

Our Firm Foundation

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

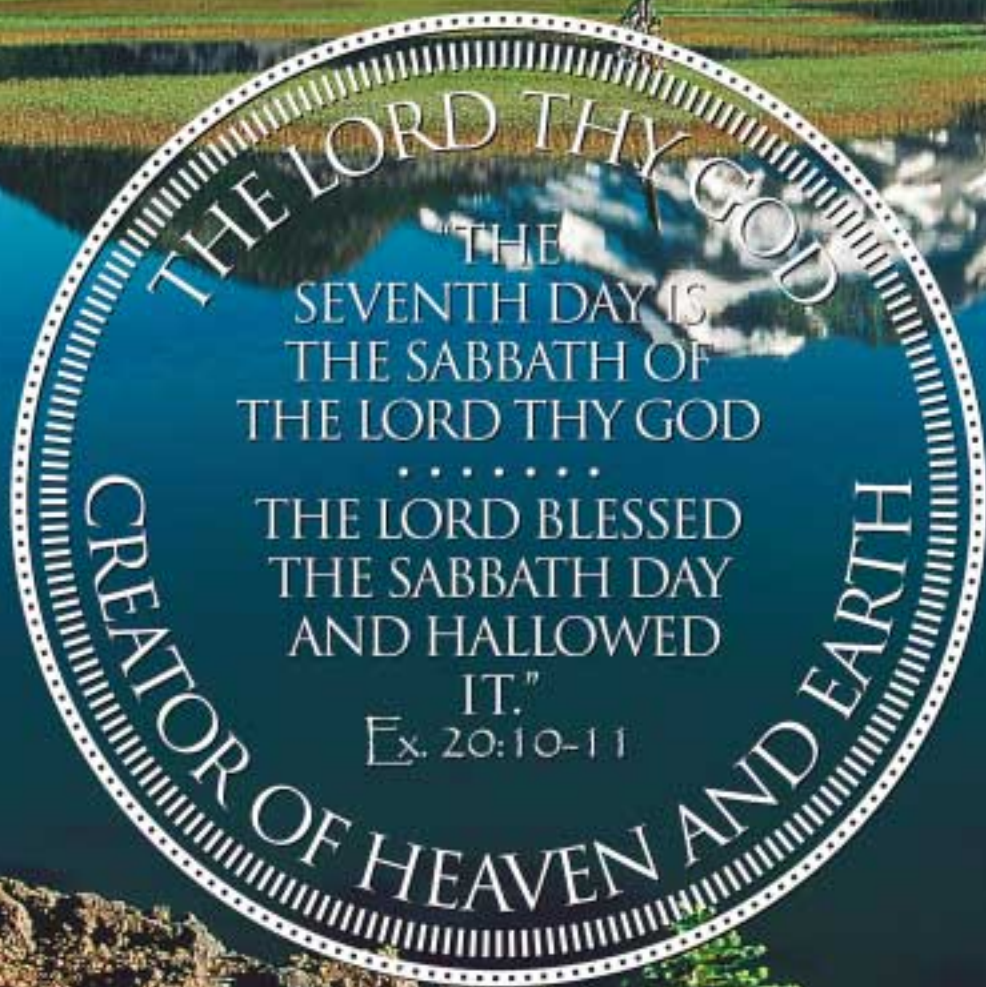
The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

Volume 16, Number 3

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God's Memorial

Stand Fast!

We have come to a very important time in the history of the great controversy. The prophecies found in Matthew, chapter 24, and in the books of Daniel and Revelation, are quickly being fulfilled.

“Let us give more time to the study of the Bible. We do not understand the Word as we should. The book of Revelation opens with an injunction to us to understand the instruction that it contains. ‘Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy,’ God declares, ‘and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.’ Revelation 1:3. When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.”¹

We are told that as we approach the final days of the great controversy, there will be terrible apostasy in the church. *Selected Messages*, book 1, 197–208, calls this apostasy the “omega,” and tells us that it will be of a very startling nature.

There will also come a revival and reformation among God’s people at this time. “There is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people.”² Then Christ will come to receive His glorious church triumphant.

According to God’s messenger, we will hear music in the church, with drums and dancing, just before the close of probation.³ We are also told that some pastors will preach Satan’s gospel from our pulpits.⁴

There will be an attempt to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God—the Spirit of Prophecy.⁵ These words of Christ will be fulfilled in our churches: “For many are called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:14.⁶

Testimonies, vol. 5, 136, tells us that in the final closing events there will be only a few champions for truth among professed Seventh-day Adventists. Also, the Spirit of Prophecy reveals that some who were once champions of truth will persecute those who faithfully stand for truth: “So it will be in these last days. The cause of Christ will be betrayed. Those who have had the light of truth, and have enjoyed its blessings, but who have turned away from it, will fight down the Spirit of God. Inspired with a spirit from beneath, they will tear down that which they once built up, and show to all reasonable, God-fearing souls that they cannot be trusted. . . . Their spirit and works will testify that they are betrayers of their Lord. The attributes of Satan they call the movings of the Holy Spirit.”⁷

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.” Matthew 10:16–17. The very same spirit of intolerance manifested in some of the leaders in Christ’s day will again be displayed in the final stage of the church militant.⁸

Increasingly, we hear reports of faithful Seventh-day Adventists who

have been disfellowshipped, while others have been taken out of church leadership positions because of their stand against apostasy. Many others see the danger in attending services where error is being forced home to the soul.⁹ Some among the faithful believers have found churches they can safely attend, yet others have found no solution but to resort to their homes for worship and study on the Sabbath. These home churches have multiplied by the hundreds. It is sad that many of these home churches have also fallen into error and are caught up in various winds of doctrine. We desire to strengthen and support every Seventh-day Adventist who is holding on firmly to the great landmarks given to us by God—whether they worship in a conference church, a self-supporting church, or a home church.

As we approach the final events in the great controversy, we pray to God for wisdom to deal with the issues of salvation—our precious doctrines, pillars, and waymarks—so that the seekers for truth may endure unto the end, be sealed with the seal of the living God, and be saved in the kingdom! ✠

Ron Spear, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

REFERENCES:

- ¹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, 113.
- ² *The Great Controversy*, 425.
- ³ See *Selected Messages*, book 2, 35–37.
- ⁴ See *Testimonies to Ministers*, 409–410.
- ⁵ See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 48.
- ⁶ See *ibid.*, book 1, 406.
- ⁷ *Review and Herald*, May 24, 1898.
- ⁸ See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 75–77, 79–83, 217.
- ⁹ See *Early Writings*, 124–125.

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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. —Editors


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God's Memorial

James White

The Sabbath is a memorial of what the Creator did during the first week of time. He wrought six days. He rested on the seventh day. Here is the origin of the week. The weekly cycle is not derived from anything in nature. Months are suggested by the phases of the moon; years, by the returning seasons; but the week can be traced only to the six days of Creation, and the seventh of rest. The patriarchs reckoned time by weeks and sevens of days. See Genesis 8:10, 12; 29:27-28.

The Sabbath was instituted in Eden, at the close of the first week, by three acts on the part of the Creator. First, God rested on the seventh day. Second, He placed His blessing upon the day. Third, He sanctified the day of His rest. He rested on the seventh day, and in this set an example for man. Next, He blessed the day upon which he had rested. He then sanctified, or "set apart to a sacred use," the day

of His rest. He gave the first six days of the week to man, in which to obtain a livelihood, and reserved the seventh day to Himself, to be used sacredly by man.

The great God was not wearied with the six days of Creation. His rest upon the seventh day means simply that on that day He ceased to create. Nor did man in Eden need rest from toil, as since the Fall. In fact, rest from labor is not a leading feature of the Sabbatic institution. The fourth commandment makes no reference to man's physical wants of a day of rest. Neither does it speak of his spiritual necessities of a day of public worship.

The Real Purpose for the Sabbath

It gives quite another reason for the Sabbath. Here it is: "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the

sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:11. This reason relates to what God did in the first week of time. He has given no other. It is as old as the world, and will continue to be the reason why man should revere Jehovah's rest day as long as the world shall continue. Man rests upon the day of the Sabbath in honor of the Creator. And wherever he may turn his eye, whether to the heavens, the earth, or the sea, there he beholds the Creator's work. As he rests upon the seventh day, he sees in the countless varieties of nature the wisdom and power of Him who created all in six days, and thus is led from nature up to nature's God.

The Sabbath now becomes the cord that binds created man to the infinite Creator. It is the golden chain that links earth to heaven, and man to God. Had he always observed the Sabbath, there could not have been an idolater nor an atheist. The Sabbath, as a memorial of what the Creator did during the first week

of time, is now seen in its dignity and importance. It is the memorial of the living God. Man is to rest on the day of the week on which the Creator ceased to create.

But those who belittle the grand Sabbatic institution to only serve man's physical wants of a day of rest, and to provide for him a day of public worship, and see no higher design in it, are satisfied with a change of the day of the Sabbath. They think that a day on which the Creator did not rest will do quite as well as the day on which He did rest. With this limited view of the subject, why may they not be content with the change? If a day of rest from toil, and a day for the public worship of God, are all the blessings secured to man by the Sabbath, the one-day-in-seven-and-no-day-in-particular theory looks quite plausible. For, certainly, man can rest his weary limbs, or weary brain, on one day of the week as well as on another. And if only a season of divine worship is to be secured, Sunday may answer for this purpose. In fact, one day in six might do as well for rest and worship as one day in seven, if rest and a day of public worship are the sum total of the reasons for the Sabbath. There is nothing in man's physical or spiritual wants to mark the number seven.

The original design of the Sabbath was for a perpetual memorial of the Creator. Yet it secures the seventh day of the week to man in his fallen condition, not only as a day of rest, but a day for public worship, in which to draw nigh to God and share His pardoning love. But these blessings, of comparative importance, can be obtained on either of the other six days of the week, and do not constitute the grand reason for the Sabbatic institution. That reason given in the law of the Sabbath is, in its importance, as much above the simple idea of repose from weary toil, and a day for public worship, as the heavens are higher than the earth. With this agree the words of the prophet: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call

the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD." Isaiah 58:13-14.

Here the great object of the Sabbath is set forth. It is to honor God. Man is required to turn away his feet from the Sabbath, and refrain from seeking his own ways, words, and pleasure, on that day, not because he needs a day of rest, but because by so doing he can honor the great God. Those who keep the Sabbath with this object in view, will call it a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honorable.

The fourth commandment points back to what God did during the first week of time. The Creation and

3. The facts connected with the giving of the manna show that the Israelites understood the obligations of the Sabbath, that some of the people violated these sacred obligations, and were reproved by Jehovah, thirty days before they saw Mount Sinai. See Exodus, chapters 16-19. They came to the wilderness of Sin, where the manna was first given, on the fifteenth day of their second month. On the sixth day they gathered a double portion of the manna, a quantity sufficient for that day and for the Sabbath which followed. Moses said to the people: "This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD." Exodus 16:23. On the seventh day, Moses said, "Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD. To

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rest occupied the first week. Immediately following, Jehovah sanctified and blessed the day on which He had rested. In this way the seventh day became the holy Sabbath of the Lord for Adam and his posterity. It was ever to be observed by the race as the memorial of the living God.

Those who locate the institution of the Sabbath at Sinai, urge that no mention is made of Sabbathkeeping in the brief record of the book of Genesis, as proof that the Sabbath was made for the Jews alone. As evidence of the unsoundness of this position, please notice the following facts:

1. The sacred record nowhere intimates that the Sabbath was instituted at Sinai, while it distinctly locates its institution at Creation.

2. The Sabbath being made for man (see Mark 2:27), as a memorial of Creation, there are no reasons why the Jews alone should enjoy its blessings. All men have need of it as much as they.

day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days." Verses 25-29.

Here we see that the Sabbath was understood, and its violation was rebuked by Jehovah. But the Israelites had not yet seen Sinai. Indeed, they did not come to the mount from which the Ten Commandments were proclaimed, until thirty days from the time the manna was first given. See Exodus, chapter 19. Here is a nail driven in a sure place, and ministers and men should cease to assert that the Sabbath was first given at Sinai, till

they have searched the sacred narrative with greater care.

The Immutability of the Sabbath

The original plan of the Sabbath contemplated its perpetual observance as long as God, the Creator, and created man should exist. It does not point forward to redemption. It looks back to Creation. It was made for man before the Fall; but, in consequence of the Fall, it is of tenfold more importance to him throughout the entire period of his fallen condition. And it will exist during man's future life upon the new earth, in all its original significance and glory. We have seen the Sabbath based upon the great facts of the Creation in six days, Jehovah's rest upon the seventh day, and His sanctifying and blessing the day of His rest. As long as these continue to be facts, so long will the

when all flesh have come to worship before the God of Heaven on the Sabbath; and this can never be while the wheat and tares, the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one, grow together; and these will not be separated until the harvest, which is the end of the world. This unity in reference to the memorial of the great God will be seen only in the immortal state, when from one Sabbath to another, and from one new moon to another, all flesh shall come to worship before the Lord.

"What! the moon in Heaven?" — No, not in such a Heaven as that of which the poet sings:

"Beyond the bounds of time and space,
Look forward to that heavenly place,
The saint's secure abode."

Beyond space there would be no room for the moon, nor for the sun; neither would there be room for the resurrected saints, possessing bodies

will have right to the tree of life, which Adam lost through disobedience. That tree yields twelve manner of fruits each month. See Revelation 22:2. And why may not the words of the prophet in reference to all flesh appearing before the Lord from one new moon to another, be fulfilled when the entire family of the redeemed shall come each month to partake of the new fruit of the tree of life?

Does the Day Really Matter?

But to return to God's memorial: the position taken in these pages presents the one-day-in-seven-and-no-day-in-particular, or the one-seventh-part-of-time theory, in its true light. If the Sabbath was made for man, for the simple reason that he needed rest from physical toil, and a day of worship, one day may answer as well as another. But if it be a memorial of Jehovah's rest, the seventh, and no other day of the week, is the day of the Sabbath. Sabbatarians are charged with being great sticklers for the day. And so they are. Sabbath signifies rest. Man is required by the fourth commandment to celebrate the rest day of the Lord, or the day on which the Lord rested. God rested on the seventh day. He hallowed the seventh day. Hence, the seventh day, and no other, is the day of the Sabbath. Change the day of the Sabbath, and you cease to celebrate the rest of the Lord. If God rested on one day in seven and no day in particular, man may do the same; but if God rested on the seventh day of the first week, acceptable Sabbathkeeping is the celebration of the seventh day of each succeeding week.

The American people celebrate their national independence on the fourth day of July. And why? — Because on July 4, 1776, patriotic men signed the Declaration of Independence. The men of this nation are great sticklers for the day; and well they may be. Should they change our national celebration from the day on which the Declaration of Independence was signed, to a day on which it was not signed, it would lose its significance. It would

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Sabbath continue. Redemption does not propose the creation of a new world as the inheritance of the redeemed. "Behold, I make all things new," says the Redeemer. Revelation 21:5. This world, redeemed from the curse and all its results, will be the eternal possession of the righteous. And notwithstanding the work of redemption, the great facts connected with the Creation week will ever be vividly impressed upon the immortal minds of the redeemed. Thus saith the prophet: "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD." Isaiah 66:22-23. There is no point of time in the past

like their Lord's resurrected, glorious body; and beyond the bounds of time, there would be no need of the sun and the moon which are God's great timekeepers. We are not looking for a general smash-up in the universe, and then the creation of all new things, for immortal saints beyond the bounds of time and space. It is this planet that has revolted. And the Redeemer, who is coming to bring it back into allegiance to the government of God, says, "Behold, I make all things new." The revolt did not affect the sun, moon, and the other planets.¹ Redemption will not affect these heavenly bodies. When the Restorer shall have established the immortal saints in the new earth, it will continue its revolutions, and the sun and moon will measure off days, and months, and years, as long as eternal ages shall roll. The redeemed

cease to be a celebration of our independence. Let the people of this country celebrate their independence on the twenty-fifth day of December, and let the Declaration of Independence be read from every orator's stand on that day, as is customary on the fourth of July, and the American people would be regarded as a nation of fools.

And what Jew ever thought of observing one-three-hundred-and-sixty-fifth part of time, or one day in three hundred and sixty-five and no day in particular, and calling that the Passover? And we might as well talk of celebrating our national independence on one day in three hundred and sixty-five, and no day in particular, as to talk of celebrating the rest day of Jehovah upon one day in seven and no day in particular. The veriest American idiot that can recollect of ever hearing about George Washington or the Declaration of Independence, might well laugh at the folly of changing the day of our national celebration. Verily, as our Lord has said, the men of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. It is only in matters of religion that people seem to be satisfied with that which, in regard to any other subject, would be considered consummate folly.

And do these men who use the one-day-in-seven-and-no-day-in-particular theory, advocate a change of the Sabbath from the rest day of the Father, to the resurrection day of the Son? Then I inquire of them, Who ever thought of celebrating the resurrection of Christ on one-day-in-seven and no day in particular? If they say that this can be done, then I inquire again, Where is the change of the Sabbath? Was it a change from one-day-in-seven and no day in particular of the former dispensation, to one day in seven and no day in particular of the present dispensation? This would be "confusion worse confounded."

A Day to Commemorate Redemption?

And to those who assert that redemption, as a greater work, is to

be celebrated on the first day of the week, as Creation was anciently to be celebrated on the seventh day of the week, I would say, We only have your word for that. Please notice these facts:

1. The Bible is silent relative to redemption's being greater than Creation. Who knows that it is?

2. The Bible is silent as to the observance of a day to commemorate redemption. Who knows that a day should be kept for that purpose?

3. We have in the Lord's Supper, and baptism, memorials of the two great events in the history of the

of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God, without reference to any particular day, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

1 Corinthians 11:26. These memorials point back to the death, burial, and resurrection, of Jesus Christ. God's great memorial points back to the day of His rest. And why not let all these remain, answering the purpose for which they were instituted? Why should the work of Creation be lost sight of in the work of redemption? Why not celebrate

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Redeemer's work for man. These are appropriate.

4. There is no fitness in keeping a day of weekly repose to commemorate the agonies of the crucifixion of Christ, or the activities of the morning of His resurrection.

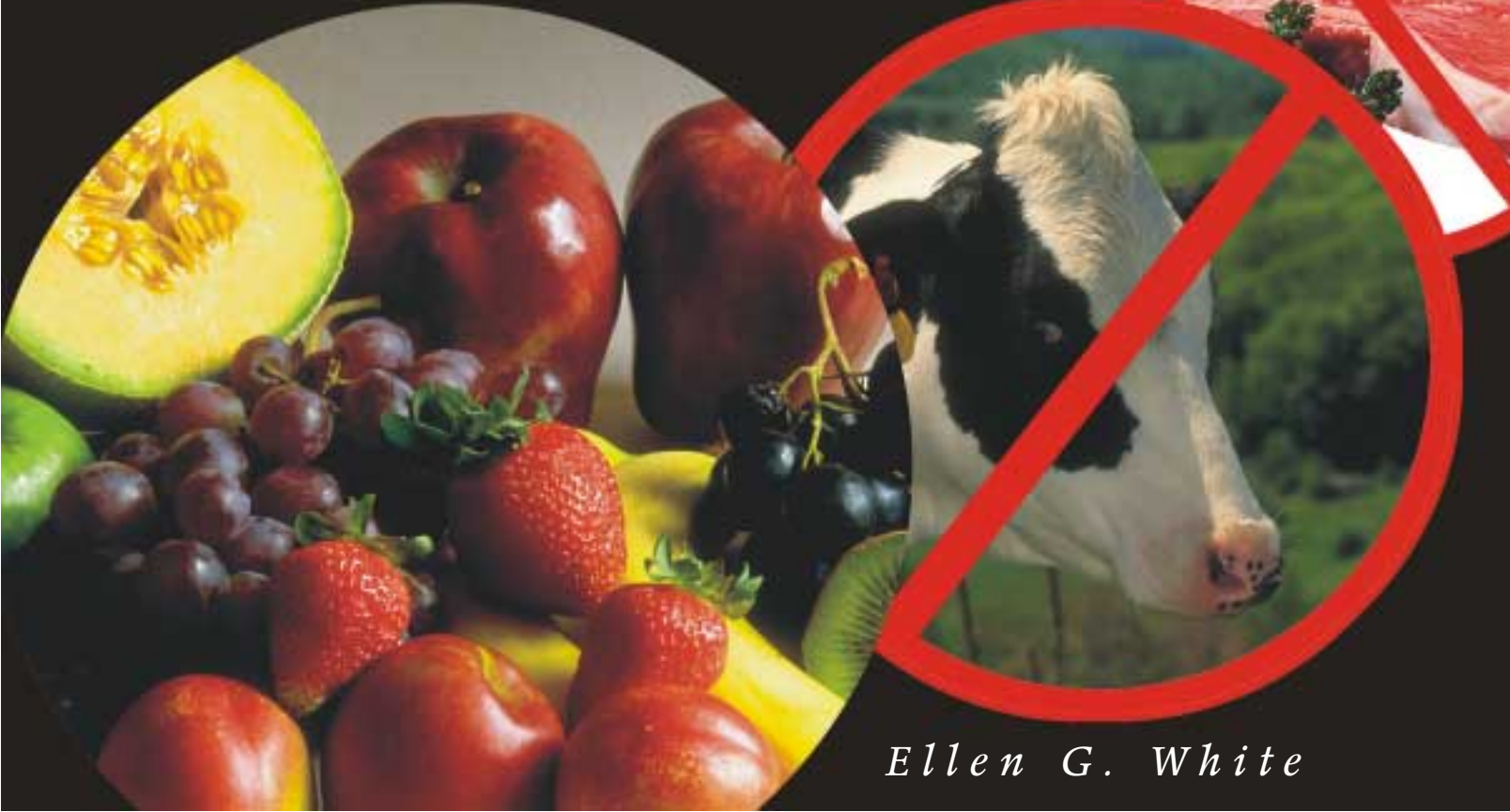
5. But if a day of the week should be kept to celebrate man's redemption, which should it be? — the day on which He shed His blood for our sins, the day on which He rose for our justification, or the day on which He ascended to the Father, to intercede for sinners? The day of the crucifixion, when the greatest event for man's redemption occurred, has the first claim. The apostle does not say that we have redemption through the resurrection; but he does say: "We have redemption through his blood." Ephesians 1:7. Now if a day should be kept to celebrate redemption, should it not be the day on which He shed His blood? Redemption is not completed; but in the Lord's Supper and baptism are two memorials of the greatest events that have occurred in connection with this work for man. Neither of these are weekly memorials. Baptism may be received by the believer on any day of the week; and it is said

both here? Both are equally remembered hereafter. It is said of the redeemed:

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Revelation 5:9. The same also "cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Revelation 4:10-11. Here the redeemed are represented as ascribing praise to both the Creator and the Redeemer. And again, every created intelligence in the universe, in joyful sympathy with man in view of his redemption, is represented in Revelation 5:13, as ascribing "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne [the Creator], and unto the Lamb [the Redeemer], for ever and ever."

We here see that the redeemed, with all the enrapturing facts of redemption completed before them, do not lose sight of the Creation. The

A Reform Needed



Ellen G. White

If Seventh-day Adventists practiced what they profess to believe, if they were sincere health reformers, they would indeed be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. And they would show a far greater zeal for the salvation of those who are ignorant of the truth.

Greater reforms should be seen among the people who claim to be looking for the soon appearing of Christ. Health reform is to do among our people a work which it has not yet done. There are those who ought to be awake to the danger of meat eating, who are still eating the flesh of animals, thus endangering the physical, mental, and spiritual health. Many who are now only half converted on the question of meat eating will go from God's people, to walk no more with them.

In all our work we must obey the laws which God has given, that the physical and spiritual energies may work in harmony. Men may have a

form of godliness, they may even preach the gospel, and yet be unpurified and unsanctified. Ministers should be strictly temperate in their eating and drinking, lest they make crooked paths for their feet, turning the lame — those weak in the faith — out of the way. If while proclaiming the most solemn and important message God has ever given, men war against the truth by indulging wrong habits of eating and drinking, they take all the force from the message they bear.

Those who indulge in meat eating, tea drinking, and gluttony are sowing seeds for a harvest of pain and death. The unhealthful food placed in the stomach strengthens the appetites that war against the soul, developing the lower propensities. A diet of flesh meat tends to develop animalism. A development of animalism lessens spirituality, rendering the mind incapable of understanding truth.

The Word of God plainly warns us that unless we abstain from fleshly lusts, the physical nature will be brought into conflict with the spiritual nature. Lustful eating wars against health and peace. Thus a warfare is instituted between the higher and the lower attributes of the man. The lower propensities, strong and active, oppress the soul. The highest interests of the being are imperiled by the indulgence of appetites unsanctioned by Heaven.

Great care should be taken to form right habits of eating and drinking. The food eaten should be that which will make the best blood. The delicate organs of digestion should be respected. God requires us, by being temperate in all things, to act our part, toward keeping ourselves in health. He cannot enlighten the mind of a man who makes a cesspool of his stomach. He does not hear the prayers of those who are walking in the light of the sparks of their own kindling.

Common Errors in Diet

Intemperance is seen in the quantity as well as in the quality of food eaten. The Lord has instructed me that as a general rule we place too much food in the stomach. Many make themselves uncomfortable by overeating, and sickness is often the result. The Lord did not bring this punishment on them. They brought it on themselves, and God desires them to realize that pain is the result of transgression.

Daily abused, the digestive organs cannot do their work well. A poor quality of blood is made, and thus, through improper eating, the whole machinery is crippled. Give the stomach less to do. It will recover if proper care is shown in regard to the quality and quantity of food eaten.

habits of eating have much to do with the many dull religious exercises of the Sabbath. The diet for the Sabbath should be selected with reference to the duties of the day on which the purest, holiest service is to be offered to God.

Eating has much to do with religion. The spiritual experience is greatly affected by the way in which the stomach is treated. Eating and drinking in accordance with the laws of health promote virtuous actions. But if the stomach is abused by habits that have no foundation in nature, Satan takes advantage of the wrong that has been done, and uses the stomach as an enemy of righteousness, creating a disturbance which affects the entire being. Sacred things are not appreciated. Spiritual zeal diminishes. Peace of mind is lost. There is dissension,

Relation of Health Principles to Spirituality

The failure to follow sound principles has marred the history of God's people. There has been a continual backsliding in health reform, and as a result God is dishonored by a great lack of spirituality. Barriers have been erected which would never have been seen had God's people walked in the light.

Shall we who have had such great opportunities allow the people of the world to go in advance of us in health reform? Shall we cheapen our minds and abuse our talents by wrong eating? Shall we transgress God's holy law by following selfish practices? Shall our inconsistency become a byword? Shall we live such unchristianlike lives that the Saviour will be ashamed to call us brethren?

Shall we not rather do that medical missionary work which is the gospel in practice, living in such a way that the peace of God can rule in our hearts? Shall we not remove every stumbling block from the feet of unbelievers, ever remembering what is due to a profession of Christianity? Far better give up the name of Christian than make a profession and at the same time indulge appetites which strengthen unholy passions.

God calls upon every church member to dedicate his life unreservedly to the Lord's service. He calls for decided reformation. All creation is groaning under the curse. God's people should place themselves where they will grow in grace, being sanctified, body, soul, and spirit, by the truth. When they break away from all health-destroying indulgences, they will have a clearer perception of what constitutes true godliness. A wonderful change will be seen in the religious experience.

The apostle plainly states that those who reach a high standard of righteousness must be temperate in all things. The Lord sends this message to His people: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And

Eating has much to do with religion. The spiritual experience is greatly affected by the way in which the stomach is treated.

Many eat too rapidly. Others eat at one meal varieties of food that do not agree. If men and women would only remember how greatly they afflict the soul when they afflict the stomach, and how deeply Christ is dishonored when the stomach is abused, they would deny the appetite, and thus give the stomach opportunity to recover its healthy action. While sitting at the table, we may do medical missionary work by eating and drinking to the glory of God.

To eat on the Sabbath the same amount of food eaten on a working day, is entirely out of place. The Sabbath is the day set apart for the worship of God, and on it we are to be specially careful in regard to our diet. A clogged stomach means a clogged brain. Too often so large an amount of food is eaten on the Sabbath that the mind is rendered dull and stupid, incapable of appreciating spiritual things. The

strife, and discord. Impatient words are spoken, and unkind deeds are done; dishonest practices are followed, and anger is manifested—and all because the nerves of the brain are disturbed by the abuse heaped on the stomach.

What a pity it is that often, when the greatest self-denial should be exercised, the stomach is crowded with a mass of unhealthful food, which lies there to decompose. The affliction of the stomach afflicts the brain. The imprudent eater does not realize that he is disqualifying himself for giving wise counsel, disqualifying himself for laying plans for the best advancement of the work of God. But this is so. He cannot discern spiritual things, and in council meetings when he should say Yea, he says Nay. He makes propositions that are wide of the mark, because the food he has eaten has benumbed his brain power.

every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to

others, I myself should be a cast-away." 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

"It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk hon-

estly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Romans 13:11-14.✠

Review and Herald, May 27, 1902.

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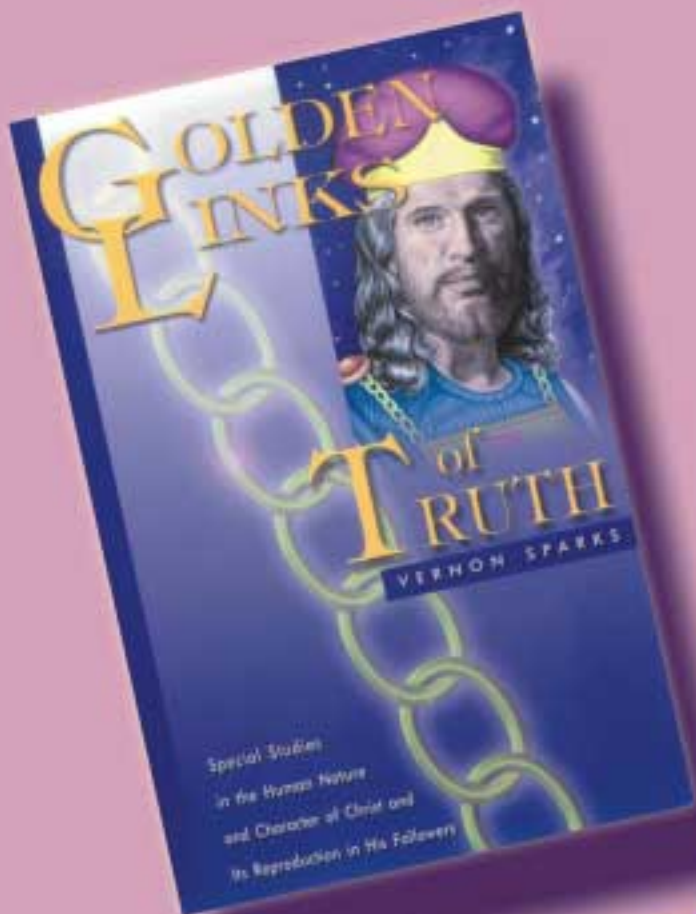
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Cultivating Obedience

This month we share with you the first in a series of articles that discuss how we can cultivate Christian character traits in the hearts of our children. "The Garden of the Heart" in the February 2001 issue of Our Firm Foundation laid the foundation for this series. It is available upon request.

THE EDITORS

When we plant a garden, we sow the good seeds of the crop we wish to produce. If we do not plant the good seed in the garden and pull out the weeds, the weeds will soon take over.

So it is with our children. If we do not plant seeds of righteousness and cultivate those little plants, we will by default grow a harvest of sinful weeds in the hearts of our children. The Scripture counsel is: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21.

One of the most important character traits that we must help our children develop is obedience. It is the very foundation of Christian character. Even Christ, our perfect Example, had to learn obedience: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Hebrews 5:8. Through the trials and temptations He suffered as a boy, a youth, and a man, He learned perfect obedience to His Father's will. That is certainly an encouragement to me, for if Christ learned perfect obedience, then He knows just how to help you and me learn to be obedient and to train our children to be obedient.

We show true obedience by a willing, prompt response—cheerfully fulfilling the duty required. In Jeremiah 7:23, the Lord gives us an example of true obedience and its results: "But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."

Obedience to God's way always brings happiness. If we will teach our children to have true obedience—willing, prompt, and cheerful—they will be very happy children.

This world is hungering to see happy children. Yet many parents have accepted the devil's lie—that children are happiest when they are given everything they desire. However, when we indulge our children and try to buy their happiness, we find that they become more fretful, disobedient, and out of control. We need to return to the Word of God and learn its principles to help us cultivate true obedience and happiness in our children.

If we are not obedient to God, demonstrating a willing, prompt, and cheerful submission to His instructions, we will not understand how to teach our children in a practical way. We can only bring them to the level of experience that we have reached. If we have not yet submitted in complete, willing obedience to our Father, we certainly cannot expect our children to learn how to submit cheerfully to our instructions.

1. Make Obedience Attractive:

The first way we can cultivate the habit of obedience is by making it attractive to our children. How do we make obedience attractive?—By our attitude toward it. How I deal with the daily duties in my home, as a mother, teaches my children how they should perform the tasks they have been given. If I have a cheerful, happy spirit and do my work thoroughly and well, they will see that I find pleasure in serving others and obeying God's Word.

We can also make obedience attractive by not focusing on negative things, but rather by helping our children find enjoyable and wholesome alternatives. When my girls, Allison and Emily, were very young, they liked to come into the kitchen

with me when I was doing dishes, and pull things out of the cupboards and drawers. Now I needed to teach my children obedience, and so I would gently say, "No, Allison," or "No, Emily, you may not play with that," and I would put it back into the cupboard and shut the door. To make obedience attractive, I said, "This cupboard you can play in," for I had specifically made a cupboard that was hands-on for my children. Not only did I open the cupboard and invite them to play with the Tupperware inside, but I also invested myself in them by showing them how to stack the cups inside of each other. I created an environment to stimulate proper obedience by giving them something that they were allowed to do.

2. State Your Expectations Clearly, and Expect Respectful Answers: The second way we can inculcate obedience in our children is to expect respectful answers by making respectful requests. We must make our requests in a polite, respectful way so that the children can clearly understand. Many parents talk to their children in a very demeaning way, which cultivates a spirit of antagonism or resentment. They might say something like this: "I want you to put that junk away and get in the house right now!" Would that spirit stimulate you to cheerful, prompt obedience?—No! If the child were to obey at all, it would probably be only out of fear for what might otherwise happen.

Parents are often vague. If a mother really wants the help of her child, she should say, "Priscilla, mother wants your help right now. Please come help me." When she says, "Priscilla would you *like* to help mommy now?" that leaves the decision up to Priscilla, and she might say, "Oh yes, mommy," or maybe, "I don't want to right now." If we want to teach obedience, we must give a

clear statement of expectation in a gentle, but firm tone which will stimulate the child to respond respectfully and to obey.

If you do not expect your child to obey, do not ask him to do anything. If you ask him to do something and do not require obedience, you are training him to disobey.

3. Train Obedience by Consistent Discipline: It is vitally important that we continue to train our children to be obedient—even when we are applying discipline. So often we parents make our decisions based on the mood that we are in. If we are tired, we have one disposition; if we are happy, we have another disposition; and if we are under stress, we have yet a different disposition. Such training of the children is not governed by principle, but by how we happen to feel at the moment. This method is sure to bring the family to disaster.

In our homes, we need to have clear, consistent rules which are based upon the principles of God's Word. They should not be arbitrary or unreasonable, but simple rules that our children know are consistently followed. Too often we will say "Yes" to get a few moments of peace because we do not want to deal with their need right then, or we will put our foot down to something innocent and harmless, and say "No." If we desire to cultivate obedience, our decisions must be based upon the principles and boundaries that have already been established in our home.

4. Be Firm, Consistent, Patient, and Persevering: When we train our children to be obedient with firm, consistent, patient, and persevering attention, the Lord will bless our efforts.

On one occasion, a family visited in our home so that we could help them learn the principles of Christian family government. They had three children; the oldest was a six-year-old boy who had a habit of outright disobedience. After the first meal, the boy offered to help because he saw my children doing their chores. I said, "Okay, why don't you sweep the kitchen for me? Do you know how to sweep?" He said he did, but it soon

become apparent that he did not know how to sweep properly, and yet he refused any guidance. He wanted to do it his way and then to quit as soon as he grew tired. (That is not obedience. If my child says he wants to sweep the floor, or if I request him to sweep the floor, I should expect him to complete the project. This consistency is vitally important in teaching obedience.)

The child sat down, stiffened up, and refused to sweep the floor. We said, "If that is the choice that you are making, that is not a very good choice." We did not try to force obedience, but we made him aware of the consequences of his choices. The longer he sat stubbornly refusing to obey, the longer became the list of privileges he would miss. It took about an hour-and-a-half of patient perseverance. We prayed for and with the boy to surrender his heart. We were lovingly firm and consistent in our expectation, and we repeatedly called to his heart to see that he was unhappy because he was choosing his own selfish way instead of surrendering his heart to Jesus.

When he recognized his error and saw a new and better way, he made the choice to surrender his heart, and he found the joy of obedience. When he finally finished with the floor, he was a very happy child! Because he finally got the job done, did we alter the consequences that he had accumulated?—No. If we had given in, and not followed through, we would have taught the little boy to be more stubborn the next time. So he continued the rest of the evening to experience the consequences of his choices.

The next morning, the first thing the little boy said to me was, "Mrs. Waters, I want to be a happy boy today." And I said, "I am so glad you do. I want to be a happy mother today, too, and with Jesus' help, we can be." He was so excited! For the rest of his visit we had hardly any difficulty with him regarding anything we asked him to do. After disobedience was cultivated for six years, he found the joy of obedience in one day. Do you see how we can work with the principles of Heaven?

5. Give Encouragement: We need to encourage the good as we teach our children what behavior is not acceptable. We might say, "No, we do not want you to stand on the table for song service. Would you like me to get you a chair so you can stand and sing?" Here we are teaching obedience, and pointing out what behavior is appropriate and what is not appropriate. We are also encouraging their participation, helping them to find joy in a right submission. When you see that your child is struggling with something difficult, just a look, a smile, a word of encouragement, can make all the difference. Take time to give encouragement!

6. Show the Natural Consequences of Disobedience: Finally, to cultivate obedience means that when a child makes a decision to deliberately disobey, there must be a natural consequence. These consequences are not intended to force obedience, but to warn against wrongdoing. Proverbs 13:15 tells us, "Good understanding giveth favour [obedience is good understanding; it brings favor, happiness, joy, and contentment]: but the way of transgressors is hard."

Parents, as we truly surrender to our heavenly Father, praying for His Spirit to manage us and work in the heart of our child, He will help us find appropriate consequences to deal with deliberate disobedience. As we give the necessary correction, our children will see how much we love them and long for them to do what is right. The working of Christ's Spirit in our own heart and in our child's heart will be the greatest motivation to our child to choose what is right and to obey. ✨

Next month we will discuss how to cultivate a companion trait: self-control.



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Christ Is God

Clark Floyd

Various groups throughout Bible history have sought to treat Christ as less than divine—as a created or a derived being. Currently, there are some, even among Seventh-day Adventists, or former Seventh-day Adventists, who are speaking against the existence of the Trinity. Some of these persons make their antitrinitarian stance the major thrust of their outreach to others.

Ellen White has stated: “God means that testing truth shall be brought to the front and become a subject of examination and discussion, even if it is through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated. Every controversy, every reproach, every slander, will be God’s means of provoking inquiry and awakening

minds that otherwise would slumber.”¹

The belief that there are three Persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is one of the fundamental doctrinal beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Lamentably, many of us have assumed the veracity of this fundamental belief without studying it as fully as we should. We thus become prey to the subtlety of those with sharp minds who speak against the existence of the Trinity. God in His great love allows us to be challenged, that our study and understanding will be deepened—that our faith will be based upon a “Thus saith the Lord.” “God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among

them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat.”²

One God

A very central scripture of the fundamental Jewish belief regarding God is the “Shema”—the statement of the Torah in Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.” In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, two different Hebrew terms are used that are translated into the English as “one.” First, *yachad* is found in Genesis 22:2, 12, 16, “thine only son.” The meaning conveyed by *yachad* is “the one and only.” Thus *yachad* gives an exclusiveness to the term “one”—one by itself, none other. Second, *echad* is found in Genesis 2:24, speaking of a married man and woman as “one flesh,” yet being inclusive of two

persons. This definition is a “unity” of one. More than one is included, but because of the sameness or united aspect, they are considered as one. *Echad* is found again in Exodus 24:3: “All the people answered with ONE voice.” (Emphasis supplied by author unless otherwise noted.) This is the unity *one*, for many are found within the one.

It is *echad*, the unity *one*, that is used in the “Shema” (Deuteronomy 6:4), “one LORD.” Therefore the Trinity is recognized as fitting within the idea of one God. This plurality of persons within the one-God concept is reinforced by other scriptures as well. Genesis 1:26, for instance, reads, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” *Elohim*, the Hebrew plural of God, is the generic term used for God throughout the first chapter of Genesis, as well as in many other places in the Old Testament. In Genesis 15:2 the word *adonai*, the plural form in the Hebrew, is used for Lord. “And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?” The singular of this same word is found in Genesis 18:12, referring to man: “Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord [Abram] being old also?” The one God is very clearly a plural God within a unity-God form.

Matthew 3:13–17 describes Jesus by the Jordan River at the time of His baptism. The Holy Spirit very clearly and separately, “like a dove,” descends from Heaven and lights upon Him. Then a voice from Heaven, from the Father, speaks, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus counsels us to baptize “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Ellen White speaks of the triune God in *Evangelism*, 614–615: “There are three living persons of the heavenly trio.” “The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. . . . The Comforter that Christ promised to

send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.”

While at Avondale School, Ellen White spoke to the students concerning this third person of the Godhead: “We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.” *Ibid.*, 616. “The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.” *Ibid.*, 617.

The Divinity of Christ

“In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. ‘He that hath the Son hath life.’ 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.”³ Therefore Satan, the one who desires to steal away our eternal life, will seek in every way he can to suggest to us and try to convince us that Jesus is not really God and that He is not equal with the Father.

But the Scripture, as well as the Spirit of Prophecy, is clear that Jesus is God. Ellen White in *Testimonies to Ministers*, 253, counsels Seventh-day Adventists to give the Lord an opportunity to “give the people a fair chance to know that we are believers in Christ, that we do believe in the divinity of Christ and in His preexistence.”

Jesus, Himself, in John 5:23 points out “all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” Jehovah’s Witnesses and those Seventh-day Adventists who reduce the Son to a lesser position than that of the Father, actually dishonor the Father, for Jesus goes on to say, “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” He then connects eternal life with the right understanding of the words He has just spoken in regard to the Father and the Son.

John 5:18 says that the Jews sought to kill Jesus because by His statements He had made “himself

equal with God.” And the Jews became more upset with Jesus because He claimed to be the great I AM (see John 8:51–59)—the Jehovah or Yaweh of the Old Testament. They sought to stone Him for this claim. The Jews again tried to stone Jesus (see John 10:31) when He stated, “I and my Father are one.” Verse 30. They said they were doing so because they saw Him as a man, while He was claiming to be God. See verse 33. Jesus adds to His claim of being God in subsequent verses and quotations.

However, Jesus did hold back His divinity while upon this earth, appearing in His humanity and allowing the Father’s divinity to work through Him that He might be an example for us, showing what could be accomplished when divinity is combined with humanity. See John 8:28. For instance, Ellen White tells us that “humanity, combined with divinity, does not commit sin.”⁴

There are many statements in the Spirit of Prophecy which reinforce belief in the divinity of Christ. “The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of Heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God.”⁵

Speaking of the Father and the Son, Sister White says, “They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one.”⁶ “In speaking of His preexistence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him.”⁷

According to Isaiah 9:6, Christ is our “everlasting Father.” Ellen White also says, “Jesus is not only our Shepherd; He is our ‘everlasting Father.’ ”⁸ “By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity,

He lays hold upon the throne of God. . . . It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, 'I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.' Exodus 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came 'in the likeness of men,' He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God 'manifest in the flesh.' 1 Timothy 3:16. And to us He says: 'I AM the Good Shepherd,' 'I AM the living Bread,' 'I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6. . . . I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. 'God with us' is the surety of our deliverance. . . . It is the 'Son of man' whose name shall be called, 'Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the

fore, it is thought that if Jesus was begotten, He had a beginning. Arius—a leader of the early Christian church—held this view.¹¹

But let us look at this word "begotten." The Greek word from which begotten is translated in the King James Bible is *monogenes*. In the New Testament this word is used nine times—five times in regard to Christ, four times in regard to others. It is applied to Jesus in John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; and 1 John 4:9. It is applied to others in Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; and Hebrews 11:17.

Now, in order to analyze this word, we go to a Greek dictionary. *Monogenes* means "one of a kind." The Greek-English Lexicon by Liddell-Scott says: "the only member of a gender or a kind, single." Moulton-Milligan states: "one of a kind, only, unique," not "only begotten," which would be *monogennos*.

son of Abraham. Yet, Isaac was not even the first son of Abraham, let alone the only begotten son. Therefore we see that the word *monogenes* really means "unique" or "one of a kind," the only one of the promise.

When the authors in the New Testament have used *monogenes*, they have used it to show that a particular human is unique, very beloved to the heart of someone. Jesus is this one of a kind, only one, unique one—the *yachid* one.

In Colossians 1:15 is another difficult phrase, "the firstborn of every creature." Investigation shows that the problem here cannot be attributable to a bad translation. So the question arises, If Christ was "firstborn," then He must have been *born*, and therefore, how can He be everlasting?

The Greek term used is *prototokos* and is found seven times in reference to Jesus in the New Testament. Two of the passages refer to His birth from Mary and therefore are no problem. See Matthew 1:25 and Luke 2:7. However, the other five create more of a theological problem: Romans 8:29, "firstborn among many brethren"; Colossians 1:15, "firstborn of every creature"; Colossians 1:18, "firstborn from the dead"; Hebrews 1:6, "first begotten into the world"; and Revelation 1:5, "first begotten of the dead."

In analyzing this term—firstborn—we must understand how it was used in Bible times. The basic Jewish social structure was built around the son who was the firstborn. The firstborn son had privileges that applied only to him. He had authority over the younger sons. He took the place of the father if—or when—the father died. He would then take over the responsibility of becoming the priest of the family.

Isaac was thought of as Abraham's firstborn because he was the son of promise, on whom all the privileges would be bestowed. Yet he was not physically the firstborn son of Abraham. Likewise, contrary to custom, not Esau, but Jacob, received all the privileges of the firstborn. This bestowal again was not in accord with the physical order of birth.

*"It is the 'Son of man' whose name shall be called,
'Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting
Father, The Prince of Peace.'"*

Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both."⁹

"The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us."¹⁰

Remember, brothers and sisters, "the divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life." Do not let Satan, through the deceit of a silver tongue, steal that assurance from you by lowering the position of our beloved Saviour in your sight.

Handling Difficult Statements

Often Satan's subtlety is brought to bear upon the Christian believer through the misuse of statements found in the Bible. Some of those statements which are used to undercut belief in the divinity of Christ are analyzed in the following paragraphs:

In John 3:16 Jesus is referred to as the "only begotten Son." There-

In the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Greek word *monogenes* is used three times and translated from the Hebrew word *yachid*, meaning "one and only one." Two of the places where it is found are in Psalm 22:20 (see margin in King James Version), "my only one"; and in Psalm 35:17 (see margin in King James Version) "only one." Thus it is evident that this term *monogenes* should be translated as "one of a kind," "unique" or "only one," not "only begotten." Also, there are several passages where *monogenes* occurs referring to people other than Christ. In Luke 7:12 it is translated in the King James Version as "only" without the term "begotten"; in Luke 8:42 the King James again uses "only," meaning "one of a kind"; and in Luke 9:38, the King James translates *monogenes* as "only," "single one" or "unique." However, in Hebrews 11:17, the King James refers to Isaac as the "only begotten"

Jacob then had 12 sons, but his firstborn, Reuben, lost the dignity of that position because he slept with one of his father's wives. The sovereignty of the firstborn went to Judah, while the priesthood went to the Levites. In the Messiah is reunited the sovereignty with the priesthood—Christ is both Priest and King. Since He could not be born of both tribes, He was born of the sovereign of Judah—yet performing of the priestly function until the time of His final coronation.

This Jewish background is important when we look at the phrases speaking of Jesus as the firstborn. The term *prototokos*, or firstborn, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, is used 130 times, 74 of which appear in the Pentateuch. In the majority of the usages, it applies to an actual physical birth of a human or an animal being lower in status in a family, but there are exceptions:

In Psalm 89:20–27, David is spoken of as “my firstborn,” referring to him as the highest of all kings. 1 Samuel 16:10–12, states that David was not Jesse's firstborn, but, in fact, was the youngest. The chronological sequence of the physical birth was not important, for firstborn actually refers here to status.

In Exodus 4:22 Israel is called “my firstborn,” but in reality Israel, or Jacob, was born after Esau. See Genesis 25:25–26; Genesis 32:28. In Jeremiah 31:9 Ephraim is referred to as “my firstborn” while in actuality Manasseh was the firstborn. See Genesis 41:50–52.

The passages referring to Jesus as the firstborn, with the exception of those referring to His physical birth, are showing that Jesus is unique in some way. He is one of a kind. He has the rights and privileges usually associated with the firstborn of a Jewish family. The whole Creation should look upon Him as the only one of a kind. Others rose from the dead before Him—Moses and Lazarus for instance. But He was unique among those who arose from the dead.

We tend to look at these phrases from a Western mindset rather than

the way we should—from the Jewish frame of reference.

In Hebrews 1:5 is the phrase, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” Not only does this verse say that He was begotten, but it also gives a definite time, “this day.” What do we do with this? The Greek is *gegenneka* meaning “I have begotten.” This expression is found in Psalm 2:7 (in the Septuagint); Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; and Hebrews 5:5 in the context of the high priesthood of Christ. The statements in the New Testament are quotations from Psalm 2:7.

Satan will seek to remove from the earth the knowledge of Christ's divinity just as he has sought to say that the law has been done away with, or that we cannot keep the law. He will attack in whatever way he feels he can to undermine our eternal life.

Then in order to analyze this word, we go first to Psalm 2:7 to read the whole context, and we find that it is a coronation psalm. The weakest moment in government occurs when a king replaces a previous king. This is the point when people—if they so choose—will try to break away from the rulership. But this psalm claims that God is in control of the coronation, that God is setting up His King. Therefore we see that it cannot refer to his physical birth since the king is an adult.

This psalm refers to that day when the king is placed within his office. It states that he has now entered into a unique relationship with God (representative of God).

In 2 Samuel 7:14, God speaks through Nathan the prophet to David about Solomon saying, “I will be his father, and he shall be my son.” How would the Jewish mind see this relationship?

Solomon Freehof's commentary of the Old Testament on Psalms, states that the phrase under study is used in a symbolic sense. In like manner, the passage in Psalm 2:7 referring to “thou art my Son; this

day have I begotten thee,” means that on the day of enthronement, the king became the servant of God. The Son was “begotten.”

In Hebrews 1:5 the phrase is used in the same way to refer, not to the birth of Jesus, but to His enthronement—His coronation. The Hebrew mind would understand. Paul uses the same phrase in Acts 13:33 to refer to the resurrection of Christ. As in baptism where the new birth is symbolized by the resurrection from the watery grave, so the resurrection of Jesus is like a new birth; Jesus is “begotten” that day.

Jesus is divine. He is the great I AM of the Old Testament. He is the everlasting Father. He is our Saviour as well as our Lord, and on our understanding and partaking of His divinity rests our eternal life. Satan will seek to remove from the earth the knowledge of Christ's divinity just as he has sought to say that the law has been done away with, or that we cannot keep the law. He will attack in whatever way he feels he can to undermine our eternal life. Do not let him steal away your right to the tree of life, which comes only through a right relationship built on a right understanding of Jesus Christ. ✽

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- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 453.
- ² *Ibid.*, 707.
- ³ *The Desire of Ages*, 530.
- ⁴ *The Ministry of Healing*, 180.
- ⁵ *Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906.
- ⁶ *The Ministry of Healing*, 422.
- ⁷ *Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1900.
- ⁸ *The Desire of Ages*, 483.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 24–25.
- ¹⁰ *Education*, 132.
- ¹¹ “Arius (A.D. 250–336) denied the eternity and absolute deity of Christ, and made Him the first and highest of created beings.”—“Christology,” *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 250.

Theistic Evolution Versus Creation

News Items: “Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind., told the [*National Catholic Register*] that intelligent design is the belief of most Americans. He noted that a majority of Americans—68%, according to a 1999 poll commissioned by People for the American Way—believe that God guided evolution.” *National Catholic Register*, article “University Weighs Teaching God’s Role in Science,” 7/30–8/5/00.

“The liberal, Washington-based civil liberties group People for the American Way took its own poll on the issue recently and found about eight in 10 U.S. adults support the teaching of evolution, but nearly as many believe creationism also has a place in the curriculum.

“To put it simply, this poll shows that most Americans believe that God created evolution.” *The Christian News*, May 15, 2000, page 20.

“Baylor University in Waco, Texas, is deeply committed to retaining its Baptist identity—so a student solemnly assured me when I visited the campus recently. Many parents pay dearly to send their children to a university that will pass on their Baptist heritage.

“Those same parents might be surprised to learn that the Baylor faculty wants to shut down a new center on campus devoted to science and religion. Why? Because it has committed the thought crime of questioning Darwinism. . . .

“In April, the Center [at Baylor University] held a star-studded conference. . . . Proponents of naturalistic evolution engaged with defenders of theistic evolution. . . .” *WORLD*, May 27, 2000, page 12.

End-Time Perspective: About twenty years ago, I remember a friend of mine sharing his belief that God initiated the evolutionary process billions of years ago in the creation of our little world. He said,

“God either started man off billions of years ago as a single cell form of life, or he introduced man into the world millions of years down the road.”

Theistic evolution teaches that each day of creation represents some long epoch in an evolutionary process overseen by God. Besides this view being supported by neither science nor the Scriptures, it also raises some very serious ethical problems. Evolution, as understood in the Western World, is based upon the concept of the survival of the fittest—the elimination of the weakest via competition. With man reigning supreme in our world, it suggests that man was rather selfish, sinful, and bloodthirsty from the day he was created. How could man begin in the image of God and be so competitive and aggressive against other forms of life? Would a God of love start off man’s existence in such a savage way?

What theistic evolution challenges is the very issue of sin, the origin of evil, the nature of man, the nature of Christ, the Creation account, the seventh-day Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, and much more.

If theistic evolution were true, then why would God establish the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial of creating our world in six days? Furthermore, why would God reinforce the seventh-day Sabbath in the Ten Commandments for the same reason?

Even though the Creation account in Genesis is not written in scientific terms, it clearly supports that God created our world in six literal days. Each day was described as an “evening” and a “morning.” This is a clear reference to a 24-hour day. In addition, there is no other explanation for a seven-day week without the Creation account. The same God that could create man through some evolutionary process is the same God that could create man in an instant by the word of His mouth.

But how could this affect the end-time scenario? If the majority of people view man’s existence through some theistic evolutionary process, taking millions or billions of years, then the Sabbath loses its significance. To them, any day could be chosen as a day of rest.

If man has evolved under God’s direction over thousands, millions, or billions of years, then there is no concept of the restoration of man in God’s image, but a continual and gradual process of refinement and improvement.

The Vatican’s Blasphemous Claim

News Item: “Pope John Paul met with Protestant leaders in the Vatican Sept. 18. ‘The commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenical dialogue is irrevocable,’ he told members of a dialogue commission of Catholics and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, which is meeting near Rome Sept. 13–19, according to Catholic News Service. The Reformed churches had considered canceling the meeting after release of *Dominus Iesus*, which said the church of Christ ‘continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church.’ It said Christian denominations without a Catholic-recognized Eucharist and ordained ministry are ‘not, properly speaking, churches.’” *Religion Today News Summary* for Tuesday, September 26, 2000.

“‘A recently released Vatican document claiming that the Roman Catholic Church holds a monopoly on Christian legitimacy should not come as a surprise to the religious community,’ says Dr. Bert B. Beach, director of Inter-church Relations for the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide.

“‘There is nothing new here,’ says Beach of the document that has prompted an outcry from many non-Catholic Christian denominations around the world. ‘The Roman Catholic Church has never affirmed the validity of Protestant churches. Despite its involvement in interfaith dialogues over the years, it has



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always claimed primacy as being the only "true church."''''

End-Time Perspective: Two false dogmas continue to mislead the Roman Catholic Church into her erroneous claim of being the only Church of Jesus Christ. The Catholic dogmas of the sinlessness of Mary and the infallibility of the pope rest upon fiction and fraud.



When the Catholic Church clothes Mary with divine attributes it perverts **Christianity** into Marianism. The worship of a human woman is virtually substituted for the worship of Christ.

The teaching of the sinlessness of Mary is derived from the erroneous doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It is taught that Mary was born different than you and I – that she was immaculately conceived and "preserved immune from any stain of original sin in the first moment of her conception." Cesar Fidal, *The Myth of Mary*, 145, quoted from the papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (DS 2803). In other words, Mary was sinless. Yet, the Bible states correctly that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. In

addition, Mary herself admitted to her need of a Saviour. See Luke 1:47.

However, this erroneous doctrine of Mary's sinlessness has gone from bad to worse. From the time that the Immaculate Conception was established as an official dogma of the Catholic Church in 1854, the Papacy has gone so far as blasphemously calling Mary a co-Redeemer or co-Mediatrix with Christ.

This continuous elevation of Mary before Catholics, Protestants, and non-Christian religions prepares the world to edify the Pope and the Catholic system. With over 200 new apparitions of "Mary" every year, some giving messages of "her son's soon return," Satan is preparing for his grand deception in the personation of Christ.

Concerning papal infallibility, which supposedly exempts the Pope from error, we have a mortal, sinful man clothed with divine attributes. This turns Catholicism into papalism – not Christianity. This gross error turns the worshiper to the fallible man-god rather than to the sinless God-man, Jesus Christ.

While the worship of Mary is dangerously fraught with all the trappings of spiritualism, the erroneous claims of papal infallibility may be worse yet. Why? – The dogma of papal infallibility has to do with the question of absolute power and authority.

Here is a mere man challenging the will of God as expressed in the Ten Commandments. Here is a fallible man assuming the role of God on earth. Here is a man who will lead millions to hell in the end of time. Yet, he claims infallibility. Tragically, the vast majority of the world will be deceived through spiritualism to follow his lead in the end of time.

Not All Blind Yet

News Item: "Catholicism is viewed negatively by about one-fourth of Americans, but it fared better than Christian fundamentalism, a Gallup Poll reported.

"The same poll found that nearly two-thirds of Americans view the Catholic religion favorably.

"Contrary to widespread opinion that anti-Catholic bias exists disproportionately among evangelical or born-again Protestants, the survey found that only 29% of that group, compared to 30% of Protestants generally, described their opinion of Catholicism as 'unfavorable.'

"Despite recent flaps over alleged insensitivity to Catholic feelings by Republican leaders, the poll found that Democrats and independents are more likely than Republicans to view Catholicism negatively." *National Catholic Register*, April 23–29, 2000.

End-Time Perspective: Three hundred years ago, the Puritans would have hung the pope from the highest tree had he tried to step on American soil. Two hundred years ago, nearly every Protestant still believed that the Papacy represented the antichrist power in Bible prophecy. One hundred years ago, most Protestants would have still viewed Catholicism unfavorably. However it is not that Catholicism has changed doctrinally. She still believes in papal infallibility, salvation through the seven sacraments, and the adoration of Mary. What has really changed is the Protestant world. Evangelicals have clasped hands with the antichrist for political and social gain. They no longer think the Papacy is the antichrist power. They teach that the antichrist is some future and singular, diabolical figure living in Europe, preparing to take over the world for seven years.

Yet there is still a feeling among many Protestants that Catholicism is not an acceptable Christian religion. While God still has many of His people within the Catholic Church, it has as a religious body long ago apostatized from the truth once handed down to the saints. But in the end, spiritualism will sway a majority of the people of the world to "wondering after" the spiritually fallen papal power. See Revelation 13:3. ✠

THE THREE SHAKINGS

Cody Francis



Have you ever been in an earthquake? Earthquakes are important signs of the end. It was an earthquake in Lisbon, Portugal, that started the signs of the time of the end.

Growing up on the Mississippi River, I heard about the greatest earthquake ever to occur there, which happened around A.D. 1800. It was so strong that the Mississippi River flowed backwards for five or ten minutes. We have the record of a steamboat captain who went backwards with the flow while the bluffs were crashing into the water. Experts estimate that it measured 8 on the Richter scale—an unusual event at that time.

In the last century there were several big earthquakes, such as: in San Francisco in 1906, which Ellen White saw in vision two days before it happened; in Anchorage, Alaska; and more recently in San Francisco, during which the Bay Bridge collapsed.

Each of us will go through three shakings. I hope most earnestly that each of us will survive all three shakings. These shakings will become successively better and better for the saints, and worse and worse for those who disregard God's law.

The Church Is Shaken

The underlying issue of the shaking of the church is, "Where is your trust?" Is it in man or God? Jeremiah 17:5 says: "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."

We can make flesh our arm in a number of ways. We can make our organization an arm of flesh by saying, "This organization or this church will not be shaken out. We will trust in it." See Jeremiah 7:4. Let us not put our trust in any organization or in any man, because all who have their trust in the arm of flesh will be shaken out. All who are not firmly rooted and grounded in the Rock Jesus Christ, will be shaken out.

We must not trust even in our own arm. We do this when we say, "I can do this by myself." That is what Peter said. But Jesus replied, "Peter, before the cock crows, you are going to deny Me three times." And Peter said, "You have to be mistaken. I would never deny You, Lord. Though all these deny You, I will not." See Matthew 26:34–35.

Peter trusted in himself, and because he trusted in himself, he was shaken. We must put our trust in God

and in His Word. If our trust is not there, we will, like Peter, deny our Lord.

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.” Jeremiah 17:7. We are blessed if we put our trust in the Lord in order to stand. Cain trusted in his own arm when he brought his very best, but that was not what God required. He said, “I will trust in my own arm. I do not want to go to Abel and ask for a lamb to have a blood sacrifice to point forward to the Messiah.” But Abel said, “I will bring the best of my flock. I will do what the Lord has said. I will trust that if I obey, He will deliver me.”

Where is our trust? Is it in our own arm? In our pastor’s arm? In an organization? If we trust in the arm of flesh, we are virtually denying God’s power.

Isaiah commanded: “Cease ye from man.” Isaiah 2:22. The whole issue of the shaking is, “Are we leaning on the arm of flesh, or on the Omnipotent arm of God?” If we will obey explicitly, like Abel, and trust in God, we will also be accepted.

We can always trust God. When we come to a dark place in our lives, we can trust that He will see us through. Would it be trust if we could see through the darkness to the other side? –No, but God has given us evidence to strengthen our faith. Just consider all the accounts in the Bible of God sustaining His people. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and as long as we do not turn from Him, He will hold us fast.

The shaking is painful, but it is necessary. Why is it necessary? If in a box of apples there is one rotten apple, all the apples around it will spoil and become rotten as well. The shaking is to test and sift the good from the bad in order to preserve the good.

During this shaking, the world exults. They will say, “Your numbers are getting smaller. Many people are leaving you.” But if we will hang on and keep our trust firm in the Lord, He will never leave us, nor forsake us. See Hebrews 13:5. Of

the three shakings, this is the most difficult shaking for God’s church, but it is also necessary.

There was a parallel of today’s shaking in Jesus’ time. It lasted throughout the life and ministry of Jesus. We read in John, chapter 6, that many of His disciples walked no more with Him because He said in essence: “I am not here for temporal gains; I am here to free you from your sins.”

The company that followed Jesus became smaller until eventually, at the cross, there were only eleven men and a few women remaining. To see how essential this shaking

devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:1–4.

Before Christ’s second coming, the earth will be lightened with His glory. This will shake the nations.

The shaking is painful, but it is necessary. Why is it necessary? . . . The shaking is to test and sift the good from the bad in order to preserve the good.

was, consider Judas. The disciples trusted in Judas because he seemed to be eloquent, intelligent, and to have more ability than the other disciples, but inside he was rotten. His influence would only have corrupted the others had he continued among them.

The Nations Shake

The second shaking shakes the nations of this earth. This shaking is much more exciting and enjoyable for God’s people. It is necessary, though, that the first shaking – the shaking of the church – take place before the second shaking – the shaking of the nations – occurs. If we do not make it through the first shaking, we will not be a part of this other shaking – when the church shakes the nations.

When the nations shake, it is going to be more powerful than anything yet seen. “After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of

The glory of God will go all the way around the earth – it will be a worldwide message.

The day of Pentecost was just a foretaste of what it will be like when the earth is lightened with His glory! When that other angel comes down, the manifestation of power will be much greater than it was in the day of Pentecost. “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats [vats] shall overflow with wine and oil.” Joel 2:23–24.

I want to be part of that experience! On the day of Pentecost, three thousand were added to the church. Then the gospel went to all the then-known world in just a matter of years. But that will be a small event in comparison to what will happen when the nations shake. We are very privileged to be living in this period of earth’s history, and to have the opportunity to be a part of that exciting work.

Ellen White tells us that the loud cry will be ten times greater than the midnight cry of the 1840s.¹ Just think about that! During the midnight cry, the first angel's message went to every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation. Joseph Wolfe, missionary to the world, preached the soon coming of Jesus to Jews, Hindus, Turks, and even to the U.S. Congress, warning them that the hour of His judgment had come. La Cunza, a Jesuit priest in South America, preached the same first angel's message there. In Scandinavia, children between six and eight years of age preached the message, saying that Jesus is soon to come, while ministers could not preach it because they were silenced by the church.

William Miller preached the first angel's message to hundreds of thousands of people who flocked to

voice, the whole earth shall be lightened with His glory, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon His people. The revenue of glory has been accumulating for this closing work of the Third Angel's Message. The prayers that have been ascending for the fulfillment of the promise, the descent of the Holy Spirit, not one has been lost. Each prayer has been accumulating, ready to overflow and pour forth a healing flood of heavenly influence and accumulated light all over the world."³

The prayers have been accumulating; none have been lost. That should urge us to pray more. The more we pray for it, the more quickly it will come and the more powerful it will be. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked

altar — we are not ready for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Of Jesus, John the Baptist said, "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." John 3:34. Why could God entrust the Holy Spirit without measure to Jesus? — Because He had no sin (see 1 Peter 2:22), and that is the only way He can entrust us also with the Holy Spirit without measure.

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Corinthians 3:17. We need liberty from sin in order for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us fully. We cannot just *believe* it; we have to *experience* it. God says, "Taste and see." Psalms 34:8. We have to know for ourselves that He is good, and we have to be willing to give up all sin by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God poured out the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost after they experienced the cross. They saw the deep spiritual significance of it. They spent ten days in the upper room, praying, searching their hearts, and making things right. That experience enabled them to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We will be enabled, in the same way, to partake of the latter rain and to be a part of the church that shakes the nations.

Are we spending time at the cross daily? When we look at the cross, we see how horrible sin is, and how much we need to have it taken out of our hearts. We must ask ourselves, Is there anything that is separating me from God? Am I clinging to any sin, so that God cannot use me for the fulfillment of His great work? We must humble ourselves before the Lord, and He will show us what we must do.

The third thing we must do in order to receive the latter rain is to work earnestly for others. In order for the other angel to unite with the third angel, we must be proclaiming the third angel's message. "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, *and work*: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:

God poured out the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost after they experienced the cross. . . . We will be enabled, in the same way, to partake of the latter rain and to be a part of the church that shakes the nations.

hear him in America. But the latter rain, the coming of the "other angel," who is going to lighten the earth with His glory, will be ten times more powerful than that! Do you want to have a part in giving that message? God is waiting on you and me and others like us.

How can we have a part in giving the latter-rain message? — First, we must pray for it. In every assembly we need to pray for it,² because God loves to hear and answer our prayers. Just as a child asks his father for something good, and the father *wants* to give it to him, so our heavenly Father wants to give us the latter rain. He wants to fit us so we can have a part in the work of this "other angel." But God cannot give us the latter rain while we are not yet ready.

"When the Third Angel's Message shall go forth with a loud

ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14. We need to pray for it as we have never prayed before!

That is not all we need to do to have a part in this second shaking. We need to become a part of fulfilling God's promise in Isaiah 13:12-13: "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."

Jesus by His death upon the cross of Calvary has made provision so that we can be made more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. To make use of the provision, we must give up our sins.

If we have not given up our sins — if we have not laid all on the

according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts." Haggai 2:4-7. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

After the nations are shaken, Jesus can come, for everyone will have made his own decision. In Noah's day everyone heard that a flood was coming. Every person on the globe had a chance to make his decision—whether to heed Noah and go into the ark, or to ignore Noah and his message from God. So it is today, Jesus will not come the second time until everyone has had a chance to hear the truth and make a decision. That is the work that we have to do. We have a part to play in shaking the nations and hastening Jesus' soon coming.

We must be working earnestly for the salvation of our neighbors, our friends, and all we come in contact with. We are to pray: "Lord, What more can I do to be a part of the proclamation of the third angel's message? I want to be a part of the work of that other angel who lightens the earth with his glory and shakes all nations."

The gospel has to go to all the world before the end can come. Paul said that the gospel was "preached to every creature" in his day. Colossians 1:23. *And it must be again.* They said about Paul, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." Acts 17:6. We need to be one of those today who work to help turn our world upside down!

How badly do we want Jesus to come? Can other people tell by how we live that we want Him to come? The angel who lightens the earth with His glory is never going to come upon someone who is not working earnestly for the salvation of souls now.

To be living during the time when the earth is lightened with God's great glory, to be living during the time when the Holy Spirit is poured out, and yet not know that it is going on, would be dreadful. That will be our experience if we are not praying for it and removing sin from our lives, and if we are not earnestly working for others.

The Heavens Shake

We have seen that during the first shaking, the church will shake. During the second shaking, the nations will shake. The third and best shaking is when the heavens and the earth will shake. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and

the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Matthew 24:29.

While the first three of these signs have already been fulfilled, the powers of heaven have not yet been shaken. This will occur at the voice of God, just a few days before Jesus comes.⁴ This shaking will be wonderful for God's people, for they will know that they will soon be delivered. It is the worst shaking for those who are wicked, because they will realize that they are lost.

Immediately after this shaking "shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Verse 30. Then Jesus will come! Is not this what we are longing for? When Jesus comes, He will take away all sickness and sorrow, and we will live in a perfect world. Yet we have a part to do to bring this about. We must experience the latter rain—when the Holy Spirit is poured out without measure—then we will be able to give the loud cry. The work will be finished, and we can go home where Jesus is! ✨

Cody Francis is a young evangelist working for Mission Projects International.

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- ¹ See *Spalding and Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies*, 4.
- ² See *Testimonies to Ministers*, 509.
- ³ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, 180-181.
- ⁴ See *Early Writings*, 15, 41.



Adventist Carnivals

by Lloyd and Leola Rosenvold

This book seeks to examine some forms of worship that are becoming more and more prevalent in Seventh-day Adventist churches. Drawing from the Bible and the wealth of Inspired Writings given to us, it helps to answer questions like: Is Christian rock music pleasing to God? How do drama and theatrics fit into our worship services? Are displays of ecstasy evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit? Find answers to these questions and others in *Adventist Carnivals*. These worship experiences are not new; they have happened in the past. We have a responsibility to examine God's instructions regarding those practices and take care of how our sacred worship services are conducted.

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The Punishment of the Wicked

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 PW, which represent "**The Punishment of the Wicked.**"
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 Punishment of the Wicked, 1PW: 2 Peter 2:9**
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 PW.**"

1PW: 2 Peter 2:9.

The wicked are not being punished in hell fire now, but are reserved in the grave (see Job 21:29–32) till the day of judgment to be punished. What a coup d'état for Satan to convince the majority of the people that the wicked are being punished for thousands of years—even before they are judged!

2PW: Mark 9:43–48.

When the wicked go into hell fire, they go there alive in bodily form and physical substance with all their members—two feet, two eyes, two hands, and so forth. See Revelation 19:20 and Matthew 5:30.

3PW: Revelation 21:8.

The casting of the wicked into the lake of fire is the second death; hence they will not be cast into hell fire until they receive a second life in the second resurrection at the close of the 1,000 years of Revelation, chapter 20.

4PW: Matthew 13:40–42.

Jesus taught that the wicked, the tares, would not be cast into the furnace of fire until the end of the world. In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus plainly teaches that the wicked will not go into everlasting fire (everlasting in its effects) until the last day, when He comes, and all people are separated into two great classes—one on the right hand and the other on the left. This separation will be at the close of the 1,000 years.

5PW: Revelation 20:7–10.

Hell, as a place of punishment, does not exist at the present time; hell will be this earth turned into a lake of fire at the close of the 1,000 years (see Revelation, chapter 20), at the great day of judgment. The word "devoured," from the Greek, means that this action will be completed—there is meant here no endless torture of burning.

6PW: Zechariah 14:12.

When the wicked are raised in the second resurrection at the end of this 1,000 years, they will come up in bodily form, and will march up to surround and capture, if possible, the New Jerusalem, which will then be resting on the earth. God will then rain down coals of fire upon them, to punish them according to their sins. This fire will not perpetuate their existence, but will devour and wipe them out of existence. See Revelation 20:9; Obadiah 1:15–16, 18, 10.

7PW: Isaiah 34:9–10.

In that day the dust of the earth will be as it were turned into brimstone—the land and rivers into burning pitch. Thus the earth will be melted into a lake of fire, and when sin and sinners have been forever destroyed, God will make this molten mass into a perfect new earth. See 2 Peter 3:10, 13; Revelation 21:1. The fact that this lake of fire, or hell fire, into which the wicked are cast, will be made into a sinless new earth, is positive proof that the

wicked will not, and cannot, burn throughout all eternity. In the new earth there will be neither sorrow, crying, nor pain. See Revelation 21:4.

8PW: Jude 1:6–7.

The everlasting fire into which the wicked are to be cast will be this lake of fire. This does not mean that the fire will burn throughout all eternity (see Matthew 25:41), but rather that the fire will burn them up everlastingly. We have an example of eternal fire in the everlasting destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which, being God-ordained, could not be put out until it had completely burned them up with a destruction that will last forever. See 2 Peter 2:6.

9PW: Jeremiah 17:27.

To say that the wicked will go into hell fire that will never be quenched does not mean that the

fire will burn throughout all eternity. But, as in the case of the destruction of old Jerusalem by Nebuchadnessar (586 B.C.), the fire will not, and cannot, be put out until it has completely accomplished its work of destruction. See 2 Chronicles 36:19–21.

The never-quenched fire and undying worm that Jesus mentions in Mark 9:43–48 refer to the Valley of Hinnom. The word “hell fire” (verse 47) in the Greek is *gehenna*, which literally means Valley of Hinnom.

Into this Valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, the bodies of dead animals were cast. On their bodies the worms preyed constantly, and fires were also kept burning constantly to burn up these bodies.

Jesus took this as an illustration of what that final hell fire, or lake of fire, will do for the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years of Revelation 20. The never-quenched fire and undying worm are symbols of utter

destruction — not symbols of eternal torment. See Psalm 37:9–10, 20.

10PW: Malachi 4:1–3.

The wicked will be destroyed, reduced to ashes, soul and body (see Matthew 10:28), in this final lake of fire. Satan and his angels will also finally be ashes, never to tempt or trouble anyone ever again. See Ezekiel 28:18–19.

11PW: John 3:16.

Nobody needs to perish or go into hell fire. All may have eternal life if they accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and humbly obey Him as their Lord. See Ezekiel, chapter 18. Choose Jesus today, “for why will ye die?” Jesus says, “Come unto me.” Matthew 11:28. ✠

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

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Third Edition



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Seeking Jesus

Michael Atolagbe

After Jesus had ministered to the multitudes and was preparing to cross the Sea of Galilee, a scribe approached Him and said, “Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” Matthew 8:19. As far as profession is concerned, this could be one of the best confessions a sinner can make.

Yet “Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” Verse 20. From the very beginning, Christ made it clear to His followers that they could expect no earthly rewards.

The day after Jesus fed the five thousand, many of those who witnessed the miracle found that Jesus had crossed over to the other side of the sea. “When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there . . . they also took shipping . . . seeking for Jesus.” John 6:24. (All emphasis supplied by the author unless otherwise noted.)

Many seek for Jesus today for various reasons. Ask yourself today why you seek Jesus. Do you remember to pray only when you are in trouble? Do you go to church because other members will visit you if you do not? Are you a Christian today because it is popular? Do you regularly arrive early for church services because you hold a lofty position in the church? By regularly attending the church, returning tithe, and doing other good works, we may think we are seeking Jesus; but all these mean nothing if we are not seeking Him from a worthy motive.

“If men could have had the world with Christ, *multitudes* would have proffered Him their allegiance; but such service He [Christ] could not accept.”¹

Many today want to be partakers of both the Lord’s table and the table of devils. They provoke the Lord to jealousy. They profess to be Christians, yet on their very bodies and

characters can be seen the stamp of the world.

“Rabbi, when camest thou hither?” John 6:25. Without trying to gratify their curiosity, Jesus sadly told them, “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” Verse 26. Jesus continued, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.” Verse 27. Jesus did not condemn working to gain a livelihood; His words are directed rather toward those who carry such labor to the extent of neglecting the nourishment of the soul²—such as, perhaps, working into the early Sabbath hours on Friday night.

We labor so much for perishable things that we do not even have time to study God’s Word for ourselves—much less to share it with others. We should not seek for material gain at the expense of our souls.

“What shall we do,” His hearers exclaimed, “that we might work the works of God?” Verse 28. They had been performing many good works—returning their tithes and attending temple services regularly. They were ready to hear of any new good work by which they could secure greater merit. Jesus’ simple and plain answer is a very profound statement of our obligations to Him: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” Verse 29. Oh, we are relieved! Just to believe?

“I believe on Him,” we say. But let us search our hearts. How much do we really believe? Do we believe that He will supply all our needs if we do not work that extra shift on Sabbath? Can we trust Him to take care of an entrance examination scheduled for the Sabbath day? Do we believe Him enough to return 25 percent of our income—not just a mere 10 percent? Do we believe that in Him we can live a godly, sober, righteous, and perfect life *in this present world*? See Titus 2:12.

“This is an hard saying.”

The leaders of the people in Jesus’ day were offended, “and they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?” Verse 42. Jesus answered again, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. . . . Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, *This is an hard saying*; who can hear it?” Verses 47, 60. Yet we are no different today. Some, when told that the last-day diet is meatless, exclaim, “This is a hard saying.”

Jesus answered the people, “Doth this offend you? . . . It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not.” Verses 61, 63–64.

“The test was too great. . . . By the public rebuke of their unbelief these disciples were still further alienated from Jesus. They were greatly displeased, and wishing to wound the Saviour and gratify the malice of the Pharisees, they turned their

backs upon Him, and left Him with disdain. They had made their choice. . . . Their decision was *never* afterward reversed; for they walked no more with Jesus.”³

Is the test too great for you? Many today have made their choices. Many, unable to decide to do what is right when truth is brought home to their hearts, eventually settle into wrong decisions they did not consciously make.

“Souls are tested today as were those disciples in the synagogue at Capernaum. When truth is brought home to the heart, they see that their lives are not in accordance with the will of God. They see the need of an entire change in themselves; but they are not willing to take up the *self-denying work*. Therefore they are angry when their sins are discovered. They go away offended. . . . Their voices are loud in praise; but when the searching of God’s Spirit reveals their sin, and bids them leave it, they turn their backs upon the truth, and walk no more with Jesus.”⁴

“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?” John 6:66–67.

Resisting the Truth

Now, “if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” 1 Peter 4:18. Friend, “strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke 13:24.

We are told, “Many at first appeared to receive the warning [of Noah]; yet they did not turn to God with true repentance. They were unwilling to renounce their sins. During the time that elapsed before the coming of the Flood, their faith was tested, and they failed to endure the trial. Overcome by the prevailing *unbelief*, they finally joined their former associates in *rejecting* the solemn message. Some were *deeply* convicted, and would have heeded the words of warning; but there were so many to jest and ridicule, that they partook of the same spirit,

resisted the invitations of mercy, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are so reckless and go to such lengths in sin as do those who have once had light, but have resisted the convicting Spirit of God.”⁵

Those who turned their backs on Jesus had been called His disciples. Christ had only “spoken a sacred, eternal truth regarding the relation between Himself and His followers. He knew the character of those who claimed to be His disciples, and His words tested their faith. He declared that they were to *believe* and *act* upon His teaching. . . . This involved the relinquishment of their cherished ambitions.”⁶

Friend, what are you holding on to that hinders your relationship with God? “So fully was Jesus surrendered to the will of God that the Father alone appeared in His life.”⁷ When you surrender all, your heavenly Father will be seen in your life.

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast [certain], and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” Hebrews 2:1–3.

Beloved, you do not want Jesus to say of you what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:7–8:

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also *resist* the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”

May God help us to believe and to act upon the truth that we know. ✽

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- ¹ *The Desire of Ages*, 383. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)
- ² See *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 935.
- ³ *The Desire of Ages*, 391–392.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 392.
- ⁵ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 95.
- ⁶ *The Desire of Ages*, 391.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 389.



Cooperation With God a Necessity

Ellen G. White

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John 1:29. I repeat the words of John, "Behold the Lamb of God!" We are to contemplate the character of Christ. We are to meditate upon the cross of Calvary; for it is the unanswerable argument of Christianity. The message we are to bear to the impenitent, the warning we are to give to the backslider, is, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Those who bring the message to the soul

may turn aside from the truth, but he who would be saved must keep his eye on Jesus. By beholding Christ he will learn to hate sin, that has brought to his Redeemer suffering and death. By beholding, his faith is made strong, and he comes to know "the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3. The sinner sees Jesus as He is—full of compassion and tender love—and by beholding the manifestation of His great love toward fallen man in His sufferings of Calvary, he is transformed in character.

While our salvation is wholly dependent upon Jesus, yet we have a work to do in order that we shall be saved. The apostle says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:12-13. The work that we are to do is not independent of what God is to do, but a work of cooperation with God. The power and the grace of God is to be wrought into the heart by the divine Worker, but some go astray here, claiming that man has a work to do that is wholly independent of any work of God. Another class take the other extreme, and say that man is free from all obligation, because God does the whole work—both the willing and doing. But the true ground to take is that the human will must be in subjection to the divine will. The will of man is not to be forced into cooperation with divine agencies, but must be voluntarily submitted. Man has no power of himself to work out his own salvation. Salvation must be the result of cooperation with divine power, and God will not do that for man which he can do for himself. Man is wholly dependent on the grace of Christ. He has no power to move one step in the direction of Christ unless the Spirit of God draws him. The Holy Spirit is continually drawing the soul, and will continue to draw until by persistent refusal the sinner grieves away the tender messenger of God.

In the heavenly councils it has been decided by what means and methods the grace of Christ shall prove effectual in saving the soul.

And it is clear that unless the sinner consents to be drawn, unless he will cooperate with divine agencies, the end will not be attained. The work to be done is a united work. The divine and the human are to work together, and the sinner is to depend upon grace, while rendering willing obedience to the dictates of the Spirit of God. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:12-13.

God has endowed men with reason and with intellectual faculties, but if these are untrained, left uncultivated, men will become like the savage heathen. The mind must be cultivated, and it is necessary that teachers present line upon line and precept upon precept, guiding and training the freewill moral agent so that he shall understand what it is to cooperate with God. God works in the human agent by the light of truth, and the mind, enlightened by truth, is capable of seeing truth in distinction from error. Open to the light of truth, free from prejudice, unbound by the opinions and traditions of men, the enlightened mind clearly sees the evidences of the truth, and believes it as from God. The man enlightened by truth will not call falsehood truth, and light darkness. The Spirit reveals to the mind the things of God, and to him who cooperates with God is the realization that a Divine Presence is hovering near. When the heart is open to Jesus and the mind responds to the truth, Jesus abides in the soul. The Spirit's energy works in the heart, and leads the inclinations toward Jesus. By living faith, the Christian places entire dependence on divine power, expecting that God will and do that which is according to His good pleasure. See Philippians 2:13. As fast as the soul resolves and acts in accordance with the light that is revealed, the Spirit takes the things of God and gives more light to the soul.

"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1:12. "And the Word was made flesh, and

dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Verse 14. The Spirit of God is not commissioned to do our part of the work, either in willing or doing. It is the work of the human agent to cooperate with divine agencies. As soon as we incline our will to harmonize with God's will, the grace of Christ is supplied to cooperate with our resolve. But it is not to be a substitute to do our work—to work in spite of our resolutions and actions. Therefore, our success in the Christian life will not be because of an abundance of light and evidence, but will depend upon our acceptance of the light

pricks." And the Lord said, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Verses 5-6. The Lord always gives the human agent his work to do. Paul was to work in compliance with the divine command. If Saul had said, "Lord, I am not in the least inclined to follow your directions in working out my salvation," then, should the Lord have showered upon him a light tenfold as bright, it would have been useless. It is man's part to cooperate with the Divine. Here is where the conflict is to be sternest, hardest, and most fierce—in yielding the will and way to God's will and way, relying upon the gracious influences which God has exerted upon the human

When the heart is open to Jesus and the mind responds to the truth, Jesus abides in the soul. The Spirit's energy works in the heart, and leads the inclinations toward Jesus.

given, upon the rousing of the energies, and operating with the heavenly ministers appointed of God to work for the salvation of the soul.

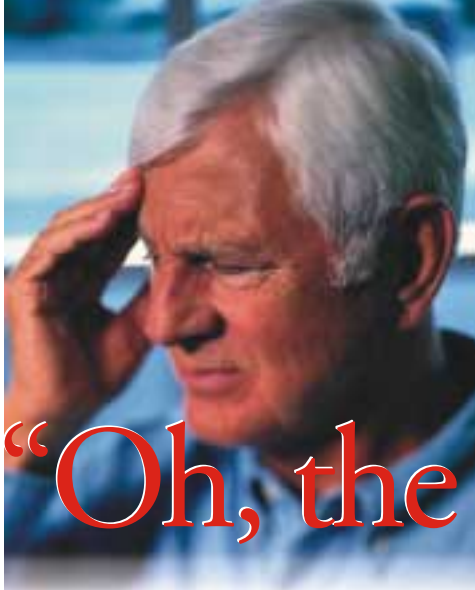
If the sinner or the backslider settles himself in sin, the light of Heaven may flash about him to no purpose, as it did about Saul when the bewitching power of the world's deception was upon him. Unless the human agent inclines his will to do the will of God, as finally Saul did, the light will shine in vain, and a thousandfold more light and evidence would do no good. God knows when the sinner has sufficient evidence, and says to such, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Luke 16:29. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Verse 31.

Paul had a terrible awakening when the light from Heaven flashed upon him, and a voice said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts 9:4. Paul answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" And Christ said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the

soul throughout all the life. The man must do the work of inclining. "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do." The character of the actions will testify what has been the nature of the resolve. The doing was not in accordance with feeling and natural inclination, but in harmony with the will of the Father in heaven. Follow and obey the leadings of the Holy Spirit; obey not the voice of the deceiver, which is in harmony with the unsanctified will, but obey the impulse God has given. This is what the heavenly intelligences are constantly working to have us do—the will of our Father which is in heaven.

Everything is at stake. Will the human agent cooperate with divine agencies to will and to do? If a man places his will on the side of God's will, fully surrendering self to do His will, the rubbish will be cleared from the door of the heart, the defiance of the soul will be broken down, and Jesus will enter to abide as a welcome Guest. ❀

Signs of the Times, February 12, 1894.



“Oh, the Pain!”

“Oh!” A stubbed toe, a hit elbow, or a bruised knee—all these mishaps often cause us to let out an exclamation of surprise and pain. Most of us deal with pain on a daily basis—some passing, some that has settled in to stay. Are there ways to make pain more bearable? Why do we need it at all? As you read this article, I hope you will discover new ways to deal with, and work with, pain so that it will be more manageable.

Our feeling of pain is a product of our nervous system—the most difficult system in the human body to understand. The nervous system is like a web of very tiny fingers, engulfing your whole body and bringing messages back to the spinal cord and through it to the brain. The nerves are constantly gathering information and transmitting it back to the central nervous system—the spinal cord and the brain.

It is the nerves that carry the message of pain and cause the feelings that are so uncomfortable. We must be quick to add, though, that many of these feelings are very necessary—without these sensations, we could greatly injure our body without our knowledge. It is pain that causes us to immediately jerk back when we have touched something hot; pain, too, that keeps us from injuring ourselves further when we have already been hurt.

Reducing pain is desirable, but it is not always wise. Pain is an

indicator of how our body really is, and we need to be aware of that. However, the cautious use of natural means to aid in coping with pain can be very helpful and beneficial.

Amazingly enough, simple lifestyle changes can empower you to handle pain better. Drinking enough water each day helps to clear the body of toxins that would add to your pain. For muscle pain, getting into a hot tub of water can relax your muscles and decrease your pain. For swelling, soaking the swollen part in warm water with Epsom salts can help reduce the swelling.

By combining exercise, sunshine, and fresh air, you will give yourself a great boost in pain relief and tolerance. The negative ions in the fresh air and sun-filled atmosphere cause you to think more rationally, and to have a higher pain threshold. By exercising regularly, you will diminish or prevent pain. Endorphins, the hormones which promote a feeling of well-being, increase during exercise and by exposure to the sun. With increased endorphins, your body handles pain much better and has a higher pain threshold.

A healthful diet goes a long way in treating and preventing pain. By correct eating you can avoid many toxic foods that cause pain and disease.

Capaisin—the compound in chili peppers that makes them hot—has been found to be a pain killer. It also

causes a reduction in nerve cells of prostoglandins, which relay pain sensations to the central nervous system. An experiment found that applying *capsaicin* to an aching tooth will drain the tooth of prostoglandins, reducing the sensation of pain.¹

Papaya has a substance called *chymopapain*, which softens tight muscles. Papaya juice was studied at California’s Oakland Naval Hospital where researchers injected *chymopapain* into 50 patients who had undergone surgery, and 80% of them found relief. As a muscle relaxant, papaya juice can be very helpful for those suffering from back pain.

Peppermint tea is a calmativ and can be very useful in treating stomach pain. When you feel a bit queasy, brew yourself a cup of tea, sit down, relax, and enjoy it!

Nature has many ways of preventing and soothing pain, of which we have merely skimmed the surface. May these thoughts spur you on to discover more ways to relieve pain naturally. ❄

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¹ *RX Prescription for Cooking & Dietary Wellness*, by Phyllis A. Balch, CNC & James F. Balch, MD.

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letters to the editor

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Your magazines have been a great inspiration to me. They have caused me to grow spiritually and to have a deeper insight into the study of the Word of God and to learn what His will is for me.

I have read about the persecution that you and some of your colleagues are now facing. I know that you are *not* alarmed, because prophecy *must* be fulfilled. So my counsel to you is to just keep on doing what you are doing. I want the whole world to know that I respect you and your ministry and have no intentions of ever not subscribing to *Our Firm Foundation*.

Praise God that you have a website! I copy articles and give them out to people at my church. They use them at midweek prayer meetings, and people come to me asking for more of "those articles." Praise the Lord!

You see, there are a lot of people in the church who want this information and need it and are reading it!

Keep up the good work in the name of Jesus!

DH, Illinois

I just received your October 2000 Newsletter and read your reply to the *Adventist Review* when it arrived in my mail at the church address.

It was not without regret and some shame that I read the Conference Report. As a pastor of one of the regular churches in — — —, I sense I am a part of a small minority group who suffer through the dissonance created by the direction many of our pastors and conference personnel are moving. A whole new way of reading and understanding E. G. White has emerged which will open the way for a flood of "socially and politically correct" abominations to enter our ranks.

Your reasonable response to this public rebuke evokes sympathy for your cause. I hope as many get to see this as read or heard the Report.

God bless and keep you, and give you peace and rest.

Pastor, via e-mail

From Overseas

I am very thankful for the work you are doing to find lost souls. I am the one who was a lost sheep, but through your magazines I was converted to my only Saviour Jesus Christ.

Thank God that He introduced me to your ministry and I am being totally helped.

Through your magazines I have decided to devote my life to God who is my Helper and my Shepherd.

JM, Zimbabwe

I thank you people for your much published inspirational magazine called *Our Firm Foundation*. I thank God for bringing people like you to stand for the truth and to uphold the faith and doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I borrowed the May 1999 edition from someone in our church and when I went through it, I was very happy to God for bringing individuals together to put out this soul-inspiring magazine.

I want to let you know that I'm just two years old in the faith. I come out of an African traditional religion family and when I received the Adventist message, I was so happy for such Biblical truths.

ED, Nigeria

I am more than glad to tell you that above all other magazines, I am educated by *Our Firm Foundation*! What a God-inspired magazine!

Unfortunately, I am sad to tell you that I am presently unemployed, hence I can hardly afford a subscription to *Our Firm Foundation*. However as time and funds permit—God willing—I shall subscribe for those poor brothers and sisters who cannot afford the magazines themselves.

I beseech you to try to send me those good magazines. Again, be notified that the magazines have set my feet on a new path. As the new born baby desires the sincere milk of the mother, I'm kindly asking you, if

you could please send me some Bibles and other inspirational books by the author E. G. White and other spiritual writers.

Thank you!

RA, Papua New Guinea

Greetings in the beloved name of our Lord Jesus! I pray that everyone at Hope is under the shadows of the Mighty God.

Back here in Africa we are spiritually fine, though forces of spiritualism are entering faster in our countries than our real Advent message. Oh, how we pray that God can revive our ministers of the gospel to proclaim the truth and awaken the people to the crisis and counterfeits ahead!

I received a parcel of three magazines last week which were brought by a friend. The envelope contained touching messages especially "The Venom of the Serpent."

Your magazines are a real and powerful message to us. It is becoming too difficult for me to keep a copy of these magazines in that they are quickly taken away by other friends as soon as I receive them. Oh, how I wish they were sent in numbers! Each copy goes round each member of staff and likely the magazines do not reach me by the end of the last person. Nevertheless I thank God that it is a clear testimony and that we all have received God's message.

Please keep us up and do not be discouraged as you work for God. Yes, there are so many forces of evil to disrupt this work, but we are assured that our good God will always guide and lead you.

EK, Zambia

Thank you ever so kindly for your parcel that I received two weeks ago!

I have read good messages that I have never heard in my life—it's so wonderful that this message has touched my life in a special way! May the Lord give me His Spirit to continue teaching me unto new truths.

MM, Kenya

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