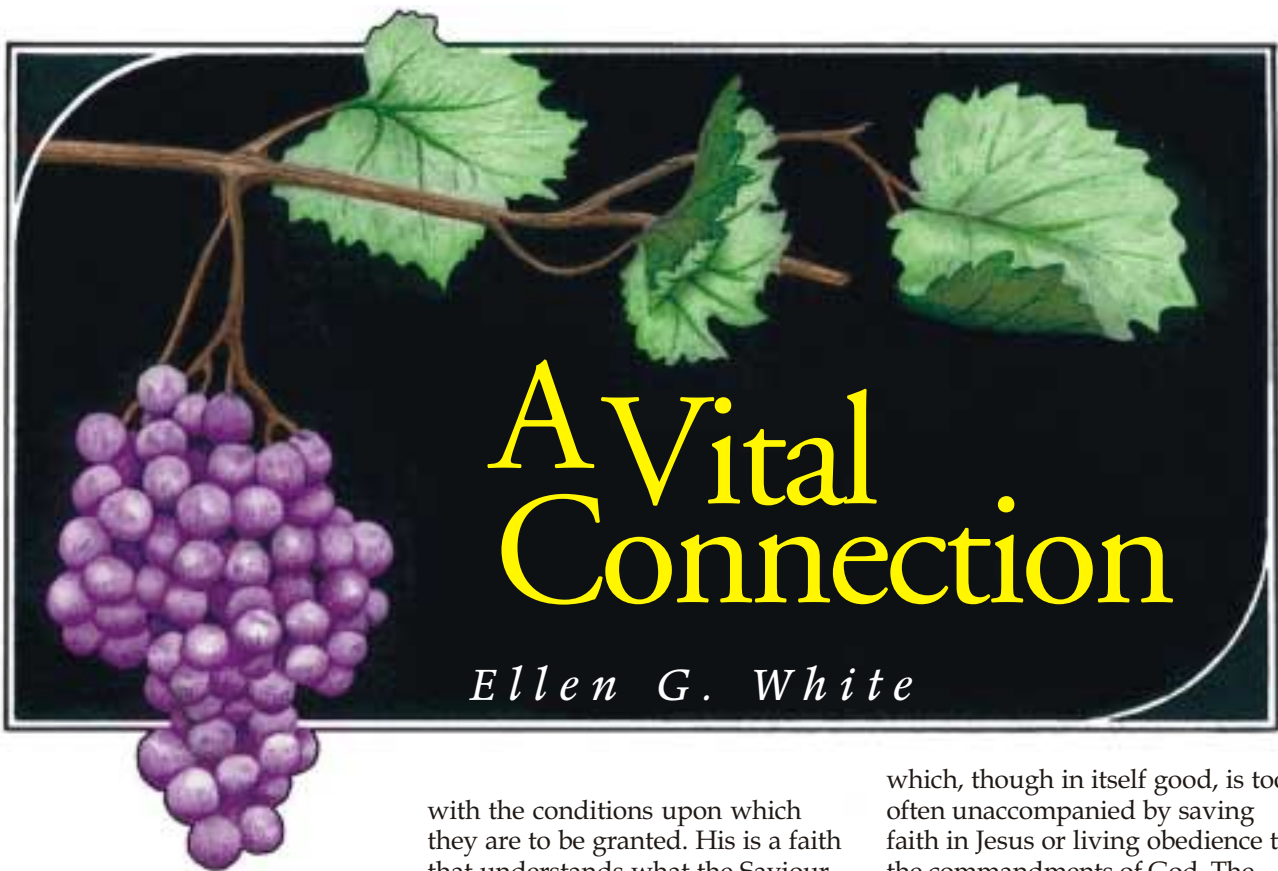
It is time now that we learn to hold Jesus Christ close to both mind and heart as our Hero of Holiness.

hope. Agitated and uneasy, mind and conscience drive him to the Lord.

What he needs to find is a source of inspiration, a pattern to follow. What he needs is—dare I say it—a *hero*. And this he may easily find by

surging discord of conflict. But the effect does not cease there.

It is impossible to separate the melody of strength from the beautiful harmony of tenderness. He finds that this Man of power was also a Man of incredible kindness. Before



A Vital Connection

Ellen G. White

He who has genuine faith in Christ will have a knowledge of Christ. He will have a growing sense of the power and preciousness of redeeming love and grace, because Christ has been brought into his daily life. He believes in Christ as his Saviour, and hopes in the mercy of God. Although he knows that he is a sinner, and deserves the wrath of God, yet he looks to Calvary and sees the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He knows that Christ has died for him, and that in Christ it is possible to keep the commandments of God. He has the witness in his own soul of the virtue and the love of Jesus, which his faith grasps, and appropriates to himself.

His faith is not of that fraudulent character which refuses to lift the cross, and follow Christ by yielding obedience to all the precepts of Jehovah. It is not of that presumptuous nature that lays claim to the promises of God without complying

with the conditions upon which they are to be granted. His is a faith that understands what the Saviour meant when he said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:53-54. True faith takes the Word of God and weaves it into the life and character. Faith lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Christ explained to His disciples the meaning of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. He said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

Faith is that mysterious and mighty principle that attracts the soul of man to God. As the sapless branch is united to the living vine, so we must be connected with Christ. There are two kinds of connection between the branches and the vine stock. One is visible, but superficial. The other is invisible and vital. So there is an apparent union, a membership with the church, and a profession of religion,

which, though in itself good, is too often unaccompanied by saving faith in Jesus or living obedience to the commandments of God. The branches that are connected with Christ, the living vine, will make it manifest by bearing much fruit in good works to the glory of God. But the branches which have nothing but an apparent union, will be fruitless. As the branch cannot possibly bring forth fruit without a vital connection with the parent stock, so the Christian can be fruitful in good works only as union with Christ is made and preserved. The ruin of those who are not connected with Christ, is as complete as though they had no name to live; for they are dead. Christ compares them to lifeless branches that are gathered and burned in the fire. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." John 15:2.

There can be no actual connection with Christ if the person who claims it has no practical knowledge of the sufficiency of the grace of God that is potent to elevate, ennoble, refine, and fit the Christian for the courts of heaven. Those who know

Christ, will make manifest the desirableness of His love and peace. Every genuine believer will taste, and see that the Lord is good, and will show forth the praises of Him who called us out darkness into the marvelous light of the children of God. The true believer not only has faith, but he has also a knowledge of the efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse from the defilement of sin. Christ crucified is the subject of his thought and meditation. The Word of God to him is not a cunningly devised fable. Christ crucified, though unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, is to him the power and wisdom of God. When assailed by skeptics, his living experience in the things of God will furnish him with

they may approve things that are excellent. The most educated, as well as the most ignorant, may become partakers of the knowledge of Christ's salvation. The great apostle himself learned in the school of Christ, and strengthened his faith by his experience in following Jesus, and by acquiring knowledge of Bible history. He convinced men that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and Christ shed His glory upon the apostle, and he could speak from what he had seen and known.

It is the very knowledge that we gain daily, in our conflicts with Satan, that will be valuable to us in the future. It is the experience that we acquire in the things that Jesus is doing for us, in guarding our souls and bodies from the

your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Philippians 1:9. We should not be satisfied with our present spiritual attainments. If the Lord should open before us our condition as it really is, and we should see the danger there is of losing our souls, even those who now profess to be Christians would fall upon their knees, and pray earnestly, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." The astonishing indifference and carelessness which many now feel, is that they are separated in their thoughts from God, and really ignorant of their own peril. If the truth does not have a sanctifying influence upon your life and character, you will be like the foolish virgins, whose lamps were gone out at the very time when the bridegroom came to go in to the marriage. A theory of the truth is not enough. There is a high standard for us to reach. Our conflict is a continual conflict with the powers of darkness, and we must put on the whole armor of God, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. But how few are willing to urge their way heavenward against every opposing force of evil in the world!

The apostle prayed that love might abound more and more. There must be a living faith, before there can be a living experience. There are many who have a certain formal knowledge of Christ, and an indefinite faith that does not have an active influence upon the life and character. This faith is not a saving faith. Our love for Jesus must commence here, if we expect to love Him through the ages of eternity. All who love Christ will talk of Him. How shall the world know of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of your Lord and Saviour, unless you make it the theme of your thought and conversation? If our

We shall have the Spirit of Christ, if we are in union with Him; and with the same untiring love and patience, we shall seek that which is lost.

arguments that cannot be gainsaid, and will enable him to resist every dart of the wicked one, so that even the uneducated believer may have simple and genuine proofs of his position, that cannot be overborne by the doubts and cavils of infidels. He can relate that which he has himself experienced. He can say, "I know whom I have believed." 2 Timothy 1:12.

Those who connect with the school of Christ will be careful to obey the words of the Lord. Their faith will be founded upon knowledge, for they will be diligent students of the Scriptures. Like the humble fishermen who united with the Saviour to learn of Him, those who love Christ today will not only listen to His words, but also practice His precepts, and follow in His footsteps. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known, has opened their understanding, and has given them knowledge and judgment, that

cruel power of our enemy, that will increase our hope and add to our power to fight our way through. In Paul's experience of suffering for his Lord, he realized the consolation and support of his Redeemer. His trials did not dishearten him, for the rich grace of God nerved him for the conflict, and with fortitude and courage, he gloried in tribulation.

What are we doing with the light God has given to us? In temporal matters, many give thought and attention, and close application of mind, in order to make a business success. Should we not give our very best talent to the service of God? Should we not seek to gain a greater knowledge, and a more intelligent manner of doing the work of the Lord? Are we content to exalt the temporal above the eternal interests?

As the apostle prayed for the Philippian brethren, so pray for yourselves, and for each other, "that

hearts are rejoicing in the hope of beholding our coming Saviour, shall we not speak of it to others? "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Matthew 12:34. We shall have the Spirit of Christ, if we are in union with Him; and with the same untiring love and patience, we shall seek that which is lost. One soul is worth the world. It is the purchase of the blood of Christ, and those who really love Christ will feel the value of the souls for whom He shed His precious blood.

The glory of the eternal world is just before us. Are you forwarding your treasure from this perishing

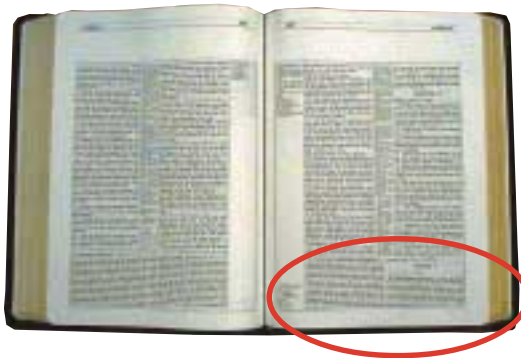
earth to the land of safety? What care is taken to secure proper titles to your worldly possession! Has your thought been exercised in regard to securing a title to the heavenly possessions? Your worldly estates will soon pass away, notwithstanding all your anxiety and toil. You must leave them all sometime. You may die before the coming of Jesus, or you may live till His appearing; however it is, the thoughts and ambitions of earth must be relinquished; but if your treasure is laid up on high, your riches will be incorruptible, undefiled, and will never pass away.

Make friendship with Christ today. Put your case in the hands of the great Advocate. He will plead your cause before the Father.

Though you have transgressed the law, and must plead guilty before God, Christ will present His precious blood in your behalf; and through faith and obedience, and a vital union with Christ, you may stand acquitted before the Judge of all the earth, and He will be your Friend when the final trump shall sound, and the scenes of earth shall be no more. ✨

Signs of the Times, July 27, 1888.

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The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Ron Spear

The study of the sanctuary message is a long-neglected study among the Seventh-day Adventist laity and ministry. “D-day” is just before us. Decision time is now. Probation is soon to close, and every Seventh-day Adventist is to be judged in the sanctuary above. But our High Priest is waiting for His people to perfect their characters by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God speaks to us through His last-day prophet: “In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence: ‘Found wanting.’ By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged.”¹

“The Jewish tabernacle was a type of the Christian church. . . . The church on earth, composed of those who are faithful and loyal to God, is the ‘true tabernacle,’ whereof the Redeemer is the minister. God, and not man, pitched this tabernacle on a high, elevated platform.”²

What is in the sanctuary message that all of us must know to be ready for the sealing angel? Read with me what God says:

“Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol – that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the

inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshipping angels, the glory of the Holiest. In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul. It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.’
1 Corinthians 3:16–17.”³

Every Seventh-day Adventist Christian knows that his body is the temple of God. But we are only God’s temple when in full obedience to His holy law, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. By the design and construction of the tabernacle, God was teaching the great lesson of character perfection. The sanctuary of Moses’ day was a tent with walls of gold-covered boards. The best craftsmen of the church were called and instructed how it was to be built. Every thread was important. The colors were chosen of God. All the furniture was symbolic. The daily service, the yearly rituals, the yearly feasts all taught lessons of the eternal value of character perfection.

“The Lord gave an important lesson to His people in all ages when to Moses on the mount He gave instruction regarding the building of the tabernacle. In that work He required perfection in every detail.”⁴

“From eternal ages it was God’s purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by

evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin — from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Malachi 3:1-3.⁵

Therefore when sins are practiced in the life, the soul ceases to be a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But God, incarnate in fallen human flesh, made a way for fallen humanity to again be God's dwelling place, His temple. Through the ages of the ancient church of the Old Testament, the church was to learn the lesson of salvation by the symbols and the services of the sanctuary. All of these pointed to the Messiah, the incarnation of God, Jesus, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. His perfect life and character were to be taught, revealed by His priests and then His people.

But tragically the ministry failed to grasp the important significance

of the services in which they daily served, and therefore the people and the church failed to understand. The results are recorded of their infamous acts and apostasies. Their history was written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:11-12.

"In the act of driving out the desecrators from the temple at Jerusalem, Jesus had announced Himself as the Messiah — the One who should cleanse the soul from the defilement of sin and make His people a holy temple unto the Lord."⁶ The cleansing of the temple in Jesus' day was a symbol of the

found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:7. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

2 Corinthians 4:17-18. He watches carefully each soul that the fires of affliction and temptation are not greater than His people can bear. God speaks to us:

"Our heavenly Father sees the hearts of men, and He knows their characters better than they themselves know them. He sees that some have susceptibilities and powers, which, directed in the right channel, might be used to His glory to aid in the advancement of His work. He

"The Lord in His providence brings men where He can test their moral powers and reveal their motives of action, that they may improve what is right in themselves and put away that which is wrong."

cleansing of the church in every age to this day, but more specific is its application for the last-day church. "The time has come when everything is to be shaken that can be shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Every case is coming in review before God; He is measuring the temple and the worshipers therein."⁷

Yes, Jesus is our great High Priest. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Hebrews 4:14.

Today, Jesus, in His priestly garments, is mediating for His people in the Most Holy Place. His church, His precious metal, the gold of eternity, He purifies by applying the fire of purification. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be

puts these persons on trial and in His wise providence brings them into different positions and under a variety of circumstances, testing them that they may reveal what is in their hearts and the weak points in their characters which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunities to correct these weaknesses, to polish off the rough corners of their natures, and to fit themselves for His service, that when He calls them to action they will be ready, and that angels of heaven may unite their labor with human effort in the work that must be done upon the earth. To men whom God designs shall fill responsible positions, He in mercy reveals their hidden defects, that they may look within and examine critically the complicated emotions and exercises of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong; thus they may modify their dispositions

and refine their manners. The Lord in His providence brings men where He can test their moral powers and reveal their motives of action, that they may improve what is right in themselves and put away that which is wrong. God would have His servants become acquainted with the moral machinery of their own hearts. In order to bring this about, He often permits the fire of affliction to assail them that they may become purified. 'But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.'

"The purification of the people of God cannot be accomplished

"I was pointed to the providence of God among His people and was shown that every trial made by the refining, purifying process upon professed Christians proves some to be dross. The fine gold does not always appear. In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church. As a class, their spirits are not steadfast with God. They go out from us because they are not of us; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, many are offended."⁹

Is Jesus Waiting for Us?

Let us not forget we are now in the day of atonement. Christ cannot finish His priestly work in the Most Holy Place until He has a people

forever ended. But what we have not been willing to see is that before that moment, God has to have a people on earth whose soul temples are cleansed from all sin, who have the faith to believe that they can, by God's power, cease to sin. The faith of Jesus in us is the only cure for sin; it is our only hope. "He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that He can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him entrance into the kingdom of God."¹²

Again Inspiration reveals to the church, through the sanctuary message, that we may stop sinning by the power of the Holy Spirit. "All sin . . . may be overcome by the Holy Spirit's power."¹³ "We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him."¹⁴

"Nothing less than perfect obedience can meet the standard of God's requirement. He has not left His requirements indefinite. He has enjoined nothing that is not necessary in order to bring man into harmony with Him. We are to point sinners to His ideal of character and to lead them to Christ by whose grace only can this ideal be reached.

"The Saviour took upon Himself the infirmities of humanity and lived a sinless life, that men might have no fear that because of the weakness of human nature they could not overcome. Christ came to make us 'partakers of the divine nature,' and His life declares that humanity, combined with divinity, does not commit sin."¹⁵ "To be redeemed means to cease from sin."¹⁶ "Christ died to make it possible for you to cease to sin."¹⁷

"Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will."¹⁸ God cannot and will not force obedience to His sacred law. "There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be

"He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that He can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him entrance into the kingdom of God."

without their suffering. God permits the fires of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. If we cannot bear these trials, what will we do in the time of trouble? If prosperity or adversity discover falseness, pride, or selfishness in our hearts, what shall we do when God tries every man's work as by fire, and lays bare the secrets of all hearts?"⁸

Again we read in the same volume:

"Christ offers to sell this precious treasure to man: 'Buy of me gold tried in the fire.' The dead, heartless performance of duty does not make us Christians. We must get out of a lukewarm condition and experience a true conversion, or we shall fail of heaven.

who understand and experience the cleansing of their own souls from every sin. "Christ is cleansing the temple in heaven from the sins of the people, and we must work in harmony with Him upon the earth, cleansing the soul temple from its moral defilement."¹⁰

"The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us, but in our hearts and characters."¹¹

We have believed that the cleansing of the sanctuary was a judicial act of God only. We believe that someday God will tell Christ to throw down His censer in the Most Holy Place; then probation for the human family will come to an end, and the great controversy will be

perfect in their life. Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren."¹⁹

Let us remember the sacred testimony in 1 John 3:8-9: "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."

This is the essence of the sanctuary message. Again the prophet speaks to us:

"When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.

"Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, *Let your light shine*. If you have received the

grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate

the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."²¹ ✝

The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.

and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence.

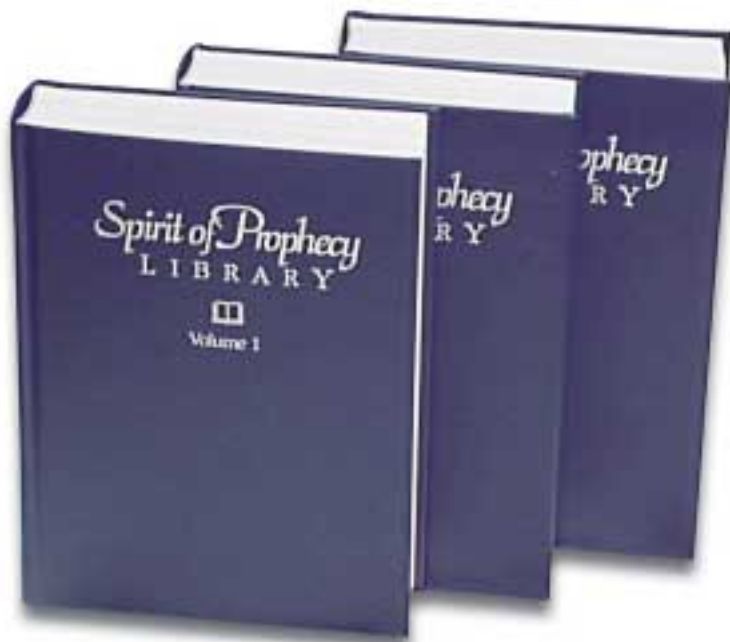
"The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring Heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. And in currents of praise and thanksgiving from the many souls thus won to God, glory will flow back to the great Giver."²⁰

The sealing of God's people is the perfect character of Jesus being developed in every obedient Christian, making us safe to save. "When

References:

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 247.
- ² *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 931.
- ³ *Education*, 36.
- ⁴ *In Heavenly Places*, 154.
- ⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, 161.
- ⁶ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, 2.
- ⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 219.
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 84-85.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.
- ¹⁰ *Review and Herald*, vol. 2, 365.
- ¹¹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 1074.
- ¹² *Review and Herald*, vol. 5, 24.
- ¹³ *The Faith I Live By*, 118.
- ¹⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 144.
- ¹⁵ *The Ministry of Healing*, 180.
- ¹⁶ *Review and Herald*, vol. 4, 321.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 181.
- ¹⁸ *Steps to Christ*, 34.
- ¹⁹ *The Desire of Ages*, 311.
- ²⁰ *Christ's Object Lessons*, 420.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

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Bible Temperance



We present this study with the desire that it will encourage you, our readers, to pursue a deeper examination of God's Word. The warning has been given us that "none but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict." *The Great Controversy*, 593–594. It is our suggestion that you use this study personally, in group settings, or with your family. We also encourage you to add other Scriptural references to this study as you proceed in your own personal, attentive scrutiny of God's Word.

The Editors

Bible Marking Directions

1. In this month's study our Bible marking key letters are *BT*, which represent "*Bible Temperance*."
2. On the blank flyleaf at either the beginning or the end of your Bible, write in the key letters followed by the first Scriptural text. This month's beginning entry should appear as follows: *1 BT: 1 Corinthians 10:31*.
3. Turn to the first reference and, in the margin near it, write the second reference. Then turn to the second reference and, in the margin near it, write the third reference, and so on to the end of the lesson. When you come to the last reference write "*End BT*."

1BT: 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Christians are commanded to eat and drink in a way that will please God. In order to do this we must govern our eating and drinking according to the principles laid down in the Word of God. A Christian is to regulate his eating and drinking by the principles enumerated in Scripture, and not merely by his preferences.

2BT: Isaiah 55:2.

God has commanded us to eat only that which is good. In order for us to know what is good we must study the teachings of His Word.

3BT: Genesis 1:29.

The Creator who made us knows what is best for us to eat. The original diet which the Creator ordained for man to eat was fruits, grains, and nuts.

God did not give man permission to eat the flesh of animals until the time of the flood. See Genesis 9:3–4. To Israel in the wilderness He made it very plain that man is not to eat the flesh of any unclean animal, fowl, or fish. See Leviticus 11. God's perfect plan was to wean Israel away from a flesh diet altogether, but they rebelled. See Psalm 78:18 and Numbers 11:4–35.

4BT Deuteronomy 14:7–10.

God told His ancient people not to eat the camel, rabbit, swine or mice. Creatures in the waters which do not have fins and scales are not to be eaten. Among other unclean

sea creatures, Christians should not eat the following: catfish, eels, crabs, shrimp, lobsters, oysters, or clams. This instruction cannot be set aside on the ground that it is in the Mosaic Law, which has passed away. The prohibition against eating unclean creatures was in force centuries before the Mosaic Law was given (see Genesis 7:2), and this uncleanness is still recognized in the last book of the Bible—long after the ceremonial law had passed away at the cross. See Revelation 18:2.

5BT Isaiah 66:15–17.

When the Lord Jesus comes the second time, those who are found eating swine's flesh and the mouse shall be consumed by the fire of His presence.

God is love; He never deprives us of anything that is for our own good. So when He asks us not to eat unclean animals, it is for our own good to obey.

6BT Proverbs 23:29–32.

This Scripture is plainly against the use of alcoholic liquors. See also 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; Ephesians 5:18. This means that when we drink as will please God, we will not drink beer, wine, whisky, gin, vinegar, fermented cider, or any other alcoholic beverage. Coffee, and Cola drinks contain a poison known as caffeine, which is injurious to the body. Tea (not to be confused with healthful herbal teas) contains two poisons, known as tannin and

theine, which are injurious to the body. Tobacco, snuff, and cigars contain a deadly poison known as nicotine, which is also injurious to the body. Cigarettes contain nicotine and another poison known as furfural. When we really eat and drink as is pleasing to God, as Scripture commands us, we will lay aside tea, coffee, cola drinks, and tobacco, or any narcotic habit—such as the morphine habit, opium habit, and so forth. Christ on the cross refused to receive any drug that would deaden His senses, and neither should we! See Matthew 27:34; *The Desire of Ages*, 746.

7BT | Corinthians 6:19–20.

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and it is to be kept clean from these harmful things so it will be a fit place for the indwelling of Jesus by His Holy Spirit.

8BT | Corinthians 3:17.

If we defile our body temple with these unclean and harmful things, God will destroy us. True Christian temperance means total abstinence from all that is harmful, and a moderate use of that which is good.

9BT | John 3:2–3.

If we really have the true hope in Christ of being like Him when He comes, we will choose purity of life now so that we can be pure, even as Jesus is pure. Jesus never ate pork or any unclean creature. He would not use tobacco, tea, coffee, Coca Cola, opium, morphine, or any other mind-deadening drugs. And if we ask for help to purify ourselves as Jesus is pure, the Holy Spirit will help us to leave off all these things. This is part of the process of getting ready to meet Jesus at His coming and being prepared for an eternal home in the new earth. ✨



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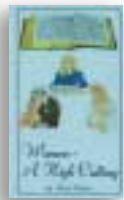


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What's Wrong With *Perfection*?

Dennis Priebe

Perfection seems to be a troublesome word these days. What does it really mean? The *first* thing we should say is that perfection is the end result of righteousness by faith. It is not the method and it is not the foundation of righteousness by faith. It is the conclusion of the

as human beings can never be absolutely perfect. This is correct, for absolute perfection—a perfection which has no limit nor the possibility of future failure—describes God Himself. There is no other absolute perfection. Thus absolute perfection is never possible for created beings, not for

listened to him and thought that he might be right.² Then God held a heavenly council in which He set forth the truth about Jesus Christ being fully God, thus showing Lucifer's challenge to be unfounded.³ After that council, approximately one third of the angels sided with Lucifer and were cast out of heaven.⁴ This means that a significant number of the angels who had listened to Lucifer and had thought he might be right changed their minds. Therefore, we cannot use the term absolute perfection to describe these angels who changed their minds about God and Lucifer. In fact, the angels were not fully convinced that God was right and Satan was wrong until the cross. Only then was Satan fully removed from their affections.⁵ Surely then, it is fair to say that absolute perfection is not a term we can apply in discussing righteousness by faith, since it

Christ in—sin out. Sin in—Christ out. We cannot have Christ and sin reigning on the throne of the life at the same time.

process of justification and sanctification.

Let us analyze the word perfection. There are at least four definitions of perfection that are relevant here. The first is absolute perfection. Sometimes it is said that we

human beings and not for angels. "Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden."¹

When Lucifer first began to suggest that God was unjust, nearly half of the angelic host

does not even apply to angels, but only to God.

The second definition of perfection is nature perfection. Our sinful nature will be removed only at the second coming of Christ, after which there will be no more sinful promptings from within. Thus, nature perfection, which involves removal of temptation from within, will occur only at the second coming of Christ. We cannot experience nature perfection before then.

However, if our definitions of sin and sinlessness focus on character, then we can discuss meanings of perfection that are possible for us today. There are at least two aspects of character which can be described by the word perfect, or perfection. First is character surrender. This occurs at the moment of conversion when we surrender our lives completely to Christ. At that moment we are accounted perfect in Christ. Our perfection is complete at that time, but we are just beginning the walk of Christ. We are fully surrendered to the degree that we understand ourselves and God. God will accept the full surrender of all that we know about ourselves at that time. Thus our character surrender is perfect, because God counts it perfect.

But there is another concept that we must examine—character maturity. If we believe that sin is on the basis of choice, then we must also believe that we can choose not to sin. Character maturity is simply the ripening of the harvest in the individual life. We are becoming mature in Christ when we are no longer choosing to sin against God. We choose not to rebel, and that choice can occur at any time. If Jesus Christ does live within us, He controls our lives, and we do not sin because Christ does not sin. Christ does nothing that is out of harmony with His will. When we sin, we are choosing Satan's control. We are choosing to let Satan operate in our lives.

This concept can be expressed in a rather simple but clear way. Christ in—sin out. Sin in—Christ out. We

cannot have Christ and sin reigning on the throne of the life at the same time. Christ will not accept a divided heart. In a mature character Christ is controlling totally and therefore we are not making rebellious choices. We are choosing not to rebel against God in thought, in word, or in action. What we are doing here is focusing on what God can do, not what I cannot do. We can talk for hours about the impossibilities of fallen man, but why not speak of the possibilities of God? Why not talk about what is possible?

In regard to our definitions, the definitions that are most important for our study are those categories over which we exercise control. If we believe that sin is by choice, then we will also believe that we can choose to obey. We can choose to surrender and we can choose to grow into maturity. Because Christ provides the power for victory, a sinless character is possible for all surren-

have a sinless character in sinful nature. Here we see the vital importance of a correct understanding of Christ's nature. If Christ overcame the promptings of His sinful nature by the Holy Spirit's control, then the same methodology is available to us. However, if Christ did not have our nature, then the methodology is unclear. It is important to be reminded at this point that guilt is not imputed because of our nature, but only because of choices made and character developed.

Jude 24 expresses a very important truth about what Christ can do. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Is Christ able to keep us from falling? Jude says "Yes." Thus, falling is not an inevitable reality of our lives. Christ is able to keep us from falling. Philippians 4:13 is another text that we must look at seriously. "I can do all things through Christ which

*Is Christ able to keep us from falling? Jude says "Yes."
Thus, falling is not an inevitable reality of our lives.*

dered Christians. Thus, perfection, carefully defined, is a reality. It is not an impossibility.

The new birth brings perfection in Christ, which is always sufficient for salvation. We are saved on the basis of that surrender. The problem is that we interrupt our surrender to Christ. The power of Christ who dwells in us does not change, but our surrender to Christ is not constant. It is the interruptions that can and should cease, for we should let Christ control us totally at all times. The variable factor is the constancy of our surrender. The power of Christ is constant, but our relationship wavers at times.

By nature we will always be sinful until Christ comes. But we can decide to make no choices against God's will. We can actually

strengtheneth me." Are *all* things possible through Jesus Christ? Is it really true that victory over sin is possible?

2 Peter 2:9 says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." Then it is not necessary for us to yield to temptation, because He can deliver us from temptation. We cannot deliver ourselves from temptation, but God can. He will provide a way of escape if we are willing. 1 Corinthians 10:13 adds, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God has promised that He will not let any temptation come to us that is too strong for us, which

would make our fall inevitable. This promise means that a way of escape is available for every temptation. There is not one temptation which comes to us that makes sin inevitable. God has promised that if we will trust in Him, He will show us the way out of every temptation.

1 Peter 2:21–22 says, “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” We know that Christ lived a life without sin, but sometimes we do not want to recognize the fact that He is also our Example, asking us to follow in His steps. Of course, this assumes that Christ was born the way we are born, feeling our temptations, and experiencing our desires. If all that was true for Him, and He did not sin, then He can be an example for us.

We find a magnificent statement in Revelation 3:21: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with

of our thoughts and all our attitudes. Galatians 5:16 adds, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” If the Holy Spirit is controlling, we will not succumb to the desires of our natures. We need not fall and fail constantly, over and over again. The promise of Scripture is that we can overcome, and that we can gain continual victories in the battle against the flesh.

As we might expect, Ellen White also speaks clearly and powerfully on the subject of growth to maturity: “The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.”⁶ We now have come to an extremely important principle in our consideration of the subject of perfection. Why is perfection important? What does it prove?

“The honor of Christ must stand complete in the perfection of the character of His chosen people.”⁷

Salvation has already been accomplished by character surrender at the time of justification. Perfection has to do with the credibility of God’s Word. God has said that His law is reasonable and can be obeyed. Satan has challenged this claim, and the final decision has not yet been rendered. God’s remnant people will have a role to play in the vindication of the credibility of God’s Word. In fact, God will vindicate His own name by providing His people with the divine power necessary to obey His law perfectly. Thus the perfect character developed by God’s people is crucially important to the final resolution of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

The question many seem to be asking today is, Has anyone ever achieved this perfection of character? Who among us is perfect? Ellen White responds, “The godly character of this prophet [Enoch] represents the state of holiness which must be attained by those who shall be ‘redeemed from the earth’ at the time of Christ’s second advent.”¹⁰ She describes Enoch as finding it necessary to live in a time when moral pollution was teeming all around him, but his mind was upon God and heavenly things. His face was lighted up with the light that shines in the face of Jesus. The atmosphere he breathed was tainted with sin and corruption, yet he lived a life of holiness and was unsullied with the prevailing sins of the age.¹¹

Apparently Enoch chose not to sin. He chose to put his life in harmony with Christ’s life at a time when things were as bad as they have ever been in this world’s history.

“Some few in every generation from Adam resisted his every artifice and stood forth as noble representatives of what it was in the power of man to do and to be. . . . Enoch and Elijah are the correct representatives of what the race might be through faith in Jesus Christ if they chose to be. Satan was greatly disturbed because these noble, holy men stood untainted amid the moral pollution

Perfection has to do with the credibility of God’s Word.

God has said that His law is reasonable and can be obeyed. Satan has challenged this claim, and the final decision has not yet been rendered.

me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” The model of overcoming is Jesus Christ, and we are to overcome even as He overcame. Certainly we must depend on His strength and power, but it remains true that we will overcome as He overcame.

Another classic statement is found in 2 Corinthians 10:5: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” God’s ideal for us is that we bring every thought into captivity so that He controls all

“If there was ever a people in need of constantly increasing light from Heaven, it is the people that, in this time of peril, God has called to be the depositaries of His holy law and to vindicate His character before the world.”⁸

“How is the world to be enlightened, save by the lives of Christ’s followers? . . . God’s people are to reflect to the world the bright rays of His glory. . . . God has plainly stated that He expects us to be perfect, and because He expects this, He has made provision for us to be partakers of the divine nature.”⁹

The purpose of character perfection is not so that we can be saved.

surrounding them, perfected righteous characters, and were accounted worthy for translation to heaven. As they had stood forth in moral power in noble uprightness, overcoming Satan's temptations, he could not bring them under the dominion of death. He triumphed that he had power to overcome Moses with his temptations, and that he could mar his illustrious character and lead him to the sin of taking glory to himself before the people which belonged to God."¹²

Apparently there was something special about the characters developed by Enoch and Elijah before their translation. They did, in fact, choose to resist sin by the power of God. Then we find this beautiful statement, "And there are Enochs in this our day."¹³ So has anyone achieved this type of perfection of character? The answer seems obvious.

If we really believe that there is a close of probation and that God is demonstrating something special after that time, then it seems that we must believe also in full character maturity, which means living without yielding to sinful desires. After the close of probation, "there will be no Priest in the sanctuary to offer their sacrifices, their confessions, and their prayers before the Father's throne."¹⁴

"I also saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully. . . . There will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father."¹⁵

"Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must

be conquerors in the battle with evil."¹⁶

There will be a difference in heaven after the close of probation, in that there will be no priestly ministry by Jesus. There will be no Intercessor, no Mediator, pleading the cause of sinners before the Father. Now this does not imply that the enabling power of Jesus dwelling within His people on earth will be removed. But the priestly ministry of forgiveness comes to an end at the close of probation. "In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an Intercessor."¹⁷ "After the close of Jesus' mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an Intercessor."¹⁸

The ending of Christ's work of intercession means that there will be no more forgiveness of sins after the close of probation. If the ministry of forgiving sins will have ceased, then it seems imperative that there be no sinning on the part of those who are sealed to God after the close of probation. We can only be forgiven if Jesus is interceding for us and forgiving our sins.

I believe that the primary reason for a short delay before Christ's coming during which there is no Mediator is to dramatize before the watching universe the reality of God's complete power over sin in the lives of those whose wills are totally and forever united to His own. The very people who formerly betrayed their sacred trust by agreeing with Satan that it was impossible to obey God's law will finally demonstrate that there really is no excuse for sin. The close of probation will play an important part in the final demonstration that God is making before His universe; that, indeed, it is possible for fallen man to obey God's law, which is righteous and good and holy.

If we take seriously the Biblical admonitions to overcome, the reality of the close of probation, and the challenge of the 144,000, then we must also take seriously the truth of living without sinning. However, we must remember when we are

discussing perfection, we are talking about the goal – the end result. Our focus needs to be on justification and sanctification, because this is the method of receiving salvation. Jesus forgives us of our sins. He comes into our lives with power and victory. As the runner focuses on the next few yards while remembering the tape that is at the end of the race, so the Christian focuses on His relationship with Christ today while remembering that there is a goal at the end of the race.

As the runner focuses on the next few yards while remembering the tape that is at the end of the race, so the Christian focuses on His relationship with Christ today while remembering that there is a goal at the end of the race.

Can we accept this challenge? "Christ took humanity and bore the world's hatred that He might show men and women that they could *live without sin*, that their words, actions, and spirit, might be sanctified to God. We can be *perfect Christians* if we will manifest this power in our lives."¹⁹ God has promised that He can give victory over all sin. Because of this promise, Biblical perfection should never be a discouraging topic, but the most glorious prospect ever set before God's people. God, in fact, *is* able to keep us from falling. ✨

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- ¹ *Our High Calling*, 45.
- ² See *Story of Redemption*, 18.
- ³ See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 36.
- ⁴ See *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 115.
- ⁵ See *The Desire of Ages*, 758-761.
- ⁶ *The Desire of Ages*, 671.
- ⁷ *Signs of the Times*, November 25, 1897.
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 746.
- ⁹ *Review and Herald*, January 28, 1904.
- ¹⁰ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 88-89.
- ¹¹ See *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 122.
- ¹² *Review and Herald*, March 3, 1874.
- ¹³ *Christ's Object Lessons*, 332.
- ¹⁴ *Early Writings*, 48.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.
- ¹⁶ *The Great Controversy*, 425.
- ¹⁷ *The Great Controversy*, 614.
- ¹⁸ *Story of Redemption*, 403.
- ¹⁹ *Upward Look*, 303, emphasis supplied.

Sunday Alert

The World Sabbath of Religious Reconciliation

News Item: Bloomfield Hills, MI—“WORLD SABBATH OF RELIGIOUS RECONCILIATION will be held on Saturday night, January 22, 2000, at Christ Church Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Leaders of many religious faiths will speak out against the scandal of religious persecution, discrimination and war. From Kosovo to Indonesia, from Sudan to Tibet religious differences have been the brutal excuse for brutality and hatred. We encourage people around the world to share in the World Sabbath of Religious Reconciliation: the first ‘Interfaith Holy Day’ devoted to making peace, and incarnating justice on earth.

“In the light of the new millennium, Saturday, January 22, 2000, has been planned a day of interfaith dialogue, prayer, forgiveness, worship, reconciliation and cultural celebration. We are calling on people of all faiths to be with us at Christ Church Cranbrook that day to participate in the first annual WORLD SABBATH OF RELIGIOUS RECONCILIATION.” <http://members.aol.com/revrodrev/intro.html>

National Sunday Observance

News Item: “Each year The Lord’s Day Alliance suggests a day in February for churches to remember the importance of keeping Sunday as the Lord’s Day. The next annual observance is scheduled for Sunday, February 6, 2000. Each year it seems that the need for such emphasis only increases as the activities of secular society encroach more and more on Sunday observance.” *Sunday*, Winter 1999, page 3.

On page 11 a bulletin insert is printed as a suggestion for the churches. It reads as follows: “NATIONAL SUNDAY OBSERVANCE, February 6, 2000, A NEW YEAR, A NEW CENTURY, A NEW

MILLENNIUM, ‘Jesus Christ . . . The Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.’ Hebrews 13:8. Today is set aside by the Lord’s Day Alliance to remind us to keep His day forever a day of rest, worship and Christian Education. ‘I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.’ Psalms 122:1. The Lord’s Day Alliance of the United States.” *Ibid.*

Ministerial Association Officially Declares a Day of Rest

News Item: North Carolina—“The Bible’s intended purpose of the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship remains as much a part of God’s plan today as it did from day seven of Creation, members of the Hickory Area Ministers Association believe. . . .

“Earlier this year, some 25 members of the association began composing an official declaration of their support of the Sabbath [Sunday]. . . .

“The increased use of Sunday morning for sports events was also a cause in formulating the declaration, as was the recent rampage of school shootings in America. . . .

“We, the members of the Hickory Area Ministers Association, encourage the members of our community to reverse the continued devaluation of the concept of Sabbath, allowing us to reclaim its true meaning and benefits.’ . . .

“The Jewish community and Seventh Day Adventists observe the Sabbath on Saturday.

“Though most of us do observe Sunday as the Sabbath, we’re not trying to impose Sunday as the Sabbath,” said the Rev. Bill Roberts with regard to other denominations.

“In addition to referencing the Sabbath as the ‘Lord’s Day,’ rather than Saturday or Sunday, the declaration also states—‘We the members of the Hickory Area Ministers Association offer this as a standard by which all members of

society can determine proper use of the Sabbath.’ ” *Hickory Daily Record*, November 14, 1999.

Prophetic Perspective: In recent years the subject of Sunday sacredness has become a subject of renewed interest.

“Heretofore those who presented the truths of the third angels’ messages have often been regarded as mere alarmists. Their predictions that religious intolerance would gain control in the United States, that church and state would unite to persecute those who keep the commandments of God, have been pronounced groundless and absurd. It has been confidently declared that this land could never become other than what it has been—the defender of religious freedom. But as the question of enforcing Sunday observance is widely agitated, the event so long doubted and disbelieved is seen to be approaching, and the third message will produce an effect which it could not have had before.” *The Great Controversy*, 605–606.

The events predicted in Revelation 13 are in the process of fulfillment. Now is the time for the people of God to arouse and share the three angels’ messages with renewed energy.

Revitalized Romanism

Congress On Luther’s Predecessor, Jan (John) Hus

News Item: Vatican City—“The figure of Jan Hus, national Bohemian hero, reformer, priest, and theologian is the focus of a noteworthy international congress that began today at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. . . .

“The meeting hopes ‘to identify elements that can serve as a bridge between the Christian denomina-



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tions to lessen the dramatic pitch of the situation and find prophetic elements for the third millennium.'

"Consequently, the congress is an endeavor 'to heal the profound wound to the churches' historic memory, which is projected onto the memory of the nation itself. Hus was a martyr to truth, or to free thinking. His theological convictions to one side, he is regarded even in our own days as one of the great symbols of the [Czech] nation.' Given the foregoing, the joint Commission of Catholics and Protestants is not attempting to rehabilitate Jan Hus dogmatically, but to propose him as a figure for meeting and reflection between Catholics and Protestants." *Zenit News Agency*, December 16, 1999.

Pope Launches Jubilee Year

News Item: Vatican City – "With a ceremonial push by frail hands, Pope John Paul II opened the Holy Door to St. Peter's Basilica late Friday to launch a yearlong Roman Catholic celebration. . . .

"The stooped, 79-year-old pontiff led a procession of cardinals, bishops and priests through the door, followed by Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi and other VIPs. Then he proclaimed the 54-week Holy Year opened and said midnight Mass.

"An estimated 1.5 billion viewers watched a live telecast in 58 countries. . . .

"The Vatican admitted 8,200 worshippers into the basilica and turned away 54,000 more who had sought tickets. It set up 40,000 chairs and four giant screens in St. Peter's Square. . . .

"Tens of thousands more spectators stood in the brightly lighted square, joining the applause as the Holy Door swung open." *Associated Press*, December 25, 1999.

Billy Graham's Man

News Item 3: "Billy Graham's pick for Man of the Century? Pope John Paul II. The Pope 'has brought the greatest impact of any pope in the last 200 years,' Graham told the Associated Press. 'I admire his courage, determination, intellectual abilities, and his understanding of Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox difference, and the attempt at some form of reconciliation.'" *National Catholic Register*, December 26–January 1, 2000.



Vision of Virgin Mary Seen in the Sky

News Item 4: Birmingham, AL – "About 3,000 people gathered to see visionary Marija Lunetti on Wednesday in a rural field where she said the Virgin Mary appeared to her three days after nearby residents reported an unexplained flash of light had streaked across the sky. . . .

"Lunetti, whose hometown is now in Bosnia-Herzegovina, arrived in Birmingham on Tuesday and prayed the rosary with pilgrims from all over the country Wednesday. At 10:43 A.M., she stopped praying in Croatian and had a vision that lasted about 80 seconds. She knelt on the ground

in front of a pile of stones and a concrete statue of the Virgin Mary. . . .

"Then Lunetti stood and began telling translator Kathleen Martin the message. . . .

" 'When Our Lady appeared, she came all dressed in gold. I recommended each of you and every intention of your hearts. Our Lady extended her hands over all of us and prayed over us for a long time. I asked Our Lady to bless each and every one of us and to bless all the religious objects that you brought. Our Lady then smiled at all of us and prayed a moment and then she raised her arm and blessed us with the sign of the cross. I then asked Our Lady if she had something that she wanted to tell us. Our Lady then looked at me and smiled and said: "Do not forget that I am your mother and that I love you." Our Lady then raised her hand again and blessed us and then left.' " *Christian News*, December 20, 1999.

Prophetic Perspective: "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." Matthew 24:24.

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Revelation 13:3.

In our world today, we are seeing the revival of the beast power of Bible prophecy. All the world is wondering after the Catholic power. We are also seeing the spiritualistic miracles of demon powers masquerading as the Virgin Mary – just as prophecy has predicted. See Revelation 16:14. Certainly the end of all things is upon our world, and we should be ready for what is about to ensnare this planet.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28. ✚

As a Man Thinketh

Does your mental attitude really affect your health?

In a research experiment conducted at UCLA, a team of psychologists measured the immune systems of ninety healthy, first-year law students. They first measured their immune system at the beginning of the semester, and again two months later. The results of this study showed that the students who had an optimistic outlook on life exhibited higher levels of both helper T cells and natural killer cells than did the pessimistic students.

This study and others show us that there is a definite connection between our mental outlook on life and our physical health.

What are some of the ways that we can increase our possibility of maintaining a cheerful, contented outlook on life? Is it possible that our health habits can affect our ability to remain positive?

Water

One way to promote optimism is to drink lots of water. When your body is deprived of the water that it needs, the blood thickens and becomes sluggish. Without enough fluid, wastes and toxins are not carried out as quickly, resulting in a feeling of drowsiness and fatigue. Your brain is also 80% water, and it is very important to keep it well hydrated. For best results, you should drink at least eight glasses of water every day.



A Healthy Diet

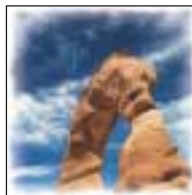
The food you eat greatly affects your mental outlook. When you eat foods high in fat, highly refined foods, or just too much food, your stomach becomes



overburdened, and in turn puts an extra tax on the brain. The best diet for maintaining an optimistic spirit consists of simple, unrefined foods, low in fat, and in as natural a state as possible.

Fresh Air

The air that we breathe contains both positively and negatively charged ions. We need a larger amount of negative ions for better health. These are found in the highest concentrations by the ocean, in the mountains, or by moving bodies of water. Positively charged ions are found indoors where they become more concentrated as the air is continually rebreathed without adding fresh air. Too many of these ions can cause headaches, nasal obstruction, hoarseness, fatigue and dizziness. A great concentration of positive ions also causes an overproduction of the stress hormone — serotonin. Serotonin is a stress hormone that causes sudden changes in mood. Therefore, if you begin to feel grumpy and irritable after a day indoors, it is time for you to go outside and breathe deeply!



Sunshine

Sunlight is another excellent natural healing agent. It electrifies the air with negative ions, which is a definite aid to maintaining a clear optimistic mind. Exposure to the sunlight improves general health, stimulates the appetite, gives a feeling of well being, and helps to enable sleep. Sunlight also gives energy. When the skin is exposed to the sun, the nerve endings absorb the radiant energy and carry it back



to the entire nervous system, thus giving you more energy.

Exercise

Exercise is one of the best aids in healing or preventing depression. When you exercise, your body is stimulated to produce endorphins — hormones that specifically aid in promoting happiness and optimism. Endorphins also reduce anxiety and stimulate the immune system to more efficient activity. Exercise increases energy and aids in promoting a clear mind. When you exercise, your circulation improves; this helps to clear your body of toxins and waste matters by increasing the blood flow.

The mind and the body are connected. When your body is healthy and doing well, your mind will be better able to rest. When your mind is at peace, your body will have a much easier time of maintaining health.

Rest

Everyone would agree that it is much easier to be positive when you have enjoyed a full night's sleep. Sleep research has documented that our body's ability to process memories and emotions through dreaming is essential to our psychological well being. The rapid eye movement (REM) stage of sleep — the dreaming stage — occurs about every 90 minutes. When we skimp on sleep we cut out some of that important emotional processing time.¹ Sleep deprivation increases irritability and erodes the normal civility that we count on from our companions.



In order to avoid these types of consequences, it is important to get a proper amount of sleep. More emphasis should be placed on the value of adequate sleep for optimum health. This is definitely a significant factor in promoting optimism.

Temperance

Another lifestyle secret that is guaranteed to help maintain optimism—*temperance*.



When we make a decision to change our lifestyle for the better and then use our willpower and self-control to carry out our choice, we gain the feeling of right doing, and of being in control of our bodies. Temperance also affects all the other branches of health that we have discussed. When you are temperate, you will eat of the right food, you will maintain proper exercise, and you will school yourself to get enough sleep. Using the principle of self-control empowers you to excel in many other areas of your life. When you learn to make correct choices for your body and not waver with them, you will be more prepared to confidently make choices throughout the rest of your life. When you know that you are in

control of yourself, it is much easier to have the confidence you need for your daily activities.

Trust in God

In this age of constant running, driving, and rushing, we cannot escape the stress that is part of the American lifestyle. Stress is a big factor in our ability to remain cheerful. When you feel as if many problems will occur if you do not perform, your stress load can destroy your happiness and have a devastating effect on your health.



Because stress is nearly inescapable, we need to ask ourselves this question, Is there a way to deal with stress that will prevent its deleterious effects? A close look at stress will reveal that, although it is a natural response, it often does not help us to accomplish our goal, unless it gives us a needed motivation. The amount of stress we have is determined by our response to the situation. It would be very helpful if we could look at our stress-causing activities, and meet them with a calm repose. Is this possible?

Stress, worry, anxiety, and fear, are the natural emotions of our

heart, and can be very devastating to our physical and mental health. Although we cannot stop stress, we can shake its power by giving ourselves to the Lord Jesus and trusting in His providence and direction. He has given us the beautiful promise, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28. When we surrender our lives to God, we must believe that He receives us, and then lay our burdens of care at His feet. To believe that God controls everything is a great simplifier in life. Our part is to remain in His will, and His part is to work all together for good.

All the thoughts shared in this article are valuable; however, trust in God is the most important. Although you will receive many benefits from the other points, they will not be as effective without this one. I pray that each of you will find a blessing in following the principles here outlined, and will determine to keep a cheerful, contented frame of mind. ✨

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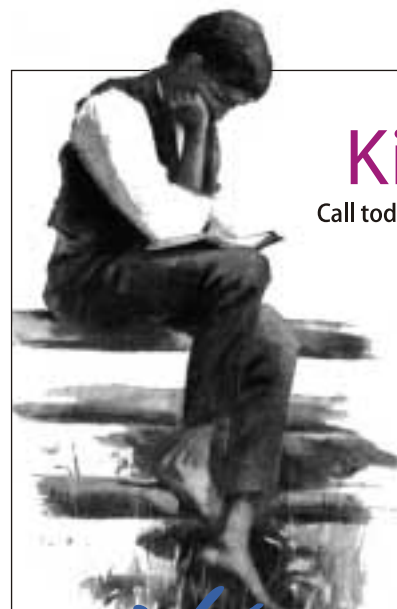
¹ "Sleep Deprivation May Be More Harmful Than You Think," by Dr. Steve Sainsbury, *Wing Tips*, May/June 1996.

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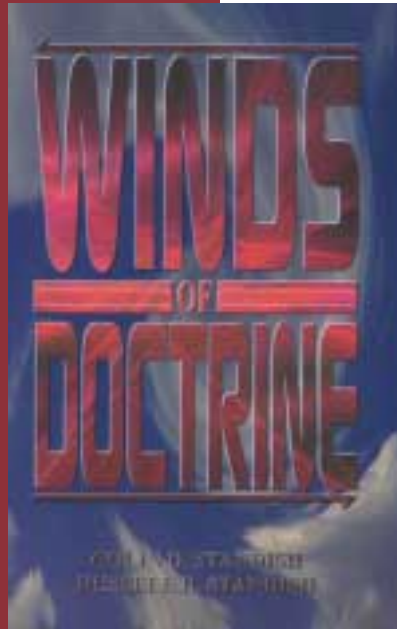
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Winds of Doctrine



by Colin D. Standish and
Russell R. Standish

Over a decade ago, the authors presented a book entitled *Keepers of the Faith*. In that book, twenty-two deadly errors that had invaded the Seventh-day Adventist Church were examined and exposed. Many men and women have been protected from error by the warnings in that book. But in the years that have passed since then, the prophetic statement of the servant of the Lord that “confederacies shall increase until the end of time” [see *Review and Herald* articles, August 5, 1909] has been fulfilled as numerous additional errors have invaded the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

The authors have discovered that, like those dealt with in *Keepers of the Faith*, most of these additional errors have their foundation in the fallen churches of Babylon. But unlike most of the older errors, which originated in mainly denominational institutions of learning, most of the present errors have come from those claiming to be faithful to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, many of whom are in self-supporting work.

This is the greatest evidence that Satan has not confined his attacks to denominational workers and leaders, but has also attacked those in the self-supporting work. The tragedy is that some have accepted the nefarious subtleties of Satan and have led many, who are not stabilized in the faith, away from truth and righteousness. The ultimate and sad result will be that many souls will be lost for the kingdom of heaven.

This book is essential reading for all earnest Seventh-day Adventists. It takes up issues as central to the apostasy as: the Name of God, the Godhead, the Person of the Holy Spirit, the eternal existence of Christ, the Wednesday crucifixion, the correct Sabbath hours, and God’s destructive judgment.

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The Preparation of God's People



Colin D. and Russell R. Standish

The implications of the final judgment are so awesome that no one may ignore them without consequence. Just as ancient Israel prepared for the day of atonement, so there is a solemn preparation for the final judgment of God's people.

King Solomon has achieved renown for his wisdom and his wealth. His folly in deserting the Lord and following pagan practices, together with his possession of one thousand wives and concubines, has won him a distinction of another order. Yet, little acknowledged among his gifts has been the gift of prophecy. Solomon, like his father King David before him, was used of God to elucidate the future. His most challenging prophecy was his description of God's latter-day church. Presenting this prophecy in the form of a question, King Solomon was inspired to write, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" Song of Solomon 6:10.

Solomon had used similar symbolism concerning the purity of

God's last church a little earlier in his song, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners." Verse 4.

The imagery of Solomon's description—fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners—aptly portrays the type of

no less engaging. "That he [Christ] might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:27.

Here is the standard which God has for His people. He is waiting their submission to Him in order

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

church God will have on this earth. Only such a group of people will be empowered to take God's last message to fellow humans. They will be a shining light to the entire world. God's people will form a mighty army of faith which will not falter until every man, woman, and child on this planet has heard the impelling news that Jesus loves them.

Paul's description of God's church in the New Testament era is

that such a church as this can be ready. It will be recalled that upon the day of atonement God commanded: "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD." Leviticus 16:30.

Surely, in the antitypical day of atonement, God asks no less of His people. Each must afflict his soul and confess every sin. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your

hearts, ye double minded." James 4:8.

Jesus, the High Priest, stands in the Most Holy Place before the throne of God, ready to cleanse us from all our sins. Peter sets forth the availability of this power. It will so transform our minds that continual victory will be the experience of God's people.

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." 1 Peter 4:1-2.

The Revelator prophesied of the characteristics of those who would be translated at the end of time. They will be those whose lives have become so patterned after their Master's that God will be able to say of them, "And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:5.

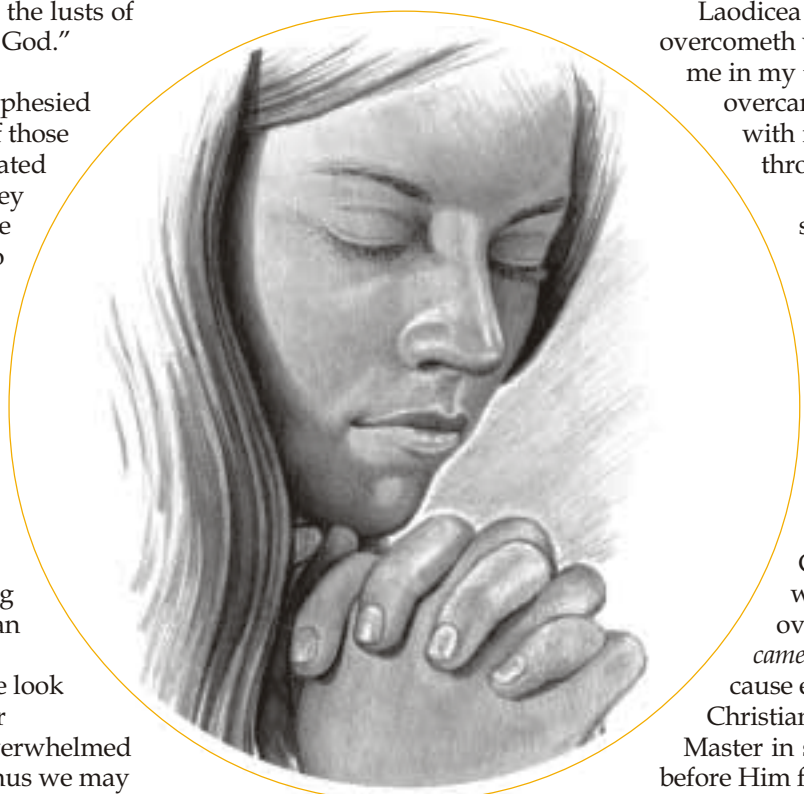
Such a standard seems beyond anything which mere mortals can ever imagine for themselves. And truly, if we look to ourselves or to other humans, we will be overwhelmed by discouragement. Thus we may yield to Satan's all-pervading lie that such a standard of obedience is impossible, even when the individual is empowered by the Holy Ghost. Only those who look to Jesus Christ and accept His promises in humble faith will ever "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14.

Powerful and certain are the promises of God's Word, which assure us that God will have a people who will stand before the throne, so filled with His Spirit, that they will indeed be without spot or blemish. Jeremiah looked forward to

the day when such assurances would accurately describe God's people.

"In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." Jeremiah 50:20.

Yet the solemn fact is that in every letter to the seven churches throughout the ages the same message was proclaimed—only overcomers will share eternity with their Saviour.



Ephesus—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Revelation 2:7.

Smyrna—"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Verse 11.

Pergamos—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Verse 17.

Thyatira—"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works

unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." Verse 26

Sardis—"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Revelation 3:5.

Philadelphia—"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God . . . and I will write upon him my new name." Verse 12.

Laodicea—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Verse 21.

It is not without significance that in presenting the message to the last church in history, Christ revealed to John the ultimate standard of victory. He not only requires victory but also empowers it.

God's standard of victory is exemplified in Christ's life. Therefore we are exhorted to overcome *even as I overcame*. This standard should cause every God-fearing

Christian to fall at the feet of the Master in supplication, pleading before Him for that infilling of His Spirit which will, by faith, give weak humans complete victory over sin. Paul claimed God's promise of full victory in exhorting the believers of Corinth to reach God's ideal for His people.

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Such an ultimate standard of victory is called for in other Scriptures penned by the beloved disciple.

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John 2:6. "And

every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous." Verse 7.

Jesus also upheld the very same standard. Speaking to those gathered about Him on the mountainside He admonished, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48.

Further, in the Old Testament era, God set forth no less a requirement for His people. "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy." Leviticus 11:44.

God again reiterates this principle for those Christians who make up His remnant church. Indeed, He foretold that they would be obedient to His law. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17.

Lest anyone doubt the total victory over sin of those who will compose God's remnant church, we have been promised they will achieve it. "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." Zephaniah 3:13.

It is little wonder that Peter, when speaking of the preparation of God's people for the last days, posed the sobering, rhetorical question, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" 2 Peter 3:11-12.

The prophet Isaiah, looking down to the last days of the history of this world, revealed the level of godliness God will empower His people to possess. "Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to

come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it: that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil." Isaiah 56:1-2.

This blessing is consistent with Peter's promise to God's people on the day of Pentecost. "Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Acts 3:26.

There cannot be the least doubt as to God's requirement for His people. All Christians do not have a proper concept of this standard. Many look to their own failures and the failures of others, and from these criteria deduce that God will save people *in* their sins, rather than *from* their sins. Such a view contradicts the plain teaching of Scripture. Others cry out as did Paul in his lost condition, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:24.

Paul's immediate answer was as succinct as it was comforting, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Verse 25.

The question on the lips of every true believer is how can a poor, sin-prone mortal with a fallen nature ever meet the standard so definitely set before us as we study the grand theme of the sanctuary?

The Bible is replete with the answers to this question. But the complete secret is found in a short passage of the great psalm exploring God's standard of obedience. The first step is to seek the Lord with our whole heart. Indeed, unless we surrender all, we surrender nothing. David expressed this essential quality this way: "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments." Psalm 119:10.

The sad reality is that rare is the Christian who gives his entire heart to his Saviour. Many present-day Christians have become great rationalizers of their self-centered culture and interest, so that they cannot distinguish their own willful ways from God's ways. The root

reason that they despair of meeting the requirement God has promised is that they do not look to Jesus and thus commit all to Him. Because they do not forsake the things of this world entirely, they present alibis and theological excuses to continue to fall short of God's standard promised to all who will allow Him to take all selfishness from their lives.

The second requirement is that we diligently seek to place the precepts of God in our hearts and affections. David's well-known utterance on this matter should have particular meaning for God's people in the judgment hour. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Verse 11.

Further, the true believer will search the Scriptures and pray sincerely in order to learn more of God's will for him. He will ever seek to come closer in character to His example, ever sitting at the feet of the Master Teacher to learn more and more of His will. "Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes." Verse 12.

Finally, the born-again Christian will share his convictions with others, seeking to direct them in the path of righteousness. To witness to God's incomparable love and power will be his greatest joy. "With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth." Verse 13.

A young Buddhist student nurse in the Bangkok Adventist Hospital was asked by a teacher, "What do you think of Jesus?" Her reply showed a depth of understanding far surpassing that of many Christians. "Jesus is the person who sacrificed so that man might have eternal life," she wrote. "He teaches man to understand the commandments that he should follow. He gives man a firm foundation to depend on, so we should stop sinning."

Perhaps this simple insight into the preparation of a people ready to meet their Lord has a depth of import that no amount of scholarly research could reveal. ✨



Genuine Conversion

Ellen G. White

In order to be saved, we must know by experience the meaning of true conversion. It is a fearful mistake for men and women to go on day by day, professing to be Christians, yet having no right to the name. In God's sight, profession is nothing, position is nothing. He asks, Is the life in harmony with My precepts?

There are many who suppose that they are converted, but who are not able to bear the test of character presented in the Word of God. Sad will it be, in the day when every man is rewarded according to his works, for those who cannot bear this test.

Conversion is a change of heart, a turning from unrighteousness to righteousness. Relying upon the merits of Christ, exercising true faith in Him, the repentant sinner receives pardon for sin. As he ceases to do evil, and learns to do well, he grows in grace and in the knowledge of God. He sees that in order to follow Jesus he must separate from the world, and, after counting the cost, he looks upon all as loss if he may but win Christ. He enlists in His army, and bravely and cheerfully engages in the warfare, fighting against natural inclinations and selfish desires, and bringing the will into subjection to the will of Christ. Daily he seeks the Lord for grace, and he is strengthened and helped. Self once reigned in his heart, and

worldly pleasure was his delight. Now self is dethroned, and God reigns supreme. His life reveals the fruit of righteousness. The sins he once loved he now hates. Firmly and resolutely he follows in the path of holiness. This is genuine conversion.

In the lives of many of those whose names are on the church books there has been no genuine change. The truth has been kept in the outer court. There has been no genuine conversion, no positive work of grace done in the heart. Their desire to do God's will is based upon their own inclination, not upon the deep conviction of the Holy Spirit. Their conduct is not brought into harmony with the law of God. They profess to accept Christ as their Saviour, but they do not believe that He will give them power to overcome their sins. They have not a personal acquaintance with a living Saviour, and their characters reveal many blemishes.

Many a one who looks at himself in the divine mirror, and is convinced that his life is not what it ought to be, fails to make the needed change. He goes his way, and forgets his defects. He may profess to be a follower of Christ, but what does this avail if his character has undergone no change, if the Holy Spirit has not wrought upon his heart? The work done has been superficial. Self is retained in his life. He is not a partaker of the divine

nature. He may talk of God and pray to God, but his life reveals that he is working against God.

Let us not forget that in his conversion and sanctification, man must co-operate with God. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," the Word declares; "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:12-13. Man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. He possesses no power by which this change may be effected. The renewing energy must come from God. The change can be made only by the Holy Spirit. He who would be saved, high or low, rich or poor, must submit to the working of this power.

As the leaven, when mingled with the meal, works from within outward, so it is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life. No mere external change is sufficient to bring us into harmony with God. There are many who try to reform by correcting this bad habit or that bad habit, and they hope in this way to become Christians, but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart.

The great truth of the conversion of the heart by the Holy Spirit is presented in Christ's words to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above [margin], he cannot see

the kingdom of God. . . . That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:3, 6-8.

The leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are aroused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened.

The Scriptures are the great agency in this transformation of character. Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the Word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us, body, soul, and spirit, to His will.

A man sees his danger. He sees that he needs a change of character, a change of heart. He is stirred; his fears are aroused. The Spirit of God is working in him, and with fear and trembling he works for himself, seeking to find out his defects of character, and to see what he can do to bring about the needed change in his life. His heart is humbled. By confession and repentance he shows the sincerity of his desire to reform. He confesses his sins to God, and if he has injured anyone, he confesses the wrong to the one he has injured. While God is working, the sinner, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, works out that which God is working in mind and heart. He acts in harmony with the Spirit's working, and his conversion is genuine.

The nobility and dignity of the man increase as he takes his position against the wily foe, who for so

many years has kept him in slavery. He feels a holy indignation arising within him as he thinks that for so long he has been Satan's bond-slave, allowing the enemy to lead him to refuse to acknowledge his best Friend.

Let the sinner co-operate with his Redeemer to secure his liberty. Let him be assured that unseen heavenly agencies are working in his behalf. Dear souls in doubt and discouragement, pray for the courage and strength that Christ waits to give you. He has been seeking for you. He longs to have you feel your need of His help. He will reach out His hand to grasp the hand stretched out for aid. He declares, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. Let mind and heart be enlisted in the warfare against sin. Let your heart soften as

day of his life he ministers to others. The light that is in him shines forth, and stills the strife of tongues. Day by day he is working out before men and angels a vast, sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings.

Let us not spare ourselves, but carry forward in earnest the work of reform that must be done in our lives. Let us crucify self. Unholy habits will clamor for the mastery, but in the name and through the power of Jesus we may conquer. To him who daily seeks to keep his heart with all diligence, the promise is given, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our

Day by day he is working out before men and angels a vast, sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings.

you think of how long you have chosen to serve your bitterest foe, while you turned from Him who gave His life for you, who loves you, and who will accept you as His, though you are sinners. Step out from under the rebel flag, and take your stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel.

He who would build up a strong, symmetrical character, must give all and do all for Christ. The Redeemer will not accept divided service. Daily he must learn the meaning of self-surrender. He must study the Word of God, getting its meaning and obeying its precepts. Thus he may reach the highest standard of Christian excellence. There is no limit to the spiritual advancement that he may make if he is a partaker of the divine nature. Day by day God works in him, perfecting the character that is to stand in the day of final test. Each

Lord." Romans 8:38-39.

"Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, . . . Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee." Isaiah 49:7. God himself is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. And "whom he justified, them he also glorified." Romans 8:30. Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings, striving for conformity to the divine image, there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. ❀

Review and Herald, July 7, 1904.

THE BORDERS OF PROFANITY

*“Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”
Matthew 5:37.*

When Jesus spoke these words, He did not mean that we should limit our vocabulary to “yes” and “no”! After all, Jesus, our Example, spoke freely and fully. Instead, His “words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity.”¹

Minced Oaths

Imagine yourself sitting in church one morning, and the elder announces the opening song: “Take the Name of Jesus With You.” You stand and sing the song from your heart, ending with the chorus,

*“Precious Name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven.”*

A few minutes later, you whisper to your friend in the seat next to you, “Gee, it’s hot this morning.” By that statement you have nullified the words you just sang. Surprised? It is true! If the expletive “gee” is in your vocabulary, each time you say it you are using the precious name of Jesus in a light and frivolous manner. *Webster’s New International Dictionary* presents this meaning of “gee”: “A minced form of *Jesus*, used in mild oaths.” That is not all! “Gosh” and “golly” — even “my goodness” — are also mutilations of God’s holy name or character.

Some who are prone to travel along the borders of profanity will use God’s acts as fillers in their speech. We shudder when we hear someone say, “Damn it!” for we know that damnation is the destiny of those who refuse to obey God. But what if we say, “I’ll be darned”? Here is *Webster’s* definition: “Darn — corruption of *damn*.” In other words, when we use this expression we are actually asking for the sentence of damnation upon ourselves!

Others use God’s domains in expletives. Thus we hear “Good heavens!” as well as numerous references to hell. Perhaps they do not realize that the Bible clearly forbids such speech: “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.” James 5:12.

I know a young man who thought he had invented a great way to avoid swearing. Instead, he decided to use substitutes for the words he could not use. However, God does not want any substitutes. Jesus admonished, “Swear not at all.” Matthew 5:34. And a moment later, He said, “Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” Verse 37. We must eliminate fillers and unnecessary words from our speech.

Idle Words

Have you ever heard someone say that it is nonsense to make a connection between our speech and our salvation? Jesus did not see it that way. In fact, He warned us, “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matthew 12:36–37.

When we think of idle words, most of us think of gossiping and evilspeaking, cursing and swearing, dirty jokes and filthy language. But there is another category of idle words that God also condemns. These are called *euphemisms*: the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant.

Euphemisms are useful when they help us be more pleasant and tactful. But if they are used instead of God’s name or as substitutes for vulgar language, they should be avoided. Examples of such expressions include “heck,” “shoot,” “crum,” and many others.

A clever person once said, “Some people use language to express thoughts, some to conceal thoughts, and some instead of thoughts!” Let us use our God-given gift of language to express exactly what we mean — instead of spicing up our conversation with idle words. ✨

¹ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, 68.

letters to the editor



I am thankful for the 'voice' of Hope International and you and God's work. I remember these in my prayers. *Our Firm Foundation* is filled with pertinent truths—present truth! It is always a great blessing! Jesus is coming so very, very soon. I think of the words of Jesus through Ellen White: "and the angel cried—get ready, get ready, get ready!"

MP, Oregon

Enclosed please find my check—for the wonderful magazine *Our Firm Foundation*. I enjoy reading every word. The more I read it, *Our Firm Foundation*, the more I see every word of the Lord finds its completion in action. Thank you.

AM, Texas

I think it is wonderful that you offer to send the magazine though a person cannot pay a subscription fee. I never knew of another magazine that did this. As you say "every issue is a help and encouragement." Thank You!

BU, North Carolina

The card reminding me about my *Our Firm Foundation* subscription came today. I appreciate your kindness to extend my subscription. Be assured you are in our daily prayers. Please remember us when you pray. Thank you.

HB, Alabama

Enclosed is my check for—. Please use half of this for subscription assistance and the rest for the Lord's work there. Each issue of your magazine gets better all the time, not to say that the previous ones weren't encouraging and inspiring. We don't know what the future holds but "we know who holds the future" and our eyes and our trust are on Him.

NN, California

Just want to thank you and let you know how much we appreciate *Our*

Firm Foundation. It's so good to be able to read a Seventh-day Adventist magazine that still keeps the "true faith." We use it where we have our weekly Bible Study with another couple, who are Seventh-day Adventists as we are.

Our family prays for all of you, you're all doing such important work for our Lord! And that work will soon be more difficult to accomplish because of the increasing evil in the world. May God bless you all!

BR, Wisconsin

Hope International, I enjoy your journals very much and pass them on to three other families.

ES, Alabama

We value the spiritual food you give us in *Our Firm Foundation*. God bless you in you ministry. Please use the enclosed donation where needed most.

KH, Nebraska

From Overseas:

Dear Hope International, I have written to you brethren thanking you for the parcel which you sent me on August 29th, 1999. I have never been given such a big gift before, no! not even my parents and my relatives. I know truly that a great reward awaits you people for the work which you are doing. I also thank Ron Spear for his book *Will the Real Seventh-day Adventist Please Stand Up*.

Never get tired brethren, but put everything in the hands of the Lord. I beg of you people that you help me with the Spirit of Prophecy books. Please, please! A lot of people including myself have little or minimum access to the Spirit of Prophecy books. Please send me as soon as possible, if possible, before December.

Brethren, I am praying for you that you may continue working for Christ with the same spirit of sacrifice. I pray that God may protect you from all the snares of Satan. The message which

our church has been given to preach in this remnant of time unfortunately has been watered down because our General Conference pastors who have been compromising with Rome. Well, brethren! Stand up for Jesus, and pray for me also that I might stand for the Lord also. Your Fellow Christian,

KLM, Zambia

Firstly, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to your organization for the books you sent me sometime ago by the grace of God. Let everyone who reads your books and magazines make new resolutions for an eternal life.

Since I began reading you books, I saw my life changing for the better. I became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when I was 12 years old. But I was not so sure of what I was doing as there had been always questions about the day of worship, that is, Saturday or Sunday. It was when I read the book, *Will The Real Seventh-day Adventist Please Stand Up*, by Ron Spear that I made up my mind and became a full member and I was baptized. I really thank God for that!

I handed out the magazines and pamphlets to other people who always commented much about their helpfulness and asking for more of these books. We circulate and exchange the few copies we have during our weekly meetings so that everyone gets the message. As God says in 2 Timothy 4:2, Preach the Word of God, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.

Thanks to God and all your members for the good work you are doing. May He please guide you throughout forever as that your ministry will prosper. Preach the Word of God so that all these who are doing wrong will change for a better future. Thank you very much.

May God be with you now and forevermore. Yours,

TK, Zimbabwe

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