

Our Firm Foundation

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

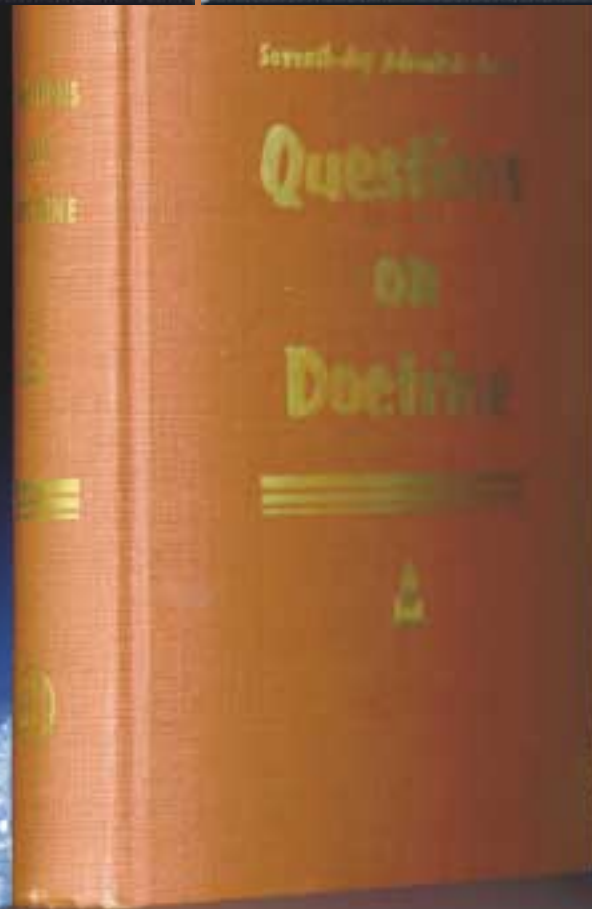
The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

Volume 16, Number 1

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The Division Prophecy

One Day Closer

As I sit in my study in the early morning, total darkness still hides the breaking of a new day. Gold and red are now mixed with the evergreen of pine and fir trees. The rain has fallen in the night. The clouds still hide the moon which will soon slide behind the mountain as the morning sun ushers in a beautiful autumn morning. Yes, we are one day nearer to the coming of our Lord.

The news of chaos in the Middle East is alarming. Leaders of the world continue to meet in their desperate and vain attempt to resolve the Palestinian and Israeli problem of Jerusalem and the sacred temple mount.

This great distress of nations, leaders, and people is one of the greatest signs of the times. Jesus foretold the present condition of the world when He said in Luke 21:25-26: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Yes, men's hearts are failing them for fear. When we see these things come to

pass, we can know that our Saviour—our King—is even at the door!

It is time now to look up, for we can be sure that we are the remnant church—the final generation—and that our "redemption draweth nigh." Verse 28. The day in which we live is a time to which this prophecy points. The distress of nations today is now on a scale which surpasses that of all times which the world has ever known. The burst of inventions and technology in our world today is phenomenal. Television, computers, and the Internet have shrunk the time of communication into seconds. We are living in the days of Daniel's prophecy—men are running to and fro and knowledge is increasing each perilous day. See Daniel 12:4. Men have rocketed to the moon and today even live in space. Immorality has surpassed the Sodomites of Lot's day. The "civilized" world in its madness revels in recreation and sports, while more than half of the people of this world suffer from hunger and disease.

Yes, distress, tension, and hatred are in the very air we breathe. They are testifying to the world and to the church this positive truth that we are about to "see the Son of man coming in the

clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30.

The question is, How many of us—God's remnant people—are preparing for that great moment? The character development we need is revealed in these inspired words of our prophet:

"Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of Heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 384 (emphasis in original).

How shall we stand in that great day? Let us now study and pray that our characters may be prepared, and that we may be found to be the "workmen approved by God." See 2 Timothy 2:15. Let us also look up, for our Lord and Saviour will soon leave the Most Holy Place. The clouds of glory will soon usher in our long-looked-for Redeemer. Praise God! ✠

Ron Spear, Executive Editor

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 to continue to be faithful to God and His cause.

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.
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The Division Prophecy

Lowell Scarborough

In the year 1896 Ellen White made a very sad prediction about a division that would come into our church. She said, “A new life is coming from Heaven and taking possession of all God’s people. But divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and tares grow up together for the harvest. . . . And all who are laborers together with God will contend most earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. [See Jude 3.] They will not be turned from the present message, which is already lightening the earth with its glory.”¹

The new life that is coming down from Heaven is, no doubt, the latter rain. This gives us a time frame as to when this division will take place among us. The faithful will contend for this special prophecy given by Ellen White in 1896 (in the era of our spiritual pioneers), and they will not be turned from it. Do we see any signs of these divisions in our church today? We are sorry to observe that we do see many divisions. We will take a look at one in particular:

In 1957 or 1958 a retired pastor was giving Bible studies to some of us in a home meeting. One night the lady of the house brought out a new book she had received, entitled, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (usually referred to as *Questions on Doctrine*, or *QOD*). She said, “I do not want this book, and I will give it to anyone who does want it.” As I understood, this lady had been a volunteer Bible worker for the conference in Southern California, and she was, therefore, very well

versed in the Scriptures and in the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. Her objection to the book was that it changed our long-held view on the nature of Christ. I took the book, and, after reading some parts on the subject of the nature of Christ, I was convinced that this book would bring a drastic division into our church—and it certainly has done so.

The writers of *Questions on Doctrine* compromised the message of Adventism that Christ as our Example took man’s fallen nature during His sojourn here on earth, changing it to the evangelical view that Christ took a sinless human nature—by which He could not be our Example.

This new view came about as a result of some of our leaders meeting with two prominent evangelical scholars who suspected us of being a cult. They had read in some of our published works that Christ took our fallen nature and, not understanding this correctly, they arrived at a false conclusion.

This article will take up only a few points regarding Christ’s nature as it is presented in the book *Questions on Doctrine*, beginning on pages 59–60 (emphasis in original):

“It could hardly be construed, however, from the record of either Isaiah or Matthew, that Jesus was diseased or that He experienced the frailties to which our fallen human nature is heir. But He did *bear* all this. Could it not be that He bore this *vicariously* also, just as He bore the sins of the whole world?”

“These weaknesses, frailties, infirmities, failings are things which we, with our sinful, fallen natures,

have to bear. To us they are natural, inherent, but when He bore them, He took them not as something innately His, but He bore them as our Substitute. He bore them in His perfect, sinless nature.”

In all these weaknesses the writer described, he included our sinful nature, and said, “He took them not as something innately His, but He bore them as our Substitute.” The writer here, in guarded words, implied that Christ did not actually take our sinful nature.

We read further: “Again we remark, Christ bore all this vicariously, just as vicariously He bore the iniquities of us all.

“It is in this sense that all should understand the writings of Ellen G. White when she refers occasionally to sinful, fallen, and deteriorated human nature.”

Does EGW Contradict Herself?

The writer gives several statements by Ellen White on Christ taking our sinful or fallen nature, and then continues, “All these are forceful, cogent statements, but surely no one would designedly attach a meaning to them which runs counter to what the same writer has given in other places in her works.” You noticed that the writer said Ellen White wrote statements in other places that ran counter to the ones that say Christ took our sinful nature. On page 383 of *QOD* the writer is implying that Christ is exempt from our fallen nature:

“Although born in the flesh, He [Christ] was nevertheless God, and

was exempt from the inherited passions and pollutions that corrupt the natural descendants of Adam.”

On pages 650–652 of *QOD* there are a number of statements that Ellen White has written which the authors of *QOD* believe run counter to Ellen White’s other statements that Christ took our fallen nature. At the heading of this section we read: “Took Sinless Human Nature.”

However, there is not one statement in this section, when honestly evaluated, that says Christ took a sinless human nature. The Spirit of Prophecy says hundreds of times that Christ took our sinful or fallen nature; *but never once has she said that Christ did not take our sinful nature.* The writers have built their case on false interpretation.

The “Baker Letter”

While Ellen White was in Australia, she wrote a letter to Elder Baker in Tasmania. We do not know what Brother Baker was preaching, but it seems that Ellen White was concerned that he would give the impression that Christ was on the brink of sinning. Some of that letter was used by the authors of *QOD* to build their false interpretation.

Dr. Ralph Larson and his wife Jeanne saw the fallacy that had come into our church through that book, and they took on the monumental task of researching our publications for the many statements concerning the fallen nature of Christ by Ellen White and many other writers from the period of 1852 to 1952. All the writers spoke with one voice for one hundred years, as Dr. Larson documented in his book entitled, *The Word Was Made Flesh*. This book is a treasure indeed!

In his book Dr. Larson lists ninety statements by Ellen White on the nature of Christ that were written *after* the Baker letter was written in 1895, and they are just as clear and positive that Christ took our sinful or fallen nature, as the ones written *before* the Baker letter. Brother Baker had been in the denominational work for a number of years, and certainly he must have known Ellen White’s position on the

nature of Christ. If he had understood the letter to say that Christ did not take our fallen nature, while she kept writing in our publications that He did take our fallen nature, He surely would have become a very confused man. Of course, Ellen White had not the slightest idea of telling him that Christ did not take our fallen nature.

What Did Ellen White Say?

Thus the entire subject as presented in *Questions on Doctrine* is not only a fallacy, but also a complete misinterpretation. How shall we give an answer to the position that *Questions on Doctrine* has posed on the nature of Christ? It seems best to give a sampling of Ellen White’s statements on Christ taking man’s fallen nature to see whether she meant for us to understand that

quainted by His own experience with the various temptations with which man would be beset, that He might know how to succor those who should be tempted. . . . Jesus also told them [the angels] that they would have a part to act, to be with Him and at different times strengthen Him; that He would take man’s fallen nature [*vicariously?*], and His strength would not be even equal with theirs.”²

Either the account given here of what Christ told the angels after the fall of Adam and Eve is all true, or none of it is true. This is a test statement—especially to those who have taken the position that Christ did not take our fallen nature. Ellen White’s account of her vision is simple and clear. Since Christ told the angels He would take man’s fallen nature, that should settle the

Jesus also told them [the angels] that they would have a part to act, to be with Him and at different times strengthen Him; that He would take man’s fallen nature, and His strength would not be even equal with theirs.

Christ took our fallen nature *vicariously*. The authors of *QOD* said that it is in this sense that we should understand her writings. Supposing this to be the case, the word *vicariously* will be inserted into each of Ellen White’s statements which mention Christ taking on man’s fallen nature.

As most readers know, Ellen White had many visions, and she drew on these visions in her writing. After Adam and Eve fell because of disobedience, God the Father and God the Son met together to finalize the plan of salvation. The angels were very anxious to know what would happen to Adam and Eve. After the Father and the Son had settled the plan, Jesus came out of the meeting and explained Their plan to the angels:

Statement 1. “He [Jesus] would leave all His glory in heaven, appear upon earth as a man, humble Himself as a man, become ac-

question on the subject for all who accept the prophetic gift to the remnant church as presented in Revelation 12:17.

As we continue, we will see that there was no other way for Jesus to carry out the plan of salvation, than to take man’s fallen nature.

When Jesus came into the world, He was filled with the Spirit without measure. See John 3:34. That was His sinless nature. But He clothed His divinity with humanity. His power had been laid aside, and He could do nothing of Himself.³

Statement 2. “He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature [*vicariously?*], that He might know how to succor those that are tempted.”⁴

Notice that Jesus took our sinful nature to be able to know how to help us in our temptations.

Statement 3. “Letters have been coming in to me, affirming that Christ could not have had the same

nature as man, for if He had, He would have fallen under similar temptations. If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our Example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our Helper."⁵

Christ can be our Example because He took our fallen nature. He was tempted like as we are so that He can be our Helper. Statement 3 tells us that if Christ did not take our fallen nature He could not be our Example. In that case, 1844 would have no significance. Christ needed to take our fallen nature to be our Example and Judge. Statement 4 tells us why 1844 would not be significant if Christ had a sinless human nature:

Statement 4. "The great work of redemption could be carried out only by the Redeemer taking the place of fallen Adam [*vicariously?*]." ⁶

weaknesses of the fallen race. . . . The great work of redemption could be carried out *only* by the Redeemer taking the place of fallen Adam."

When this great plan of the love and condescension of Christ was revealed, Ellen White became enraptured and continued, "What love! What amazing condescension! The King of glory proposed to humble Himself to fallen humanity! He would place His feet in Adam's steps. He would take man's fallen nature and engage to cope with the strong foe who triumphed over Adam."⁷

We found in the statement above that it was unacceptable with God the Father for His Son to take the sinless nature of Adam before the fall. The only plan that was acceptable to God the Father was for His Son to take the sinful nature of Adam after the Fall, as the Son had proposed it to Him. It could not be changed; there were no alternative choices. That is the reason why the great work of redemption could be

This, of course, is speaking of Christ in His *fallen* human nature. How do we know this?—The answer is simple. Since Christ suffered being tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted also, because He was made *in all things* like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. He had to understand by experience our fallen nature in order to be our merciful and faithful High Priest.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15.

The Ladder in the next statement represents Christ's incarnation:

Statement 5. "Christ is the Ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that Ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh [*vicariously?*]' (Romans 8:3), He lived a sinless life."⁸

Notice that Ellen White used Romans 8:3 to show that Jesus came all the way down to take sinful human flesh. Statement 5 means that if He did not take our sinful nature, we would have been lost. There would not have been a plan of salvation if Christ had taken our nature *vicariously*, and we would have been lost.

Statement 6. "Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh [*vicariously?*], by a pure and holy life to condemn sin in the flesh."⁹

Jesus had to take man's fallen nature and live a perfect life to condemn sin in the flesh. This involved the work of judgment. He had to prove that a person with a sinful nature (as we all have) can keep the law of God when he walks in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what Romans 8:3-4 is all about:

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God [the Father] sending his

The only plan that was acceptable to God the Father was for His Son to take the sinful nature of Adam after the Fall, as the Son had proposed it to Him.

In the *Review and Herald* article from which Statement 4 was quoted, we find a comment regarding the nature of Christ that is one of the deepest expressions of God's love and mercy that Ellen White ever wrote. Writing about what would be done after the fall of Adam and Eve, she said, "Christ's divine soul was exercised with pity that was infinite for ruined man. . . . He proposed the only means that could be acceptable with God [the Father], that would give man another trial. . . ." The following quotation will explain what the proposal to His Father was: "Christ consented to leave His honor, His kingly authority, His glory with the Father, and humble Himself to humanity. . . . Through His humiliation and poverty Christ would identify Himself with the

carried out only by the Redeemer taking the place of fallen Adam. Through Christ's incomprehensible love-gift for us, He became our Example. That will be to His glory for all eternity.

What were some of the things Ellen White had in mind when she said that the only way the plan of salvation could be carried out was for the Redeemer to take the fallen nature of Adam?

We are told in Hebrews 2:17-18: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

God could not have been vindicated before the universe had Christ not taken man’s fallen nature.

Statement 7. “The Majesty of heaven held not Himself aloof from degraded, sinful humanity.”¹⁰

Statement 8. “Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those He wished to save. . . . He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Him our sinful nature [*vicariously?*].”¹¹

There have been many billions of precious babies born into our world, all with a sinful nature, and, of course, not by any choice of their own. God in His mercy took all of that into account, and there was a precious Baby born in Bethlehem who took our fallen nature by *choice*. This will be the greatest love story in all eternity: to realize that He really did take our nature increases our love and appreciation for Him.

We are told that the 1888 message was a latter-rain message. It was to prepare God’s people for a life of victory over sin. The speakers A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner strongly emphasized that Christ took our sinful nature as our Example. Victorious living, and Christ taking our fallen nature as our Example, go together hand in glove.

Certainly it must be clear by now that when Ellen White says that Christ took our fallen nature, we are not to understand that she meant He took it vicariously. She meant that Christ actually took our fallen nature *exactly as she said it*.

Does It Matter What We Believe?

We understand that our colleges and seminaries are currently teaching the erroneous view of *Questions on Doctrine* to our students. This is frightening because of what it has already brought into our church and what the future holds for our

church. One deception is followed by another. Let us face it: this evangelical view was brought into our church by leaders in high places. It also continues to be promoted largely by our leaders in high places. That is our shame—to place such a fallacy alongside the pure message of Adventism.

While this is only part of the division that would come into our church, it is a big part. One can hardly mention the nature of Christ before a group of our church members for fear of offending someone. The view on the nature of Christ presented in *Questions on Doctrine* is so drastically unreal, with no substance to support it, that we

calling to advance in Christian growth than any previous church. It is, of course, our church that faces the close of human probation. If you will look again at *Selected Messages*, book 2, 114, you will see that the ones who receive the new life that will come down from Heaven (the latter rain) are made up of those who have stayed with the old message that God gave us—not the ones who have brought in the division.

Ellen White and several of our pioneers met together to establish our doctrines on solid rock. Sometimes they spent the entire night in studying the Scriptures, and in prayer. When they could not agree,

While this is only part of the division that would come into our church, it is a big part. One can hardly mention the nature of Christ before a group of our church members for fear of offending someone.

wonder how it could ever be taught in our schools and perpetuated in our churches.

In *Selected Messages*, book 1, 48, we read, “The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.” This view in *Questions on Doctrine* is a classic example of making the testimony of the Spirit of God of none effect. The statement says that it will be the very last deception of Satan. Brothers and sisters, God loves us all—whether we are right or wrong. However, if we take a false view on a major doctrine that we have had the light on for years, we could be lost.

“All who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days.”¹² To be ready for the seal of God, God’s people must settle into the truth intellectually and spiritually, so that they cannot be moved.¹³

Ellen White just may be the greatest prophet of all time. Certainly the remnant church has a higher

Ellen White would be given the answer from the Lord. God honored that kind of an approach with great blessings. We do not follow their findings blindly, but we find them to be in harmony with the Scriptures. That is how we know that God led them.

If we forget the way we were led of God in our past history and join in with the evangelicals to learn what message to give, we shall come to nought. God help us to stay with the doctrines that He has given to us! ❀

References:

- ¹ *Selected Messages*, book 2, 114.
- ² *Early Writings*, 150.
- ³ See *The Desire of Ages*, 336.
- ⁴ *Medical Ministry*, 181.
- ⁵ *Selected Messages*, book 1, 408.
- ⁶ *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874.
- ⁷ *Ibid.* (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)
- ⁸ *The Desire of Ages*, 311–312.
- ⁹ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, 395.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 346.
- ¹¹ *Signs of the Times*, July 30, 1902. See also *Review and Herald*, December 15, 1896; *ibid.*, August 22, 1907.
- ¹² *Selected Messages*, book 3, 84.
- ¹³ See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1161.

God's Judgment Upon the Midianites

Ellen G. White

Moses' work for Israel was almost done; yet one more act remained for the aged leader to perform, ere he should go to his long rest. "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites," was the divine command; "afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people." Numbers 31:2. This mandate was communicated to Israel, not as the word of Moses, but of Christ, their invisible Leader; and it was immediately obeyed. One thousand men were selected from each of the tribes of Israel, and sent out against the Midianites. In the battles which followed, that people were defeated, with great slaughter.

The men who promptly and speedily executed the divine judgments upon those heathen nations have been pronounced harsh and unmerciful in destroying so many human lives. But all who reason thus, fail to understand the character and dealings of God. In His infinite mercy, the Lord had long spared those idolatrous nations, giving them evidence upon evidence that He, the mighty Jehovah, was the God whom they should serve. He had commanded Moses not to make war upon Moab or Midian, for their cup of iniquity was not yet full. Additional evidence was to be given; clear and distinct light from the throne of God itself was to shine upon them.

When the king of Moab had called Balaam to pronounce a curse upon Israel, and thus accomplish their destruction, the goodness and mercy of God was strikingly displayed. That corrupt and hypocritical gain-seeker, whose heart longed to curse God's people for reward, was constrained to pronounce upon them the richest and most sublime blessings. The Moabites themselves could see that it was the power of God which controlled the avaricious prophet, and compelled him in the most exalted strains of Inspiration to proclaim Israel God's chosen, and His almighty power her



protection. Here the last ray of light shone upon a stiff-necked people who had set their wills in defiance to the will of God. When, at the suggestion of Balaam, the snare was laid for Israel, which resulted in the destruction of many thousands, then it was that the Midianites filled up the measure of their iniquities. Then their day of probation ended, the door of mercy was to them closed, and the mandate went forth from Him who can create and can destroy, "Vex the Midianites, and smite them: for they vex you with their wiles." Numbers 25:17-18.

Those who would complain of God, or question the wisdom and justice of His dealings with His creatures should realize their own incompetence, with their finite wisdom, to determine what conduct is befitting to the Judge of all the earth. They should make it their chief anxiety to so conduct themselves as not to become subjects of His wrath, and should leave the Lord to deal with the work of His hands according to His own wise purposes.

Moses had been filled with grief and indignation at the deceitful wiles by which Israel had been enticed to sin and thus bring upon themselves the wrath of God. In the command to make war upon the Midianites, Moses saw not only the justice of God in visiting His judgments upon the guilty, but His mercy in giving Israel the victory over a people who were seeking by every hellish art to accomplish their destruction. The Israelites were to engage in this warfare, not to gratify malice or revenge, but as God's instruments, to do His bidding, being influenced solely by zeal for the divine glory.

Illustrations: Bob Bresnahan

Doubting God's Benevolence

Men do not understand what they are doing, when they permit themselves even for a moment, to doubt the wisdom and benevolence of God—to regard as a species of cruelty the judgments visited upon the stubborn and rebellious. Few realize the malignity of sin. It is a deadly leprosy, contaminating all who are brought in contact with it. If men persist in showing contempt for divine authority, God, who created them, and whose property they are, has a perfect right to take from them the blessings which they have abused. God's name and authority as Ruler in the universe must be maintained.

When idolatry is rearing its proud head, when blasphemy and rebellion are strengthening, then God reproves the sins of the nations, and the manifestations of divine anger which they had provoked come upon the transgressors of His law. The Most High delivers His word of doom, and chooses the instruments to perform His will. These messengers of God are required to faithfully perform the work appointed them, however repugnant it may be to their natural feelings.

Sacred history records no instance in which these men were reprov'd for too great thoroughness and severity; but God has many times reprov'd His servants for lack of faithfulness in executing His judgments. In all this, God would teach us the lesson that in the future Judgment retribution will surely be visited upon "every soul of man that doeth evil" (Romans 2:9), according to the deeds done in the body. See 2 Corinthians 5:10.

God's method of dealing with sin is not in harmony with the views cherished by a large class who occupy a prominent position among the professed followers of Christ. Many of these men cherish sin, and laud the benevolence and longsuffering of God, and dwell upon the loving character of Jesus—all mercy, all tenderness—while they pass over the threatenings of God's

wrath against sin and sinners, and our Saviour's scathing denunciations of hypocrisy and self-deception. It is those who have not a keen sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin that are ready to question the justice of God in punishing with such severity the sins of the Amalekites, Canaanites, and Midianites. Those who love sin are unable to comprehend God's dealings with His subjects.

God's Call for Heroes

In our day, as in ancient times, there is disagreeable work to be done in reprov'ing sin. In this work, God uses men as His instruments—men of determined purpose, whom no threat or peril can intimidate, no hardship turn aside from the path of duty—men who will never forget their sacred commission as servants of the Most High. The Lord calls for

It is those who have not a keen sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin that are ready to question the justice of God in punishing with such severity the sins of the Amalekites, Canaanites, and Midianites.

men to act promptly, with the courage of heroes, and the firmness and faith of martyrs, to tear down the idolatrous images that have usurped His place in the minds of men, and meet the armed force of wrong on battlefields. But in all this there is no excuse for any to indulge in harshness or severity to gratify their own wrong feelings.

God wants men whom He can use to His own glory, either to bear reproof and execute justice, or, with a heart full of piety and benevolence, to carry light into darkened homes, to speak peace to the troubled soul, and point the sinner to the pardoning love of Christ. The great want of this age is men fitted to do God's will—men who will listen with praying hearts for God's words, and will hasten to obey His voice.

There are men full of zeal, who claim to be doing God's will, while in reality they are governed by

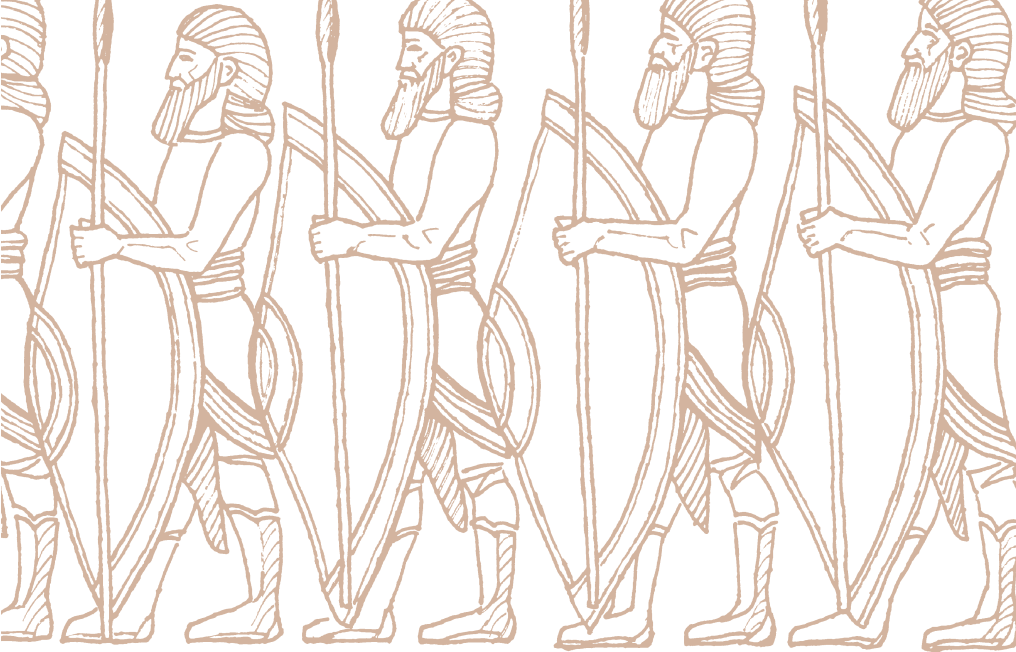
human impulse. They feel at liberty to question, criticize, and challenge everyone who does not act in harmony with their ideas. They make themselves offensive to God and to the people. They wound continually, and by their wrong course create in others a spirit of distrust and hatred for God, because He employs such men to do His work. But the Lord does not give these men the great work which they consider theirs. If He did, He would give them grace to perform it after Heaven's order, not their own. Those who are permitted to become coworkers with God, should ever cultivate the feeling that in every plan and work, they are doing the will of the Most High; and that in any and every emergency, God's Spirit, not man's, is to bear sway.

Balaam, having yielded himself to the control of covetousness, and

hardened his heart by persistent rebellion, had joined his fortunes with the Midianites, and he perished in the general slaughter. He had felt a presentiment that his own end was near when he exclaimed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Numbers 23:10. The fate of Balaam is similar to that of Judas, and their characters bear a marked resemblance to each other. Both had received great light and enjoyed special privileges; but a single cherished sin, like gangrene, poisoned the entire character, and drove them to perdition.

Dangerous Sympathy

While the victorious Israelites completely destroyed the armies of Midian, they spared all the women and children, and brought them into the camp as captives. When Moses ascertained this, he became alarmed



and indignant, and thus reproved the officers of the host: "Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD." Numbers 31:16. There had been a lack of thoroughness in executing the commands of God. The war against Midian had been a

none can prevail against the servants of the living God, except by tempting them to disobedience.

In the Light of the Cross

The offensive character of sin can be estimated only in the light of the cross. When men urge that God is too merciful to punish the transgressors of His law, let them look to Calvary; let them realize that it was

If man refuses to respond to the great sacrifice which has been made to ennoble and to save him, if he obstinately chooses the path of sin, will the great Judge of all the earth excuse the willful transgression of His holy law?

just retribution upon a guilty people, of whom the women had been the principal criminals. Had these idolatrous, licentious women been preserved as captives, their presence would have constantly endangered the morals of Israel. The sympathy which would spare these transgressors was contrary to the will of God.

There is a sympathy for sin and sinners that is dangerous to the prosperity of the church at the present day. You must have charity, is the cry. But that sentiment that would excuse wrong and shield the guilty, is not the charity of the Bible. The friendship of the wicked is more dangerous than their enmity; for

because Christ took upon Himself the guilt of the disobedient, and suffered in the sinners' stead, that the sword of justice was awakened against the Son of God. It was to save us from shame and everlasting contempt that He endured the scorn and mockery which the world heaped upon Him. It was our sins that caused the Saviour of the world such intense agony, pouring darkness into His soul, and extorting from His pale lips the anguished cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46.

He was numbered among the transgressors, He made His soul an offering for sin, that in His right-

eousness the believing, repenting sinner might stand justified before God. See Isaiah 53:12, 10-11.

After all this, if man refuses to respond to the great sacrifice which has been made to ennoble and to save him, if he obstinately chooses the path of sin, will the great Judge of all the earth excuse the willful transgression of His holy law? Surely, everything that is noble and generous in our natures must respond to such love as Jesus manifested in suffering for our sake. It was an unexampled humiliation for Him to take upon Himself the nature of fallen man, and sacrifice His life for a race of rebels; and the manner of His death makes that humiliation more apparent. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8.

Jesus was not insensible to ignominy. He felt the disgrace of sin as much more keenly than it is possible for man to feel it, as His divine and sinless nature was exalted above the nature of man. We should never entertain the thought that the Majesty of Heaven, so holy and undefiled, was not acutely sensitive to scorn and mockery, abuse and pain. He asks the murderous mob in Gethsemane, "Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves?" Mark 14:48. This shameful treatment Jesus keenly felt, yet for our sakes He endured the most ignominious and most painful death which it was possible for mortals to experience; a death which was appropriate for the basest of criminals was that which the Lord of Glory suffered to ransom guilty man.

Let none flatter themselves that they can continue in sin, and yet share in the great salvation which Christ has so dearly purchased. God is merciful and compassionate, but He is also just. Let the cross of Cavalry forever settle this matter. As surely as Christ, the Guiltless, suffered for the guilty, so surely will the wrath of God fall upon the heads of those who persist in their transgression of His law. ✠

Signs of the Times, January 6, 1881.



The Secret Key

Lisa L. Epperly

shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Verses 2-4.

Could anything be more plain? Jesus did not enjoy the scourgings. That crown of thorns really hurt. So

TEMPTATION! We all know – theoretically, at least – that we should resist it. But many times the devil wraps his ugly temptation in such a fascinating package that we do not even have the desire to resist it.

You have read the key to victory: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." James 4:7-8. But if you are anything like I am, you are weak and helpless and do not even *think* of submission when an attractive temptation comes along.

Then, too, we have trials. Most of us do not enjoy trials, even though we are promised "that the trying of your faith worketh patience." James 1:3. But when big sister teases, and little brother annoys, sometimes it is just too hard to endure!

Or is it? I believe the Bible gives us a secret key to resisting temptation and enduring trials. In the great faith chapter, Hebrews eleven, Paul talks about great heroes of the Bible. Eventually he stops listing names and begins to refer to "others." "Others," he wrote, "were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprison-

ment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Hebrews 11:35-37.

*God wants us to dig deep, to see the hidden treasures
He has put in His Word. What does it mean to resist
unto blood?*

Did you notice that Paul listed temptation along with all those other horrible trials? Why?—I believe the reason is that we often give in to temptation too easily. Do you think those poor tortured, souls were tempted to deny their Lord to save a little pain?—Of course they were. But most did not give in. How did they do it?

The key is in the next chapter of Hebrews—it is short and very simple: "Looking unto Jesus." Hebrews 12:2. I fear many of us do far too little of this. Let us look unto Jesus, for in looking we will find the ultimate Source of victory over temptation:

"Looking unto Jesus . . . who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the

did the nails. He did not relish the idea of hanging naked before the world. But He *endured*. Why?—"For the joy that was set before him." We must keep in mind the joy that is set before us. It can give us strength to endure!

But we have only touched the surface. God wants us to dig deep, to see the hidden treasures He has put in His Word. What does it mean to *resist unto blood*? Think about it: By the time Jesus was scourged, He was no longer resisting—He had fully submitted Himself as the Lamb of God long before then.

We must go back to Gethsemane, and there "consider him." Paul said that Jesus "endured the cross." But the cross is more than just two

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The Christian's Rule of Life

How to mark your Bible and know God's Word better

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 *CR*, which represent "*The Christian's Rule of Life*."
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: *The Christian's Rule of Life, 1CR: James 2:8–12*.
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 CR*."

1CR: James 2:8–12.

Note four points in this Scripture:

1. The law that James is talking about is the Ten Commandments, because in verse 11 he cites the seventh and sixth commandments respectively.

2. This Scripture shows that the Ten Commandments were not abolished at the cross, but were still a binding code on all people when the book of James was written in A.D. 60. Verses 9 and 11 declare that any who commit sin, or disobey any one of the Ten Commandments, are transgressors of the law; hence, the law of the Ten Commandments could not have been abolished at the cross.

3. If the fourth of the Ten, which commands the keeping of the seventh day, were not binding on Christians, that would be one point out of the Ten in which a person could go contrary to them and not be guilty of sin. However, verse 10 shows that he who disobeys any one of the Ten is guilty of sin; therefore, every one of them, the fourth included, is binding upon all people. God requires everyone to keep the seventh day holy. To break even one commandment is to manifest rebellion toward God.

4. The keeping of the Ten Commandments is an expression of love to God and love to our neighbor. See John 14:15; Romans 13:10.

2CR: 1 John 3:4.

The transgression of any one of the Ten Commandments is sin.

3CR: Romans 4:15.

Where there is no law, there is no transgression. Hence, the Ten Commandments, the transgression of which is sin, are binding as long as sin exists.

4CR: Psalms 111:7–8.

These Ten will stand unchanged in this sinful world just as God spoke them.

5CR: Psalm 89:34.

The Ten Commandments, recorded in Exodus 20:3–17, are the only part of the Bible that God spoke with His own voice to all His people and wrote with His own finger in stone. God will never change any of the Ten. Their exact wording, just as they came from His lips, will ever remain binding in this sinful world—and their principles will stand throughout eternity. For this reason, the seventh day is still the Lord's Sabbath. The Ten Commandments forbid idolatry, image worship, swearing, Sabbathbreaking, dishonoring one's parents, hatred, murder, adultery, theft, dishonesty, lying, and coveting. They teach us to worship God only, to worship God directly and spiritually, to keep the Lord's day, to be reverent, to honor our parents, to be kind, pure, honest, truthful, and content. Such duties are binding forever on all people; therefore, the Ten Commandments are still binding on all people. However, the ceremonial observances—ceremonial feast sabbath days, and typical ordinances of the Mosaic law—were abolished at the

cross (see Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14–17), but the Ten Commandments were just as binding after Jesus died as they were before. The apostles refer to the Ten Commandments as being binding upon all Christians. See Ephesians 6:2; Romans 7:7; 13:8–10; James 2:10–11; 1 John 3:4.

6CR: Romans 6:14–15.

Paul declares that Christians have no right to commit sin, though they are not under the law, but under grace. This certainly does not give anyone the “right” to transgress any of the Ten Commandments. Being under grace, we are no more excused from keeping the seventh day of the fourth commandment than we are excused from being honest and truthful, as required by the eighth and ninth commands. When we sin, we cease being under grace. Only humble confession and repentance (turning from sin) before God through faith in Christ’s atonement, can again place us under Christ’s blood-bought grace.

7CR: Romans 3:31.

Having faith in Jesus Christ does not make void any of the Ten Commandments. Rather, faith connects us to Christ’s mediated, empowering grace so that we can be victorious over sin. See 2 Timothy 2:1; Romans 5:2, 20–21; Hebrews 4:16.

8CR: Revelation 14:12.

Having the faith of Jesus and keeping the commandments go together. Commandment keeping requires faith to succeed. Our victory over sinning through the grace of Christ is also Christ’s victory in the great controversy with Satan. Therefore, the one that we show allegiance to by our obedience is our master. See Romans 6:16.

9CR: Hebrews 8:8–10.

The same Ten Commandments that were written on stone under the old covenant, are written on the Christian’s heart under the new covenant. See Jeremiah 31:31–34.

Therefore, they are binding under the new covenant. The New Testament shows that Jesus spoke the Ten Commandments at Sinai. Compare Nehemiah 9:12–15 with 1 Corinthians 10:4. Thus, they are the commandments of Jesus as well as of the Father. See John 10:30; 14:24, 10. Hence, obeying Jesus Christ includes keeping all of the Ten Commandments, since He taught all of them. This obedience is intended to be a blessing and a delight! See Psalm 119:24, 47, 92, 127.

10CR: Hebrews 5:9.

We must obey Jesus Christ if we are ever to be saved and to dwell in heaven. The word translated “author” in the KJV literally means “cause” or “source.”

11CR: Matthew 19:16–17.

Obedience to the Ten Commandments is necessary for eternal life. See also Revelation 22:14, KJV. ✠

Adapted by Alan F. Esselbach from *Helps to Bible Study*, by J.L. Schuler.

The Secret Key

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beams of wood. It is also a symbol of self-denial.¹ We must understand the nature of the struggle that Jesus faced in Gethsemane.

He had two choices: He could go back to heaven, letting the earth and its inhabitants perish, or He could take their sins—our sins—and endure unimaginable shame and torture and the feeling of separation from His Father. What a fearful decision! To Jesus, sin was the most awful, revolting thing in the universe. Yet He not only had to bear it, He had to *become* it: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. “The sense of the withdrawal of His Father’s love pressed from His anguished soul these mournful words: ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.’ Matthew 26:38.”² He knew by heart the verse in Isaiah that

says, “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” Isaiah 59:2. He felt that if He became sin, He would be separated from His Father forever. And He could not bear that. “It was a sense of His Father’s frown, in consequence of sin, which rent His heart with such piercing agony and forced from His brow great drops of blood.”³

But He could not bear to see you and me hopelessly perish in our sins, either. He had to make a choice. Is it any wonder that He sweat blood? Is it any wonder that the agony He endured made His face unrecognizable to His disciples? Is it any wonder that the struggle lasted for hours? He could have left us all to perish and gone back to His Father, but He did not. He “resisted unto blood.”

After seeing that, how can we

give in so easily to temptation? Who among us have ever agonized over a temptation so hard that we sweat blood? No one else will ever have to face the intensity of resistance that Christ did.

So why do we fail? No temptation will ever be too strong for us; God will make a way for us to escape.

So next time you are faced with an “overwhelming” temptation, remember Jesus. Remember His prayer: “Not my will, but thine, be done.” Luke 22:42. ✠

Lisa Epperly works for Hope International’s Copy Editing Department. She is twenty years old and wrote this article just prior to coming to work at Hope.

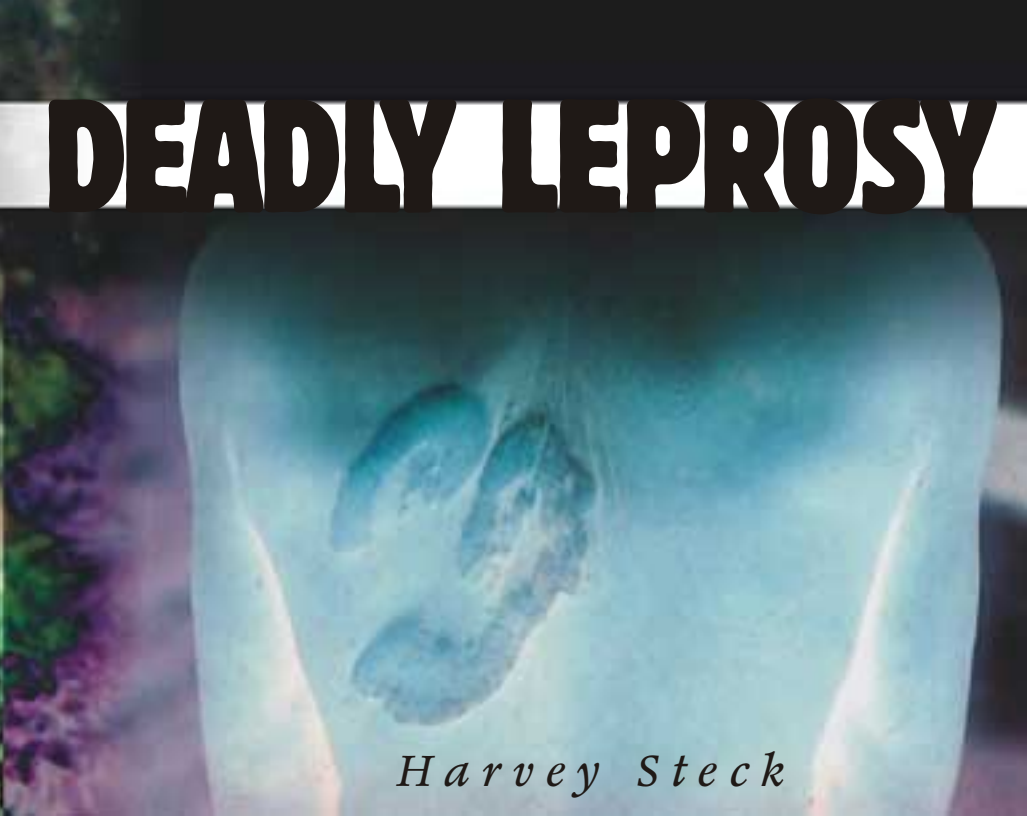
References:

¹ See *Strong’s Concordance*, N.T. #4716.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 206.

³ *Ibid.*, 204.

DEADLY LEPROSY



Harvey Steck

Is leprosy a thing of the past? According to one source, the World Health Organization estimates that “at present the global prevalence of patients with severe disabilities due to leprosy ranges between 1.3 and 1.5 million.”¹ They note that most cases of leprosy are found in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with over 90% found in a few tropical or subtropical countries, including India, Madagascar, Bangladesh, Nepal, Nigeria, and perhaps two or three others.²

What would it be like to have leprosy?

“Its main targets are the skin and nerves, though other organs may be involved as well. Especially the hands, the feet, the face, and the eyes can be affected. Because the nerves are attacked, the patients may be unable to feel when they get injured or burn themselves.”³

“True leprosy is a fearful thing, and in its advanced stages presents a loathsome sight. The nose, fingers, and toes atrophy [waste away] and drop off, the eyelids disappear, and the sight vanishes, and the sufferer takes on a most dreadful and pathetic appearance. The voice deteriorates and disappears; the breath becomes most foul; the joints

are often dislocated or engulfed by the tubercles [nodules/swollen areas] associated with the disease; and patches of gray, necrotic [dead] flesh appear about the body. The hair, nails, teeth, tongue, and palate are often consumed.”⁴

God Tells How to Deal With Leprosy

Because the results of this disease are so fearful, do you suppose God gave Israel any special instructions concerning it?—Yes, He did. In chapters 13 and 14 of Leviticus, God instructed the priests (who were also the people’s physicians) in the following: how to diagnose leprosy, what someone was to do if he had leprosy, and how the priests should deal with someone who claimed to be cured of leprosy.

We read in Leviticus 13:45–46: “And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.”

Were important people exempt from the laws about leprosy? You remember the story in Numbers 12:13–15, when Miriam spoke against her brother Moses—the leader of Israel chosen by God. Miriam was smitten with leprosy, and Moses prayed for her. God answered Moses’ prayer and healed her, but because her sin was so grievous she still was banished from the camp for seven days.

2 Chronicles 26:20–21 tells us what happened to King Uzziah when he insisted on entering the holy place to burn incense upon the altar of incense: “And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence: yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several [isolated] house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.”

Jesus Heals Leprosy

Jesus came to show that He is the Great Physician who has power

over all diseases—even the dreaded leprosy: “When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.” Matthew 8:1–4.

Picture this miracle as you read: “Of all diseases known in the East the leprosy was most dreaded. Its incurable and contagious character, and its horrible effect upon its victims, filled the bravest with fear. Among the Jews it was regarded as a judgment on account of sin, and hence was called ‘the stroke,’ ‘the finger of God.’ Deep-rooted, ineradicable, deadly, it was looked upon as a symbol of sin. . . .

“In the region of Christ’s ministry, there were many of these sufferers, and the news of His work reached them, kindling a gleam of hope. But since the days of Elisha the prophet, such a thing had never been known as the cleansing of one upon whom this disease had fastened. They dared not expect Jesus to do for them what He had never done for any man. There was one, however, in whose heart faith began to spring up. Yet the man knew not how to reach Jesus. Debarred as he was from contact with his fellow men, how could he present himself to the Healer? And he questioned if Christ would heal *him*. Would He stoop to notice one believed to be suffering under the judgment of God? Would He not, like the Pharisees, and even the physicians, pronounce a curse upon him, and warn him to flee from the haunts of men? He thought of all that had been told him of Jesus. Not one who had sought His help had been turned away. The wretched man determined to find the Saviour. Though shut out from the cities, it might be that he could cross His path in some byway along

the mountain roads, or find Him as He was teaching outside the towns. The difficulties were great, but this was his only hope.

“The leper is guided to the Saviour. Jesus is teaching beside the lake, and the people are gathered about Him. Standing afar off, the leper catches a few words from the Saviour’s lips. He sees Him laying His hands upon the sick. He sees the lame, the blind, the paralytic, and those dying of various maladies rise up in health, praising God for their deliverance. Faith strengthens in his heart. He draws nearer and yet nearer to the gathered throng. The restrictions laid upon him, the

upon the skin of a healthy child, took its place.”⁵

Spiritual Lessons

There are powerful spiritual lessons to be learned from this miracle of Christ’s:

“The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin. The man who came to Jesus was ‘full of leprosy.’ Its deadly poison permeated his whole body. The disciples sought to prevent their Master from touching him; for he who touched a leper became himself unclean. But in laying His hand upon the leper,

Jesus came to show that He is the Great Physician who has power over all diseases—even the dreaded leprosy.

safety of the people, and the fear with which all men regard him are forgotten. He thinks only of the blessed hope of healing.

“He is a loathsome spectacle. The disease has made frightful inroads, and his decaying body is horrible to look upon. At sight of him the people fall back in terror. They crowd upon one another in their eagerness to escape from contact with him. Some try to prevent him from approaching Jesus, but in vain. He neither sees nor hears them. Their expressions of loathing are lost upon him. He sees only the Son of God. He hears only the voice that speaks life to the dying. Pressing to Jesus, he casts himself at His feet with the cry, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make *me* clean.’

“Jesus replied, ‘I will; be thou made clean’ (Matthew 8:3, RV), and laid His hand upon him.

“Immediately a change passed over the leper. His flesh became healthy, the nerves sensitive, the muscles firm. The rough, scaly surface peculiar to leprosy disappeared, and a soft glow, like that

Jesus received no defilement. His touch imparted life-giving power. The leprosy was cleansed. Thus it is with the leprosy of sin—deep-rooted, deadly, and impossible to be cleansed by human power. ‘The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.’ Isaiah 1:5–6. But Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives no pollution. His presence has healing virtue for the sinner. Whoever will fall at His feet, saying in faith, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,’ shall hear the answer, ‘I will; be thou made clean.’ Matthew 8:2–3, RV.

“In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy, no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from

sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life.”⁶

Two Solutions for Leprosy

Two powers in this world are offering a solution for spiritual leprosy. Each of these two powers presents a message that claims to be the gospel. Each of these messages offers a solution to the pain that we should feel from our rotting flesh—the pain of sin.

Satan tries to convince us that spiritual leprosy is *incurable*—but not deadly. He says that we might as well accept it, since there is no cure—so just live as you please. Even after we find a cure, Satan insinuates to us that there is no way to avoid catching the disease again, so why bother going to all the trouble of trying to cure it anyway? Just as physical leprosy deadens the

we have the petitions that we desired of him.” 1 John 5:14–15. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

Christ has a therapeutic program that will help us gain full recovery from spiritual leprosy and keep us from catching it again: “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6. Christ “is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” Jude 24.

Christ offers the Holy Spirit to each one of us to make our senses—our conscience—alive again!

Which gospel have you accepted?
You can take the anesthesia that

specific sins that God has pointed out to help us spot spiritual leprosy in our lives:

Selfishness—“True conversion is a change from selfishness to sanctified affection for God and for one another. Will Seventh-day Adventists now make a thorough reformation, that their sin-stained souls may be cleansed from the leprosy of selfishness?”⁸

Strife and Dissension—“Unity is the strength of the church. Satan knows this, and he employs his whole force to bring in dissension. He desires to see a lack of harmony among the members of the church of God. Greater attention should be given to the subject of unity. What is the recipe for the cure of the leprosy of strife and dissension?—Obedience to the commandments of God.”⁹

Unbelief—“The presence of Christ, manifest among us, would cure the leprosy of unbelief that has made our service so weak and inefficient. We need the breath of the divine life breathed into us. We are to be channels through which the Lord can send light and grace to the world. Backsliders are to be reclaimed. We are to put away our sins, by confession and repentance humbling our proud hearts before God. Floods of spiritual power are to be poured forth upon those prepared to receive it.”¹⁰

Parental Neglect—“Parents are responsible for the work coming from their hands. They should have wisdom and firmness to do their work faithfully and in the right spirit. They are to train their children for usefulness by developing their God-given talents. A failure to do this should not be winked at, but should be made a matter of church discipline, for it will bring the curse of God on the parents and a reproach and grievous trials and difficulties on the church. A moral leprosy that is contagious, polluting the bodies and souls of the youth, often results from a failure to discipline and restrain the young; and it is time that something was done to check its ravages.”¹¹

Which gospel have you accepted? You can take the anesthesia that Satan claims will deaden the pain, or you can take the divine remedy that Christ offers.

nerve endings, so Satan’s solution for the pain resulting from sin is to administer anesthesia to keep our consciences dead. If we believe Satan, any suggestion that we have leprosy might seem rather annoying. Since we are not feeling any pain, we may rationalize that maybe other people are just trying to cause us trouble.

Christ tells us that our leprosy—sin—is a *curable* disease, through the power of His blood. Christ offers relief from the pain of sin through forgiveness and cleansing. It is God’s will that we should be delivered from our sins: “[Christ] gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” Galatians 1:4. “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that

Satan claims will deaden the pain, or you can take the *divine remedy* that Christ offers. Have you found the Great Physician? Are you taking His medicine?

How to Recognize Leprosy

Friends, we have been born into a world full of leprosy. Do *you* have leprosy? Do I? Could it be that we have lost our spiritual senses, that our ability to feel the pain that results from sin has been deadened? What does God say in Revelation 3:17 about His last-day church? “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. . . .”⁷

Can you recognize leprosy? We noticed in what we read above from *The Desire of Ages* that leprosy is a symbol of sin. Can you recognize it in your own life? Here are some

Shun Like Leprosy

There are a number of things that the Lord tells us we should shun, or avoid, like leprosy:

Impure Publications— “Parents should guard their children and teach them to cultivate a pure imagination and to shun, as they would a leper, the lovesick pen pictures presented in newspapers. Let publications upon moral and religious subjects be found on your tables and in your libraries, that your children may cultivate a taste for elevated reading.”¹²

Does not this counsel also include videos, the Internet, and all other kinds of entertainment?

Evil Insinuations and Gossip— “Closely allied to gossip is the covert insinuation, the sly innuendo, by which the unclean in heart seek to insinuate the evil they dare not openly express. Every approach to these practices the youth should be taught to shun as they would shun the leprosy.”¹³

All Deception— “Brother G might have united his efforts with those of the physicians at the sanitarium, but he could not harmonize with them. . . . There has been a disposition on his part to deceive, to prevaricate. This will destroy the usefulness of anyone’s life, and would certainly close to him the doors of the ministry. The strictest veracity should be cultivated and all deception shunned as one would shun the leprosy.”¹⁴

Institutional Debt— “As church schools are established, the people of God will find it a valuable education for themselves to learn how to conduct the school on a basis of financial success. . . . We should shun debt as we should shun the leprosy.”¹⁵

Do You Want to Be Healed?

Sin (leprosy) is contagious. “In how short a time from the first sin of Adam did sin increase and spread like the leprosy. It is the nature of sin to increase. From generation to generation sin has spread like a contagious disease.”¹⁶ Today we are

so accustomed to sin that we do not abhor it. Rather than seeking true repentance, we carelessly sin and then think we can claim Christ’s forgiveness.

Do we desire with *all our hearts* to be cured of our spiritual leprosy, or are we frustrating God and His angels by our indifference? “This grand and saving truth is oft repeated in the hearing of believers and unbelievers, and yet it is with amazement that angels beheld the indifference of men to whom these truths mean so much. How little is evidenced that the church feels the force of the wonderful plan of

‘Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ [John 1:29]. In the wilderness, when the Lord permitted poisonous serpents to sting the rebellious Israelites, Moses was directed to lift up a brazen serpent, and bid all the wounded look to it and live. But many saw no help in this Heaven-appointed remedy. The dead and dying were all around them, and they knew that their fate was certain; but they would lament their wounds, their pains, their sure death, until their strength was gone, and their eyes were glazed, when they might have had instant healing.”¹⁹

Perhaps we do not find ourselves recoiling from sin as we would from leprosy. Is it because sin has grown too familiar to us?

redemption. How few make this truth, that only through faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ there is forgiveness of the sins that cling to human beings like the foul leprosy, a living reality.”¹⁷

Perhaps we do not find ourselves recoiling from sin as we would from leprosy. Is it because sin has grown too familiar to us? Could it be that we are not keeping fresh in our minds the price that the Son of God paid to redeem us? I believe this is one of the great reasons we need to spend time each day contemplating the life of Christ—especially the closing scenes.¹⁸

I challenge each reader to prayerfully study Isaiah, chapters 1 through 5. These chapters are addressed to God’s professed people. Were they seeking healing from their spiritual leprosy? Are we any different today?

Praise God, there is a remedy for our leprosy! “We are wounded, polluted with sin; what shall we do to be healed from its leprosy? As far as it is in your power to do so, cleanse the soul-temple of every defilement, and then look to the

Now is the time for us to put away the sins among us. It is time to carefully study the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy so that we can recognize any forms of leprosy that we are cherishing. *Today*, while probation still lingers, *let us ask Christ to cleanse our hearts and fill us with the Holy Spirit*. By His grace let us choose to get all sin—all leprosy—out of our lives. ✠

References:

- ¹<http://infolep.antenna.nl/leprosy/disabilities.html>.
- ² See <http://infolep.antenna.nl/leprosy/howbig.html>.
- ³<http://infolep.antenna.nl/leprosy/whatis.html>.
- ⁴ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, 648.
- ⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, 262–263.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 266.
- ⁷ All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.
- ⁸ *Selected Messages*, book 1, 115.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, book 2, 159.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 46.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 327–328.
- ¹² *The Adventist Home*, 415–416.
- ¹³ *Education*, 236.
- ¹⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 437–438.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 217.
- ¹⁶ *Signs of the Times*, December 20, 1877.
- ¹⁷ *Selected Messages*, book 1, 107.
- ¹⁸ See *The Desire of Ages*, 83.
- ¹⁹ *Review and Herald*, July 1, 1884.

Dominus Iesus:

Vatican Retrenchment



The following material is condensed with permission from Samuele Bacchiocchi's email newsletter entitled *Endtime Issues*, Number 54.

The Vatican Declaration *Dominus Iesus* ["Lord Jesus"], released on Tuesday, September 5, 2000, reaffirms the traditional Catholic view of salvation expressed by Pope Boniface VIII in his Bull, "Unam Sanctam" (A.D. 1302): "There is one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that outside this Church there is neither salvation nor remission of sins."

This view was substantially modified at the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) which formulated the concept, especially in the Constitution of the Church, that salvation is found not only inside the Catholic Church but also outside its fold, by all who live according to their conscience. This broader view of various avenues to

salvation fostered a policy of benign tolerance toward non-Catholics. Protestants, for example, were rehabilitated from heretics, to "separate brethren," and to brothers and sisters in Christ. Similarly, members of world religions are now treated with openness and respect.

In the thinking of Vatican conservatives, the policy of benign tolerance toward non-Catholics, inaugurated by Vatican II, may have gone too far. It may have weakened the alleged unicity and primacy of the Catholic Church. This concern is expressed in an official four-page "note" by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the powerful Prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The "Note," approved by Pope John Paul II on June 9, explains that "when the expression 'sister churches' is used in the proper sense, the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Universal

Church is not [meant to be] sister but 'mother' of all particular churches. This is not merely a question of terminology, but above all of respecting a basic truth of the Catholic faith: that of the unicity of the Church of Jesus Christ. In fact, there is a single Church."

In other words, only one true church possesses the means of salvation, and that church is the Roman Catholic Church. Any salvation obtainable through other churches, ultimately derives from "the fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church."

This fundamental truth is reiterated more fully in the pages of the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, which is largely a reprimand to liberal Catholic theologians who "have argued that all religions may be equally valid ways of salvation." The Declaration is concerned about "the rapid spread of the relativistic and pluralistic mentality" among liberal Catholic theologians, who believe that "one religion is as good as another." To remedy this problem, the Declaration reiterates that the "Catholic faithful are required to profess that there is an historic continuity – rooted in the apostolic succession – between the Church founded by Christ and the Catholic Church. . . . There exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him." (All emphasis in original unless otherwise noted.)

The Declaration makes a distinction between the Orthodox churches which retain "apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist," and the Protestant "ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery." The former are viewed as part of "the Church of Christ" because of their close bonds with the Catholic Church, while the latter "are not Churches in the proper sense; however, those who are baptized in these communities are, by Baptism, incorporated in Christ and thus are in a certain commun-



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ion, albeit imperfect, with the Church.”

Both documents pointedly avoid using the word “church” when referring to Protestants, adopting instead the elusive term “ecclesial communities.” These Protestant communities may have elements of truth, but, according to the Declaration, “they derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church.”

What all of this means is that the churches born of the Protestant Reformation are reduced by the Vatican Declaration *Dominus Iesus* to a lower level, being excluded from the list of “sister churches.”

Evaluation of *Dominus Iesus*

The absolutistic Vatican Declaration that salvation for any person is ultimately possible only through the channels of grace entrusted to the Catholic Church, stands in stark contrast with the interfaith dialogue fostered by Vatican II and the ceaseless efforts of Pope John Paul II to become the undisputed spiritual leader of mankind by reaching out to people of all faiths.

One wonders, What has caused this Vatican retrenchment? The reason for the Vatican retrenchment is the concern, mentioned earlier, that the policy of benign tolerance, inaugurated by Vatican II, may have gone too far. It has encouraged the spread of “religious relativism” and “the mentality of indifferentism [that] leads to the belief that one religion is as good as another.”

It is evident that the Vatican is concerned about the spread of theological relativism and pluralism which is weakening the alleged unicity and primacy of the Catholic Church. To counteract this threat, *Dominus Iesus* reiterates in a succinct but comprehensive way the theological foundation of the Catholic claim to possess the sole means of salvation.

The document is well-structured with an introduction, six parts, and

a conclusion. The introduction states the problem that motivated the Declaration: “The [Catholic] Church’s constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only *de facto* but also *de iure* (or *in principle*).” The result is that “the universal salvific mediation of the [Catholic] Church” is weakened and obscured.

To counteract the “relativistic mentality, which is becoming ever more common,” the first three parts of the Declaration reassert the fullness of the revelation of Jesus Christ and the unicity of the salvific mystery of Jesus Christ. “It must therefore be firmly believed as a truth of Catholic faith that the universal salvific will of the One and Triune God is offered and accomplished once and for all in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.”

Evangelical Christians reading the first three parts of the document can find themselves in full agreement with the emphasis on the unique revelation and salvation provided by Jesus Christ. After all, this is a fundamental Biblical concept. However, most readers may miss the reason for emphasizing the unique salvific role of Christ, which becomes apparent in the next three sections. The latter explain that the salvific mystery of Christ becomes a reality for the believer only through the Catholic Church and her sacraments.

The Declaration states: “Christ continues his presence and his work of salvation in the Church and by means of the Church.” By “the Church” is meant “the Catholic Church,” and not Christian churches in general. This is clearly stated in *Dominus Iesus*: “There exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him.”

By linking the saving work of Christ with the Catholic Church, making the latter the sole channel for dispensing “Christ’s salvific mystery,” the Declaration makes salvation a monopoly of the Catholic Church. This means that the Catholic Church herself is a “sacrament,” that is, a channel of grace to the world. “The Church is a ‘sacrament.’ . . . She is therefore the sign and instrument of the kingdom.”

Such a preposterous, presumptuous, and exclusive claim is based on the unfounded assumption that the church in the New Testament is a visible, hierarchical organization, which was originally established by Christ Himself, when He made Peter the foundation rock of the Church. See Matthew 16:18. This is known as the “Petrine Theory,” according to which Christ entrusted to Peter the government of His church.

Petrine Theory. For the sake of brevity I will limit my comments to the pivotal text of Matthew 16:18 used to prove the Petrine theory. Christ tells Peter: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the power of death shall not prevail against it.” The question is, Who is the “rock” upon which Christ built His church? Obviously for Catholics, the “rock” is Peter as the foundation stone upon which Christ built His church. They point out that the play on words “You are Petros and on this Petra” shows that there is an unmistakable connection between the two. Thus, Peter is the Petra upon which Christ has built His Church.

However, when Jesus spoke about building His church, He meant, not the establishment of a hierarchical religious organization, but the building up of a community of believers who by faith would accept Him and confess Him before the world. In this context, Peter, by being the first person to confess and accept Jesus as “Christ,” which means “Messiah,” became the first living stone of the spiritual edifice

consisting of a community of believers. The idea of Peter being the foundation of the church as a hierarchical organization identified with the Catholic Church, is foreign to the text and to the teachings of the New Testament.

Apostolic Succession. A fatal blow to the Catholic Petrine claim is the lack of any New Testament support for the primacy of Peter in the Apostolic Church. If, according to the Catholic claim, Christ appointed Peter as His vicar to govern the church, then we would expect Peter to function as the leader of the Apostolic Church. But this is hardly the case.

For example, there are no indications that Peter ever served as the presiding officer of the Jerusalem Church. At the Jerusalem Council, it was James, not Peter, who presided in the deliberations. See Acts 15:13.

Furthermore, the ultimate authority of the Jerusalem Church resided, not on Peter, but on the apostles. For example, it was "the apostles" who sent Peter to Samaria (see Acts 8:14) to check on the new Christian communities. It was "the apostles and the elders" who sent Judas and Silas to Antioch. See Acts 15:22-27.

Had Peter been appointed by Christ to serve as the head of the Church, he would have played a significant role in the decisions mentioned above. There are no indications that Paul viewed Peter as the leader of the church. We are told that when Peter went to Antioch, Paul "opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned." See Galatians 2:11. Paul's action hardly suggests that Peter was recognized and respected as the infallible head of the church.

Furthermore, Paul refers to the "pillars" of the Apostolic Church as being "James, Cephas, and John." See verse 9. The fact that "James," the Lord's brother, is mentioned first, indicates that James, rather than Peter, served as the leader of the church. The fact is that Peter is never seen in the NT as the sole leader of the Apostolic Church.

The notion that Christ invested Peter with the authority to govern

the church and that such an authority has been transmitted in an unbroken succession to his successor, is a pure Catholic fabrication devoid of Biblical support.

Anyone familiar with the history of the Papacy knows how difficult it is even for the Catholic Church to prove the unbroken succession from Peter to the present Pope. There have been times when the Papacy was in the hands of several corrupt popes, who fought among themselves for the Papal throne. For example, in 1045, Pope Benedict IX was driven out of Rome by the people because of his unworthiness, and Silvester II was placed on the Papal throne. Later Benedict IX returned and sold the Papal throne to a man who became Gregory VI.

During the course of events Benedict refused to lay down his papal claims, so that there were three popes claiming to be the rightful pope. To resolve the problem, the German Emperor Henry II called a synod at Sutri in A.D. 1046, which deposed all three popes and elected Clement II instead. One wonders, which of the three deposed popes fits into the apostolic succession? It is evident that there are some broken links in the chain of the apostolic succession.

The Eucharist. The Catholic claim to possess the sole means of salvation rests not only on the alleged apostolic succession, but also on the Catholic view of the Eucharist as the reenactment of Christ's atoning sacrifice. In fact, the "apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist" are mentioned together several times in the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, because they are the two pillars of the Catholic claim to be the only true church which has the power to dispense salvation.

Space will not allow us [here] . . . to expose the fallacies of the Catholic view of the Lord's Supper, known as transubstantiation. The absurd claim that the priest has the power to transform the bread and wine into the physical and historical body of Jesus, and to offer it to the believers by means of a wafer, makes the

Catholic Church a dispenser of salvation through her priesthood.

Conclusion

The foregoing reflections on the Declaration *Dominus Iesus* have served to highlight the Catholic attempt to make salvation a dispensation of the church, rather than a disposition of the believer. By claiming to be the only church that has the apostolic succession and consequently the right to dispense salvation, the Catholic Church is deceiving millions of sincere people into believing that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church (*no salus extra ecclesia*). The fact that the Declaration *Dominus Iesus* goes into great length to reiterate this traditional Catholic teaching, goes to show that, after all, Ellen White was right when she wrote: "Rome never changes. Her principles have not altered in the least. She has not lessened the breach between herself and Protestants; they have done all the advancing. But what does this argue for the Protestantism of this day? It is the rejection of Bible truth which makes men approach to infidelity. It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy." *Signs of the Times*, February 19, 1894.

Our only safeguard against deceptive teachings, such as those found in the Vatican document *Dominus Iesus*, is familiarity with the teachings of the Word of God. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that the church is not a hierarchical organization that has the right to dispense salvation, but a community of believers committed to "declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9. ✝

If you would like to receive Brother Bacchiocchi's electronic newsletter, send an email message to sbacchiocchi@qtm.net. The subject of the above article is dealt with in-depth in Samuele Bacchiocchi's book Sabbath Under Crossfire. To obtain this book, you may call Brother Bacchiocchi at 616-471-2915 or visit his web site at <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com>.



An Awesome Time

Ron Spear

We have arrived at an awesome time in the history of the world and the church, for we are now about to witness the closing scenes of the prophetic period just before the close of probation.

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” Revelation 13:11–14.

The United States is now in a position to enforce the image to the beast. Several years ago, former President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II entered into a confederacy which dismantled Communism and reduced Russia to a third-world power. America presently controls much of the economy of the world. Her dollar is king. Through NATO, America has become the policeman of the world. With the

cooperation of some democratic countries, she has fought wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Kosovo; her military power stands unchallenged.

The signs of the times are ominous. Wars and rumors of wars are all around us. See Matthew 24:6. The world is in constant confusion. Nation rises against nation, kingdom against kingdom. Revolution is everywhere. Terrorism causes men’s hearts to fail them for fear of what is coming upon the earth. See Luke 21:26. Violence and immorality surround us on every side. Homosexuality is accepted as an alternative lifestyle. Many churches are now accepting same-sex marriages, and some are even ordaining men and women to their ministry who are practicing this sexual perversion—despite Biblical warnings. Famine, disease, and revolution have become top concerns of the United Nations. Half the world is malnourished. Floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes sweep away in a moment the homes and wealth of thousands.

Listen to God speak to us through His prophet:

“More and more, as the days go by, it is becoming apparent that God’s judgments are in the world. In fire and flood and earthquake He is warning the inhabitants of this earth of His near approach. The time is nearing when the great crisis in the

history of the world will have come, when every movement in the government of God will be watched with intense interest and inexpressible apprehension. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire and flood and earthquake, with war and bloodshed.”¹

Billions of souls cry out for relief from the misery and sorrow of the great tragedies, which are now bursting almost daily upon our confused planet. See Isaiah 2:12.

Who Will Blow the Warning Trumpet?

The prophecies of the book *The Great Controversy*—written more than one hundred years ago—are being fulfilled in our world at the present time. Its pages of warning are relevant to us today. Its last chapters are calling us to awaken the church—its leaders, pastors, and laity—to the fact that this is the end of all things! Probation is about to close for the church and for the whole human family. God calls out to the church: “Where are my watchmen? Who will blow the trumpet in Zion to warn them of coming destruction?”

“Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts,

and set him for their watchman: if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his

hierarchy; the opinion is gaining ground that, after all, we do not differ so widely upon vital points as has been supposed, and that a little concession on our part will bring us into a better understanding with Rome. The time was when Protestants placed a high value upon the liberty of conscience which had been so dearly purchased. They taught their children to abhor popery and held that to seek harmony with Rome would be disloyalty to God. But how widely different are the sentiments now expressed! . . .

"The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility. All that she has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution. . . .

ized by Protestants. Look at the growth of ritualism in England and the frequent defections to the ranks of the Catholics. These things should awaken the anxiety of all who prize the pure principles of the gospel."²

Leaders and pastors, how could we—the watchmen—be so mesmerized by the ecumenical world that we would discard, ignore—yes, even reject—the warnings in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy?

Listen again to our prophet:

"The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged. Every principle of the Papacy that existed in past ages exists today. The doctrines devised in the darkest ages are still held. Let none deceive themselves. The Papacy that Protestants are now so ready to honor is the same that ruled the world in the days of the Reformation, when men of God stood up, at the peril of their lives, to expose her iniquity. She possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and princes, and claimed the prerogatives of God. Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty and slew the saints of the Most High. The Papacy is just what prophecy declared that she would be—the apostasy of the latter times. See 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4. It is a part of her policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent. . . .

"As the Protestant churches have been seeking the favor of the world, false charity has blinded their eyes. They do not see but that it is right to believe good of all evil, and as the inevitable result they will finally believe evil of all good. Instead of standing in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints, they are now, as it were, apologizing to Rome for their uncharitable opinion of her, begging pardon for their bigotry."³

In our spiritually blind, Laodicean condition, we are currently accepting the Pentecostal, celebration music and church-service style as a way to "hold" our youth and middle-aged members in the church.

blood will I require at thine hand." Ezekiel 33:1–8.

The ecumenical voices have wooed many leaders, pastors, and laity into a surety that the Pope and Protestant leaders have accepted us as brethren: "We should not be concerned; the Pope is a good man; the Papacy has changed," they say. What folly!

Listen to the prophet:

"Romanism is now regarded by Protestants with far greater favor than in former years. In those countries where Catholicism is not in the ascendancy, and the papists are taking a conciliatory course in order to gain influence, there is an increasing indifference concerning the doctrines that separate the reformed churches from the papal

"But Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history. The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done. Catholicism is gaining ground upon every side. See the increasing number of her churches and chapels in Protestant countries. Look at the popularity of her colleges and seminaries in America, so widely patron-

“By the decree enforcing the institution of the Papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.”⁴

Could It Be Apostasy?

Dear leaders, pastors, and laity, the night is soon coming when no man can work. The church has now reached the omega of deadly heresies.⁵

“The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.” Isaiah 21:11–12.

“Slumbering watchmen, what of the night? Do you not know the time of night? Do you feel no burden to lift the danger signal and give the warnings for this time? If you do not, come down from the walls of Zion, for God will not entrust you with the light He has to give. Light is only given to those who will reflect that light upon others.”⁶

The evidence is now overwhelming that there is apostasy in God’s remnant church. In our spiritually blind, Laodicean condition, we are currently accepting the Pentecostal, celebration music and church-service style as a way to “hold” our youth and middle-aged members in the church. We ask the question here, Is not Satan now in charge, directing leaders and pastors in the ways of apostate Protestantism?

Catholic priests and worldly Protestant preachers from the ecumenical movement visit our pulpits and preach the devil’s

doctrine on salvation to our people. Leaders of these churches are welcomed at General Conference Sessions. We no longer are protesting!

Our constant search for recognition from the world has led us to be friends of Babylon, and has prevented the preaching of the three angels’ messages of warning.

In God’s beloved church some leaders and pastors seek to disfellowship those who question their authority, labeling them “offshoots.” Some are taken to court for using the name Seventh-day Adventist because they are giving the last warning message of Revelation 14:9–11 to the world over radio, in newspapers, and in tabloids.

Listen to the prophet:

“It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the Papacy—the beast. Said Paul: ‘There’ shall ‘come a falling away . . . and that man of sin be revealed.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:3. So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.”⁷

What is Satan’s next move in his final attack on God’s faithful Seventh-day Adventist Christians?

“A power from beneath is working to bring about the last great scenes in the drama—Satan coming as Christ, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies. Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect.

“Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world, and a great terror will soon come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.”⁸

We as a people, our leaders, and our pastors are asleep. The last movements will be rapid ones. The Sunday laws will come to many as an overwhelming surprise. Satan’s personation of Christ and the collapse of the world economy will

set the stage for the final act in the great drama of the ages. The whole world will soon wonder after the beast. The United States will then enforce the image to the first beast of Revelation, chapter 13.

Persecution will rage first from within the church, and then from the world. Remember, we have far more to fear from within the church than from without.⁹ Every Seventh-day Adventist will soon be tested.¹⁰ The seal of God will be given to the loyal and obedient; the mark of the beast to the disobedient.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12.

Martyrdom and prison will be the reward from the world to many who remain faithful to truth without a compromise.¹¹ See Revelation 20:4.

True Sabbathkeeping, according to Isaiah 58:13, will be the test of every Seventh-day Adventist.¹² The church—God’s faithful—will survive Satan’s final attack. The faithful, loyal, and obedient will receive the latter rain and give the loud cry: “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins.” Revelation 18:4.

Much of the present church structure will not survive. It will be swept away. Jesus will take the reigns into His own hands.¹³

Probation will soon close. The end will come suddenly, unexpectedly.¹⁴ The plagues will fall, and our loving, precious Jesus—King of kings—will return to gather the faithful saints to the mansions above. “Come soon, Lord Jesus,” is our prayer! ✨

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- ² *The Great Controversy*, 563–566.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 571–572.
- ⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 451.
- ⁵ See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 200.
- ⁶ *Evangelism*, 144.
- ⁷ *The Great Controversy*, 443–444.
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 28.
- ⁹ See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 122.
- ¹⁰ See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 976.
- ¹¹ See *Maranatha*, 197–199.
- ¹² See *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 350–360.
- ¹³ See *Testimonies to Ministers*, 300; *Selected Messages*, book 2, 58–59.
- ¹⁴ See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 989.

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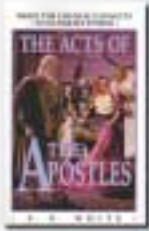


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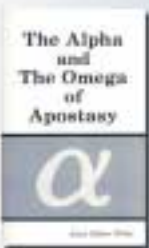
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And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Genesis 1:29.

Why do we eat? – One reason is that we enjoy eating. And we enjoy it so much that few of us would want to give it up even if we could. Thank God He created us with the ability to taste and smell and that He put such delightful flavors and aromas into the food He has appointed for us. But even if we did not enjoy it, we would still have to eat. Food is needed to furnish fuel to

supply energy to the body, to provide material to repair and build tissues, and to supply substances that act to regulate body processes.

Any chemical substance found in food that functions in one or more of these ways is known as a nutrient. The seven basic classes of nutrients are carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, fiber, and water.

Only carbohydrates, fats, and proteins provide energy or calories. Sugars and starches are both carbohydrates. Carbohydrates and proteins yield about four calories per gram, and fats yield about nine calories per gram. As these figures show, fats are a much more concen-

trated source of energy. Fiber, long regarded as a nonessential, is now recognized as an important body regulator. It helps to control blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and also aids in colon hygiene. A low-fiber diet is associated with increased risk of colon cancer, as well as other bowel diseases.

When food is properly selected and prepared, so that the basic nutrients are consumed in the correct ratios and amounts, we can be assured of good nutrition. All natural foods contain all seven essential nutrients. However, the different amino acids (the building blocks of proteins), fatty acids,

vitamins, and minerals are found in varying amounts in different foods. So we need to eat a variety of food to get all the nutrients in sufficient quantities.

Malnutrition means we are not getting the proper intake of nutrients, or in some cases that the nutrients are not utilized as they should be in the body. Undernutrition means that there is a lack of certain nutrients. In underdeveloped countries the most common problem is simply not getting enough food to eat or not enough variety of foods. Starvation is a tragic health problem for millions of people in the world. Less frequent, but equally serious, are the problems of protein or vitamin/mineral deficiency diseases. Usually, as long as people are getting enough unrefined calories to eat, these diseases are not common.

Overnutrition means too many nutrients. In developed countries it is usually related to the excess consumption of refined foods. For millions of well-fed people in the world, overnutrition is the root cause of much premature death and disease. The top three killer diseases in the U.S. — heart disease, cancer, and stroke — each have strong contributing dietary factors. Hypertension and diabetes also have strong dietary links. The specific dietary excesses that tend to promote or cause these diseases involve cholesterol, animal fat, too much total dietary fat, too much sugar, too much protein, and too much salt — basically, just too many calories in general. It is possible to get a toxic overdose of specific vitamins or minerals, but usually one would have to be taking vitamin/mineral pills or highly concentrated foods for this to happen.

Obesity is one of the most common side effects of overnutrition. A combination of proper diet and exercise is needed to correct the problem. Briefly, the food in the diet should be low in fat and high in fiber. High-protein diets are no more effective than any other diet except that there is rapid initial water loss. Excess protein is harmful to the body in several ways; in time it

weakens the kidneys, heart, bones, and immune system. Instead, eat a regular, balanced diet that is low in fat and sugar and high in fiber. In terms of food this regimen means sticking mainly to fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. Most people who are obese need to eat less. They probably need to learn to accept being slightly hungry most of the time — at least until their body adjusts to less food, and they become physically fit through an exercise program.

We can briefly summarize what we have learned about proper nutrition thus: Maintain a calm, thankful attitude, and at proper times eat a wide variety of mostly unrefined foods, prepared in a simple, attractive, and palatable way, in sufficient quantity to maintain ideal body weight and good health.

Our attitude about the food we eat and our attitude while eating is important. If we are nervous, in a hurry, or upset about something, the digestive process is impaired. It is better not to eat at all, unless we can do so in a positive frame of mind and take our time. Hurried eating tends to overeating. Since digestion begins in the mouth, it is important to chew your food slowly and well.

A good breakfast should come early in the day. There is no such thing as “breakfast food” either. Many people enjoy potatoes, beans, or other vegetables, with a main entree at breakfast. Why not? Such food gives your body the nutrients it needs to restore itself after the night’s fast and sets the nutritional tone for the day. Usually, another main meal should be consumed no sooner than five hours later. Most people could get by very well on two meals per day. Those who do not need many calories for their daily occupation or who are overweight, should try this two-meal-a-day plan. If a third meal is necessary, it should be lighter and smaller and eaten at least two hours before bedtime. Eating big meals late at night or before going to bed is not a good practice. Digestion during sleep is not efficient because the metabolic

rate is falling. Sleep can be disturbed, and often one feels the effects the next morning. The same number of calories eaten in the evening are more fattening than if they were eaten in the morning. This fact can easily be explained on the basis of the rise and fall in the metabolic rate between morning and evening. Also, most bodies are energy-conservation conscious, meaning that it is easier to store fat than to get rid of it once it is there.

Eating between meals or having too many meals in a day interferes with digestion. Sour stomachs and sour attitudes are often the result. Smaller, lighter meals digest more rapidly. The rule is that the stomach should be allowed sufficient time to completely empty itself of one meal, and rest for maybe an hour, before more food is eaten.

Factors that slow the stomach’s emptying time are the fat content of the meal, the amount of food eaten, the liquid drunk with the meal, and sedentary occupations. Fruit or vegetable meals usually leave the stomach in about two hours, whereas higher fat and protein meals take four to five hours.

To prevent overeating and indigestion there should not be too many varieties of food eaten at once. It is true that we should eat a wide variety of food from meal to meal and from day to day, but three or four different kinds of food at one time is plenty.

A good variety of plain, unrefined plant food is more nutritionally balanced than the animal products and man-made processed foods. Whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds contain high-quality protein, a better fatty-acid profile (thus decreasing the risk of heart disease and cancer), no cholesterol, plenty of complex carbohydrates, and fiber, and are rich in vitamins, minerals and water. Animal products and man-made foods are often high in fat, cholesterol, sugar, salt, and harmful additives, and are lacking in fiber. Sometimes we cannot obtain an ideal diet. People should not be made to feel guilty about what they

eat if they are doing the best that they can with what knowledge and resources they have. Certainly it is not unhealthful to use some refined products like white flour, sugar, or oil in small amounts to prepare healthful and tasty dishes. A moderate amount of salt can be used by most people. The problem is that the average American taste bud has been conditioned through overuse to expect and demand far too much of these things. It would be well to gradually re-educate people to require much less.

The U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs in 1977 issued these recommendations to all Americans: Reduce salt intake by about 50–85 percent, cut fat consumption by at least 10 percent, slash sugar ingestion by 40 percent, and limit cholesterol to 300 mg. daily (equivalent to one egg).

These guidelines suggest that major changes are in order for the average American diet. The benefits of making such significant changes in the types of food in the diet are amazing. The Adventist Health study has shown that pure vegetarians (no animal products) have only one-third as many deaths from cancer and one-fourth as many deaths from coronary heart disease as nonvegetarians. In these studies other variables such as tobacco and alcohol were accounted for, so that we know that the tremendous health advantage of the pure vegetarian group is due to the fact that they are not using animal products in their diet. These same studies have shown that the vegetarians who do not smoke tobacco or drink alcohol have only 14 percent as many heart-attack deaths and 9 percent as many cancer deaths and live an average of 12 years longer than the general population.

Until the last few years, most people were taught to measure the nutritional status of their diet by the Four Food Group Plan. The four food groups were: Milk and milk products, meat or protein, fruits and vegetables, and bread and cereals. The idea was to eat a certain number of servings from each group

every day to ensure balanced nutrition. This plan ensures that we will meet the daily requirements for all nutrients. Its chief drawback is that it does not guard very well against overnutrition, which is the greatest nutritional problem in the U.S. today. We can easily consume too much protein, fat, cholesterol, and salt on this plan.

Another nutritional education device that is becoming popular is the "Food Pyramid." This represents an improvement over the Four Food Group Plan because it clearly shows the relative amounts of the major types of foods we should eat. It correctly places grains, fruits and vegetables at the base of the pyramid. It also places refined foods and animal products near the top, indicating that these foods should be used sparingly. However, one fact should be kept in mind: there is no such thing as essential foods—only essential nutrients. Vegetable sources for these nutrients provide as much nutrition as do animal sources. So, while the above-mentioned nutritional education devices can serve as guides to a balanced diet, it is not true that people are obligated to use dairy products or meat in order to obtain a balanced diet.

The chief concern then should be, "What are the *best* sources available to me so that I can get the nutrients I need?" We now know the answer to that question: A well-balanced vegetarian diet that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds. With the possible exception of vitamin B₁₂, all known essential nutrients are available from plant foods.

Although vitamin B₁₂ deficiencies are very rare, even among vegetarians, there is still a question as to whether or not there are any good vegetarian sources of this vitamin. We know that vitamin B₁₂ may be obtained from food supplements or from fortified foods. Also, small amounts of low-fat dairy products would take care of this. Yet there is evidence that the vitamin is produced in the human body, and

vitamin B₁₂ is also found in some drinking water, which may account for the rarity of such vitamin deficiencies.

The case in favor of the vegetarian diet can be summarized by the American Dietetic Association: "The (ADA) affirms that a well-planned diet, consisting of a variety of largely unrefined plant foods, supplemented with some milk and eggs (lacto-ovo vegetarian diet), meets all known nutrient needs. Furthermore, a total plant dietary can be made adequate by careful planning, giving proper attention to specific nutrients which may be in a less available form or in lower concentrations or absent in plant foods. The (ADA) recognizes that a growing body of scientific evidence supports a positive relationship between consumption of a plant-based dietary and the prevention of certain diseases."

People wanting a better diet should make changes gradually so that the body has time to adapt. Other family members who are not so eager to change their diet need time to adapt, too. A good strategy would be to start decreasing and eliminating some of the worst junk food first and then to replace them with more fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Switch to low-fat dairy products and omit fatty and processed meats. Cut out more of the refined, processed foods like instant dinners, pastries, snack foods, and soft drinks. Buy whole-grain breads and cereals instead of the refined ones. Use less of the unnecessary toppings, dressings, and gravies that add so many calories to the meal, and when you do use them look for low-fat or reduced-calorie varieties. Eat at home more often, pack your own lunches, and simplify your eating. Get some good health-conscious, vegetarian cookbooks (some are not that healthful, for they overuse cheese, eggs, and nuts) and start practicing and experimenting with new dishes. But keep it simple.

"Blessed art thou, O land, when . . . thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!" Ecclesiastes 10:17. ✨



GOD'S CHURCH ON EARTH

Ellen G. White

The Word of God must be our authority in all things. The testimony of David in this respect was, "Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words. I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments." Psalm 119:57-62.

How is the Lord the portion of His people? He can be such to them only when they choose Him above everything earthly and temporal. But there are very many who prefer every other portion rather than the heavenly treasure. This is not appreciated. They prize more highly the selfish pleasures that minister only to the gratification of self. They consider the possession of lands, of houses, and of money, the most desirable prize they can gain: for they know that when once these

are in their hands, they will receive the esteem and favor of the world. The standard of the world estimates a man according to his money value. This certainly can raise him to position and honor as far as the world is concerned, but it can never give him true value of character.

Those who exercise true faith in Jesus Christ will be blessed with sharp discernment. Everything connected with truth and righteousness will be precious in his sight. The knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, will lead man to place a high value on every faculty given him of God. He will have a keen sense of his obligation to keep these intrusted treasures in the most wholesome condition, that he may ever discern the value of God, and choose Him as his portion forever.

The privilege bestowed upon us in doing service for Christ is the highest exaltation that can be given to the human agent. And God desires that man shall choose Him as the portion of his soul. Without this decided acceptance of the

heavenly gift, in preference to any other that the world can give, Christ's followers can never be one with Him, as He is one with the Father.

Consider the wondrous power of our God, and then call to mind His love for fallen man. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. How can man, for whom God has done so much, for whom Christ has given His life, continue in his perversity? Can we wonder that at the close of the thousand years, all who have refused to accept Him shall be destroyed with fire from Heaven outside the city of God? God declares that this shall be so. He says, "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. . . . And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." Isaiah 13:9, 11.

Art: Bob Bresnahan

I love Jesus. I tremble at the Word of God. I am seeking to hide myself in the cleft of the rock, that I may behold His holiness of character. God has a people, and I want to be among them. I want, too, that *you* shall be among them. And if you will, without any reservation, give up your way and will to God, you may. The Spirit calls today. There is hope still.

The church of God, enfeebled and defective though it is through yielding to temptation, is the only object upon earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. His interest, with all the interest of the heavenly host, is all with His people, who, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, are to shine as lights in the world. His Holy Spirit is giving rich and constant supplies of grace for every emergency. Not one needs to stumble, for Christ has said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8:12.

Satan has a church upon the earth, which outnumbered the church of Christ. Christ calls it the "synagogue of Satan" (see Revelation 2:9; 3:9), because its members are the children of sin and transgression. They have ceased to honor God; they have cast His divine law aside; they have confounded the distinction between good and evil. But the world's Redeemer will have a church in which these essential differences will be made apparent, where the character of God will be represented. In marked contrast to the character of Satan, the beauty of holiness will be exemplified, the loveliness of truth shine forth in life and practice. Its members will love, honor, and glorify God, whom the world has despised. These are the fruits by which they are known to the world; these will have the superscription of Heaven, by which all men may know that they are Christ's disciples.¹

Through Jesus Christ, God has made every provision that His people may connect with divine agencies, and that these agencies may cooperate with human instru-

mentalities. They may reveal to a world that is dead in trespasses and sins, the power and sufficiency of Christ. They will present before the world another world of higher, holier laws than worldly-wise men can invent or earth obey, a purer happiness and joy than earth can give to its votaries, coming through a service that is independent of all human inventions.

Christ's church on earth is to resemble heaven, a temple built after the pattern of things shown in the holy mount. Man must give up his ideas, his plans, and devices, and let God work out His original intentions. The great Designer must not be impeded in His work by human wisdom. His work and purpose

Christ's church on earth is to resemble heaven, a temple built after the pattern of things shown in the holy mount. Man must give up his ideas, his plans, and devices, and let God work out His original intentions.

have not been understood. Through the miscalculations of man, the church today is so misshapen that it cannot be accepted by the great Builder. Human counsel has been so abundant, that individual experience is rare. Men are placed where God should be. God's plans are turned aside, and men's measures brought in to fashion and mould. But the great and perfect Designer pronounces the work imperfect. The temple that He is building after the pattern of things in the heavens must have the exact proportions assigned it by the Architect, whose pattern is without a flaw. He has brought the golden measuring rod from heaven, and every worker is employed only as he works under His superintendence, and according to His plans.

There must be no human calculations. God will have as workers, only those who will be laborers together with Him, who will yoke up with Christ, and learn of Him meekness and lowliness of heart. His directions are, "Make all things

according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Hebrews 8:5; see also Exodus 25:40. Then a temple of heavenly design will be presented to the world, where the Divine Presence is manifested, and to which is affixed God's seal.

What has Jesus, the precious Saviour of the world, done that human, finite beings should put Him to open shame, and thus crucify Him afresh? Satan has remarkable power over all who open their hearts to temptation. But the mind, the character, the reason, belong to God. Christ is saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. But you are saying,

"I will not do as Christ has said. I will seek my own interest first; I want none of God's ways."

While you thus cooperate with Satan, he walks by your side. He says, "Whatever may be true in regard to life eternal, in order to make a success of business, you must serve me. I hold your welfare in my hands. Riches, pleasure, honor, and happiness I can give you. If you will hearken only to my counsel, you will succeed. You cannot be successful if you allow yourself to be carried away with any whimsical notions. I will prepare the way before you." These are Satan's temptations. But will any turn away for this from God and heaven, thrusting eternity out of your reckoning, working like a slave in the service of Satan? Will it pay to do this?

Like Christ, every man has had offered to him the kingdoms of this world if he will acknowledge the supremacy of Satan. And how many are doing this before the universe of heavenly intelligences, before God

their Creator, and Jesus Christ their Redeemer? But suppose all of Satan's alluring temptations were just as he presents them, will you,

success are the prospects presented before you if you will work in Christ's lines. But how many are saying, "I will not accept the

Then no longer neglect this great salvation, as many of us are most assuredly doing. Your salvation has been purchased by the Lord Jesus, in giving His life for you. It will be found that there are some things worse than temporal death. It is better for a soul to die, than to sin; better to be in poverty and suffer hunger than to do a dishonest action. Should your success be purchased at so fearful a price as surrender to the control of Satan, you will find perplexities and embarrassments you never dreamed of. His presentations of worldly attractions are as a deceitful mirage, terrible as his own character, fearful as hell.² ✠

It will be found that there are some things worse than temporal death. It is better for a soul to die, than to sin; better to be in poverty and suffer hunger than to do a dishonest action.

even if you knew that by assenting to them you would gain the whole world, be so infatuated, so bewitched as to sacrifice your hope of heaven, your spiritual and immortal interests for mere worldly advantages?

You have another life than that which you live in this world. You are to consider this, and live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Happiness and

conditions. I will have my own way and will in the matter." I warn you that if you keep on in this course, you will have all your own way with all it implies. This is nothing less than the loss of your soul. But for all who, for their Saviour's sake, will make any and every sacrifice, even to want, and hunger, and death, there awaits the crown of eternal life that Paul was seeking for, and an eternal weight of glory.

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¹ "Extract from an Unpublished Testimony Written March 13, 1897," *Lake Union Herald*, December 9, 1908.

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letters to the editor

Have a letter to share?

contact editor@hopeint.org or see page 3 for our mailing address.



It is quite unlike me to write to an organization and commend them on the good work that they are doing, because I am a very shy person. The Holy Spirit, however, has moved me to write this letter to you because of the many added blessings that I have received from reading your magazine. I am very delighted to get the issue of *Our Firm Foundation* in the mail every month. I am most grateful to God for the brother who introduced me to your inspiring and spirit-filled ministry.

My family and I, and also my friends at church, greatly enjoy reading your magazines. Most of the time, we read them through so quickly that we can't wait until the next issue arrives! I pray to God daily for your ministry and the continued publication of *Our Firm Foundation*. I pray that your ministry will continue shedding Light to the people and will continue presenting the plain message and teachings from the Spirit of Prophecy, Ellen G. White. In times like these, we need the plain truth and the Spirit of Prophecy to wake us up and to make us get rid of the compromises that have stealthily crept into the church and into our lifestyles as Christians. I pray that your ministry will never be swayed, come what may, but instead will always stand firm at the right hand of God. Please continue to keep up the good work in the strength of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and He will richly bless and reward you when He comes again in His glory for His people.

TB, Illinois

This letter is to thank you for the magazines that I started receiving this year. Needless to say, they are a source of great encouragement and discernment. I can understand the pain you are going through even from other ministries, in upholding the truth. God be with you. Do not get discouraged. Only eternity will reveal the impact that you have made in bringing many from the brink of destruction. Thanks once again!

CR, via e-mail

I have just read your newsletter regarding the *Adventist Review* article. I just want to let you know that you are in my prayers daily. I truly do appreciate your ministry and your magazine and feel that the church desperately needs you. I know several in the rather large church I attend who are at least somewhat sympathetic with your work. I have never heard you indicate that the SDA structure is Babylon, and I know that charge in the *Review* article is false. Also their statements on the issue of the nature of Christ do not make any sense. It is so clear from the Bible and especially from the Spirit of Prophecy that Christ took upon Himself fallen human nature.

Again, you are in my prayers, that you will know just the right course to pursue. May God strengthen all of us, God's true believers—in the conference, in the self-supporting work, and in the faithful independent ministries.

DT, via e-mail

From Overseas

Calvary greetings to you in the blessed name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! How is the work you are doing for the Master? We hope and pray God will continue blessing your ministry for the great work you are doing.

We are writing to you at this time to appreciate your kind gift you sent to us, which arrived at our place safely. In fact, the materials arrived at the right time we need them. We recently conducted a two-week crusade in one town. So we are now doing the follow-up program, and that is why we are saying the materials arrived at the right time when we needed them.

May God richly bless you as you continue helping to spread the message far and wide through publications. We also got some of your magazines—the *Our Firm Foundation* issues. We are forced to confess that the long-awaited predicted events of Sister White about some of our ministers urging the necessity of keeping the first day of the week are beginning to show up. Really, your messages are awakening and preparing

God's people for what is soon to come upon the remnant church. Thank you for a great work!

Finally, we will conclude by extending our greetings to all the staff of Hope International. We pray that all of us will remain faithful to God so that at last we will meet at Jesus' feet and walk the golden sea of glass and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, is our prayer in Jesus name.

D, I, & M, Nigeria

Greetings in the wonderful name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the donation of the books which I have received in good condition.

The books are going to go a long way to helping me and others in Christ to know and understand the Bible and His ways and much more to grow spiritual. It will as well help those that have not yet come to know Christ as their Saviour.

Thank the Lord that some of the books have the answers to some great topics such as "The National Sunday Law."

My prayer is if we do not meet on earth, we will meet in heaven.

God's richest blessing upon you all!

DS, Zimbabwe

It is indeed a great ministry you have targeted while the Seventh-day Adventists of India are sleeping.

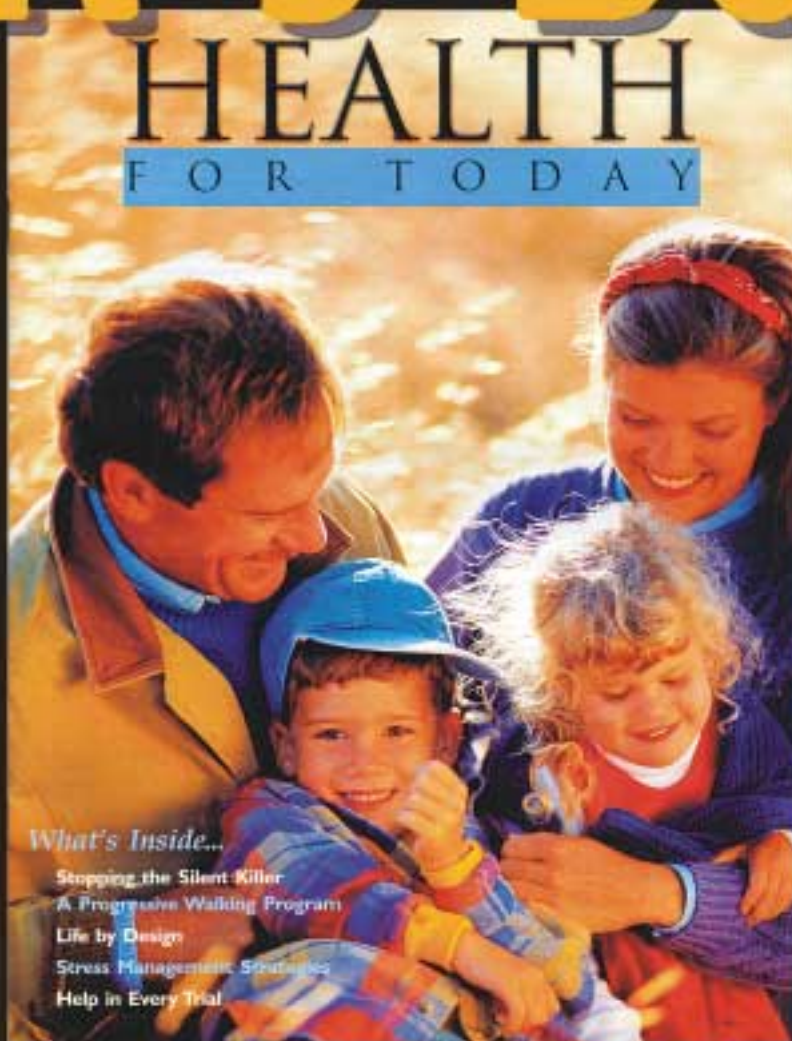
We pray the Lord's blessings on you and your team. I have good news that, though I am called a Protestant, the Lord opened to me the Sabbath truth in 1993. Since then I'm a voracious reader and have been distributing literature in the Protestant circle. Of late I'm planning to come fulltime, and have started a Lord's day church. I am reaching out with the Sabbath message to millions of Christians now in India despite lots of opposition. But I'm equipped with subjects from your magazines.

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