# Our Firm ation

Volume 16, Number 4

NW N NE E

April 2001

### TARGETING THE WRONG ANTICHRIST

The Seventh-day Sabbath

**Christ Our Righteousness** 

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

### The Presence of God in Your Life

We have been told that "Moses was fitted to take preeminence among the great of the earth, to shine in the courts of its most glorious kingdom, and to sway the scepter of its power. His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages. As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer." 1 What made Moses so great was his experience in practicing the presence of God. Moses knew that "there is no one living who has any power that he has not received from God, and the Source whence it comes is open to the weakest human being."2

Jesus has promised, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." John 14:13-14. In Christ's name and in His presence, we are to go forward in the power of the Lord.

However, to practice the presence of Jesus, we must learn to commune with God in prayer. "We should go to Jesus and tell Him all our needs. We may bring Him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. When we feel that we need the presence of Christ at every step, Satan will have little opportunity to intrude his temptations....

"Prayer is the most holy exercise of the soul. It should be sincere, humble, earnest - the desires of a renewed heart breathed in the

presence of a holy God. When the suppliant feels that he is in the divine presence, self will be forgotten. He will have no desire to display human talent; he will not seek to please the ear of men, but to obtain the blessing which the soul craves."3

When we are assailed by Satan, we have the exalted privilege to enter into the presence of God. Through communion with God in prayer "the soul is brought into a sacred nearness with God and is renewed in knowledge and true holiness and fortified against the assaults of the enemy." 4

"Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a Fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom

he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him."5

"If we would develop a character which God can accept, we must form correct habits in our religious life. Daily prayer is as essential to growth in grace, and even to spiritual life itself, as is temporal food to physical well-being. We should accustom ourselves to often lift the thoughts to God in prayer. If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy. We cannot for one moment separate ourselves from Christ with safety. We may have His presence to attend us at every step, but only by observing the conditions which He has Himself laid down."6

Daily communion with God means everything to us. Therefore, let us plan to daily commune with our Heavenly Father and practice the presence of Jesus. We should find a special place and time to meet with God as our first work in the morning. We should grow in our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We should learn to be still and enjoy His presence. We should fully lean upon the Lord to overcome anything that would stand in the way of our walk with Him. The time to choose to make God your best friend is now. 🕏

Jeff Wehr, Associate Editor

### References:

- Patriarchs and Prophets, 246.
- The Desire of Ages, 667. Testimonies, vol. 5, 200–201.
- Child Guidance, 468.
- Christ's Object Lessons, 129-130.
- <sup>6</sup> Messages to Young People, 114-115.

### About Hope International.

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

### Foundation

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

–Editors

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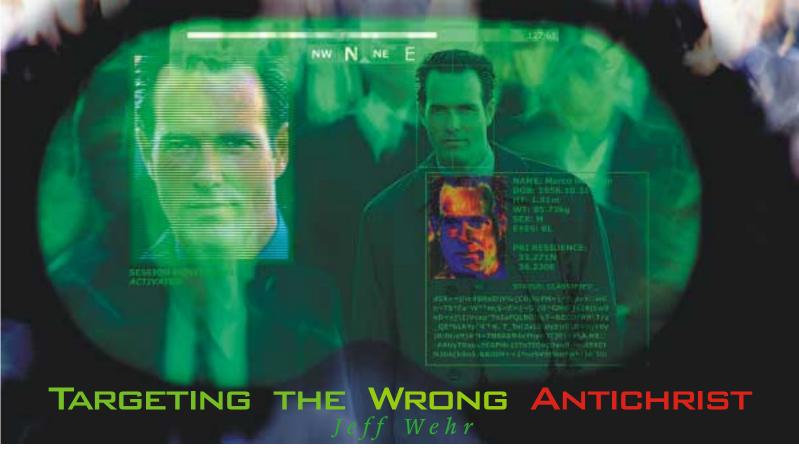
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he best-seller, blockbuster series of books, and multimillion dollar movie Left Behind, is a fictitious story about end-time events. It begins by assuming the erroneous doctrine of the secret rapture, picking up the story with those who are left behind when millions of Christians around the world mysteriously vanish into thin air. According to the tale, those left behind must then face the rule of antichrist for the next seven years. Antichrist is portrayed as a brilliant Romanian named Nicolae Carpathia. He is a crafty politician with a most powerful and charismatic personality. When the secret rapture occurs, Carpathia quickly seizes power by controlling the United Nations. From there, he establishes a one-world government. His ultimate plan is to have the whole world worship him. Viewers and readers know it is a work of fiction, yet they are left to wonder, "Is this how these events might actually happen?"

But who really is antichrist? Is he a singular, diabolical person, like Nicolae Carpathia, who will rule the world for seven years prior to the visible second coming of Christ?

What does the Bible actually say about antichrist?

### "Antichrist" in the Bible

The words "antichrist" and "antichrists" are used only five times in the Bible, and all occurrences can be found in the books of 1 and 2 John.

1 John 2:18-19: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

In this passage, we find that the early Christians had heard that antichrist was coming. This would place antichrist in the future. However, John adds, "even now are there many antichrists." This teaches us that "antichrist" or "antichrists" cannot be applied simply to the end of time. The period of antichrist stretches across many centuries. In addition, we learn that there are "many antichrists."

Therefore, we cannot apply the term "antichrist" to one singular, diabolical person.

John reveals that these antichrists "went out from us." In other words, antichrist, antichrists, and the spirit of antichrist, come from among the Christian community. Antichrist is not some secular humanist or atheist. Antichrist was once a part of the true church.

1 John 2:22-26: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ve have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you."

Antichrist denies both the Father and the Son, but how?—He does so seductively or deceptively. John wrote, "These things have I written unto you, concerning them that seduce you."

The text does not say that antichrist does not speak about the Father and the Son. What it does say is that antichrist denies the Father and the Son in a way that seduces Christians. What then is the relationship between the Father and the Son? Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6. Paul said, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 2:5.

Does antichrist deny that the only way to the Father is through Jesus Christ?—He certainly does. And if you deny that relationship between the Father and the Son, you are also denying the Son. Can antichrist deny that relationship and still claim or profess to follow Christ?—Yes, and this is what makes antichrist so deceptive.

Again, this text does not throw antichrist far into the future. In fact, John warned his fellow first-century Christians not to be seduced by antichrist.

1 John 4:3-4; 2 John 7: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

Did John consign antichrist to the future alone?—No. John said, "even now already is it [the spirit of antichrist] in the world." And again, John does not apply the concept of antichrist to a single person. John says, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [antichrists]."

In the *Left Behind* story, readers/viewers are taught that Christians will not have to face antichrist—that Christians will be raptured out of the world before antichrist comes to power. How-

ever, we see in this text that Christians—God's "little children"—overcome these antichrists. So who really fights against antichrist?—Christians!

The emphasis in these two passages, found in 1 and 2 John, focuses on the fact that antichrist does not confess that Jesus came in the flesh. This does not say that antichrist denies Jesus as a historical figure in human history, or even as the Son of God. What antichrist fails to do is to acknowledge the true human nature of Jesus. Even in our own church there is a controversy over the human nature of Christ by people who confess Jesus as Lord.

### Identifying Marks of the Antichrist

So then, who is the antichrist of the Bible? The Reformers from Luther to Miller all understood, preached, and wrote regarding the was on the prophecies concerning the Papacy." <sup>1</sup>

Does the Papacy fit all the identifying marks of antichrist?—It does

The spirit of antichrist was already working in the early church. There were those who desired the preeminence over other believers. For example, John writes, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." 3 John 1:9-10.

This amazing text declares that Diotrephes, who loved preeminence, would not even welcome the beloved John. Imagine someone in the church working against the beloved

Does antichrist deny that the only way to the Father is through Jesus Christ?—He certainly does. And if you deny that relationship between the Father and the Son, you are also denying the Son.

antichrist power, calling it the Papacy—not the average Catholic, but the Papacy. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), declares, "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God."

H. Grattan Guinness wrote, "From the first, and throughout, that movement [the Reformation] was energized and guided by the prophetic word. Luther never felt strong and free to war against the Papal apostasy till he recognized the pope as antichrist. It was then that he burned the Papal bull. Knox's first sermon, the sermon that launched him on his mission as a reformer,

John! Diotrephes even exercised kingly power in casting out the saints from the church.

Paul wrote about the spirit of antichrist, saying, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you [the elders, overseers, bishops], not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Acts 20:29–31.

There were in the early church those who would speak perverse things—teaching erroneous doctrines—to draw disciples after themselves. Some of these elders or bishops would become "grievous wolves . . . not sparing the flock."

### Fully Revealed Before the Second Coming

While it is true that the New Testament writers recognized the presence of the spirit of antichrist in the early church, they nonetheless pointed to a future time when antichrist would be fully revealed.

Paul wrote, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the second coming of

them that that glorious and blessed hope would "not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." Verse 3.

Bible scholars have recognized that the "man of sin, the son of perdition" is the same as the antichrist power of Bible prophecy. We saw that application in the Westminster Confession. The *Left Behind* story teaches that 2 Thessalonians 2:1–8 refers to the supposed time of the "secret rapture" when Jesus comes and "silently steals Christians away from the earth." It teaches that the antichrist power will rise after the secret rapture. However, Paul clearly teaches that

The Left Behind story teaches that . . . the antichrist's power will rise after the secret rapture. However, Paul clearly teaches that antichrist will come first.

Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thessalonians 2:1–8.

The subject is the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" when He gathers the saints together. Verse 1. Some were teaching that Christ was coming immediately — perhaps next week. However, Paul told them not to be "soon shaken in mind, or be troubled" as to some immediate return of Christ. Verse 2. He assured

antichrist will come first, "for that day [the coming of our Lord] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." Verse 3.

The term "falling away" comes from the Greek word *apostasia*. In other words, the coming of our Lord follows a great apostasy in the church. This apostasy —falling away from the truth—leads to the rise of the "man of sin, the son of perdition."

Who is this "man of sin"? He "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." Verse 4. Does the Papacy exalt itself above God?—Certainly, by claiming to have the authority to change the law of God.

We are also told that the "man of sin . . . sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Verses 3–4. Do these verses support the building of another temple in Jerusalem, as taught by the *Left Behind* story? — Certainly not! First, the word "sitteth" does not refer to the actual posture of sitting in a chair. We know that since Jesus' ascension into heaven, He sits at the

right hand of the Father. Obviously, the emphasis is not on a continual posture, but rather on a conferring of authority. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, signifying His continual authority with the favor and blessing of the Father.

Often the Greek word for *temple*, *naos*, is used in a spiritual, rather than in a physical sense. For example, Paul wrote, "Know ye not that ye are the temple [*naos*] of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16. Here Paul uses the Greek word *naos* to refer to the members of the church.

Therefore, the "man of sin" sits in the church—the Christian community—as if he had the authority of God among believers. Does the Papacy claim such authority?—It blasphemously does.

Paul continues to tell the Thessalonians (in chapter 2) that he had already told them "these things." Verse 5. He reminds them that they know what power "withholdeth that he [antichrist, the man of sin] might be revealed in his time." Verse 6. Even though the mystery of iniquity—the spirit of antichrist—"doth already work," there yet remains that power that must be "taken out of the way." Verse 7. That power was none other than the Roman emperors who for a short time prevented the popes from ascending to the throne of Caesar and thereby ruling the world.

Paul concludes with the coming of the Lord and the destruction of the "Wicked" one (literally, "the lawless one," the one against God's law). The *Left Behind* story has antichrist rising to power at the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." However, Paul teaches just the opposite — at the coming of our Lord, antichrist will be destroyed!

### **Summary**

In conclusion, what have we learned about the antichrist?

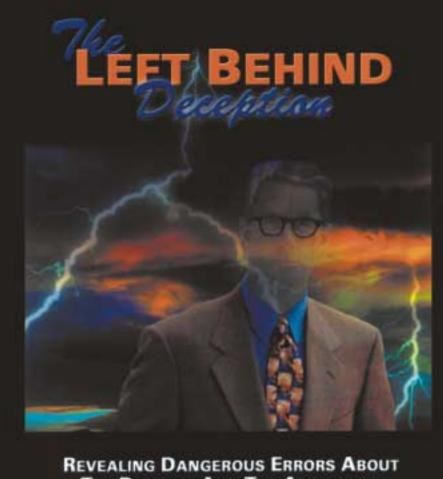
1. The spirit of antichrist was already at work in the early church. That spirit exemplified a desire for preeminence. In fact, this haughty spirit would even exalt itself above God and sit in the church of God as though it had the authority of God.

- 2. Antichrist came out of the Christian community. It is a religious power that has fallen away, or apostatized, from the truth.
- 3. The presence of the antichrist power covers a large stretch of time – from the early church to the second coming of Christ.
- 4. Antichrist denies the Father and the Son, by denying that Jesus is the only way to the Father, having long claimed the superiority of human intercessors - priests - in Jesus' place. In more recent years this power has added the blasphemous claim that we can approach the Father through Mary and the saints. This erroneous teaching not only supports aberrant views concerning the saints of old, but also the deadly and deceptive doctrine of the immortality of the soul.
- 5. Antichrist denies that Jesus came in the flesh as taught by Scripture. Catholicism teaches that Mary herself was immaculately conceived born without sin. This teaching leads then to the sinister doctrine that Iesus was born of a sinless mother and conceived by the Holy Spirit, and therefore was not made like unto His brethren. However, Paul teaches us that God the Father sent His "own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Romans 8:3; see also Hebrews 2:14-18. Jesus did not receive that sinful flesh from the Holy Spirit, but from Mary. Catholicism denies this truth, because they have erroneously exalted Mary in her human nature.

Tragically, Protestants are proclaiming false ideas about antichrist to the world. As a result, antichrist will more easily come to power. And worse yet, Protestants are clasping hands today with antichrist, but they do not know it.

While confusing to many, Left Behind will cause some people to inquire further about antichrist. Let us study the Scriptures for ourselves - that we might know the truth and recognize the counterfeit – and then let us reach out in these days of confusion and deception to help others to find the truth. \$

H. Grattan Guinness, Romanism and the Reformation, 136-137.



### THE RAPTURE AND THE ANTICHRIST

### The Left Behind Deception

by Steve Wohlberg

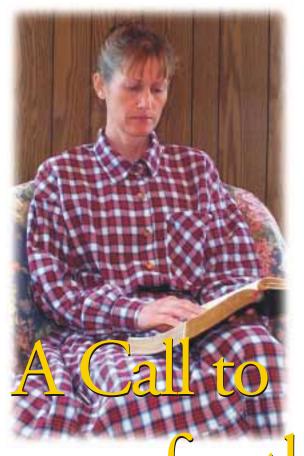
The best-selling novel and multi-million dollar movie *Left Behind* has captured the attention of millions of Christians. It is influencing millions of Christians for eternity. It tells the story of what happens after the supposed rapture of the righteous before the tribulation. Even though people know it is fiction, they are left to wonder, "Is this how it really will happen?"

The Left Behind Deception answers this question in detail. Steve Wohlberg, with his easy writing style, grips your attention from the start, filling your mind with the truths of God's Word that Left Behind has forgotten.

This is an excellent book to share with non-Adventists. It is small enough to carry in your purse or shirt pocket. Just ask people you meet if they have heard of Left Behind, and you will have the perfect opportunity to share the truth with them!

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## Prepare for the Final Crisis

Ellen G. White

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

This I am saying in the visions of the night in assemblies in Battle Creek. If ever the believers in Battle Creek needed the Holy Spirit's guidance, it is now. They need the deep moving of the Spirit of God, that they may give the trumpet a certain sound. Read the first eleven verses of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. Present the truth in its power, as it is in Jesus. Keep the mind stayed on God and imbued with His Holy Spirit. Present the affirmative of truth. Stand on the platform of eternal truth. But do not accuse. Say nothing to arouse enmity and strife.

The truth, present truth for this time, will be meat in due season. Let plain, authoritative truth be presented with decided assurance and in the spirit of love and kindness, that the Holy Spirit's power may give force to the words spoken. You are surely where many souls have become confused. But Christ has promised, "Lo, I am with you alway,

even unto the end." Matthew 28:20. We are to claim this promise. The Lord is not asleep or indifferent to our faith, and He will give knowledge and grace to all who will humble their hearts before Him.

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

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

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

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

The message was given. And there should be no delay in repeating the message, for the signs of the times are fulfilling; the closing work must be done. A great work will be done in a short time. A message will

soon be given by God's appointment that will swell into a loud cry. Then Daniel will stand in his lot, to give his testimony.

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

The signs of the end are fast fulfilling. The time of trouble is very near us now. We are to be brought into strait places in a way in which we have not been brought heretofore. The time of trouble is near, and we are to awake to a realization of this. We are to be sure that our feet are in the narrow path. We need an experience that we have not yet had, that we may have the assurance that the God of all grace is a very present help in time of need. The time of trouble—trouble such as was not since there was a nation—is right

upon us, and we are like the sleeping virgins. We are to awake and ask the Lord Jesus to place underneath us His everlasting arms, and carry us through the time of trial before us.

Let us turn our attention away from unimportant things, and give ourselves to God. We scarcely dream of the destroying angels that already must be given. The end of all things is at hand.

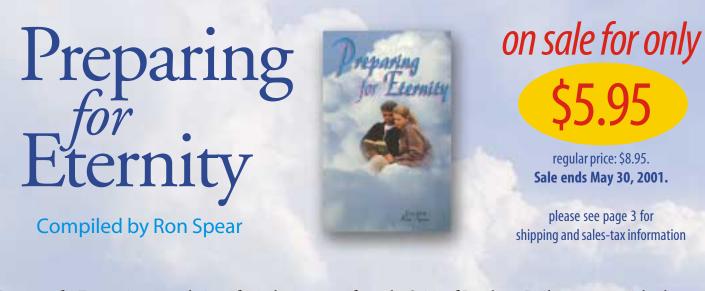
Again I say to my ministering brethren in Battle Creek, Preach the Word. The last message of mercy is to be given to prepare a people to stand in these last days. Everything is to be shaken that can be shaken, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.

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

are permitted to bring disaster and destruction in their path. Shall my life be spared to act a part in the closing scenes of this earth's history?

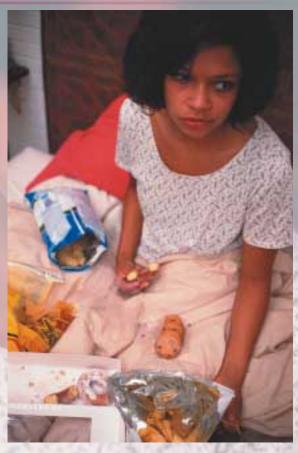
How little we know of what is going on in heaven! What fearful indifference those on this earth show to eternal realities. Souls are unprepared for what is about to take place in our world; the warning This is what has been presented to me—that we are asleep, and do not know the time of our visitation. But if we humble ourselves before God, and seek Him with the whole heart, He will be found of us. \$

Manuscript Releases, vol. 21, 435–438, written January 30, 1906, from Sanitarium, California, to Brother and Sister Farnsworth.



Preparing for Eternity is a compilation of priceless passages from the Spirit of Prophecy. In these twenty-eight short chapters you will find encouragement, correction, instruction, reproof, caution, motivation, direction and challenge. You will find the inspired message of God's attempt to bring sinful man back into harmony with his Creator and Redeemer. If you read this message and heed it, if you do in fact prepare for eternity, we are sure you will meet with us in the land of pure delight—where there will be no more tears, sorrow, pain, or death—to be with Jesus forevermore!

## The Health Message: Does It Really Matter?



What a time in which to live! The signs of the second coming of Jesus are all around us—both in the church and in the world. Satan is walking around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, for he knows that his time is short. Tensions are increasing—in individuals, in families, and in churches. But the question persists, Are we really prepared to meet our God in peace?

There are many diversions calculated to draw us away from the three angels' messages—the truth for this time. Some people try to prove that the Holy Spirit is not actually a separate personage of the Godhead, while others are heavily involved in reliving the feast days of the Old Testament. And still others are engaged in using worldly methods of winning converts—drama, unholy music, and other types of entertainment.

Some, who seem to have everything else together, are "slacking" in the area of the health message. True, they are total vegetarians; they exercise regularly, and they follow many of the other health principles.

Yet appetite is still a major battle for them. Sadly, at times I find myself among this group. For many, this is the place where the great final battle needs to be fought. God is calling us onto higher ground in the area of diet:

"I am instructed to bear a message to all our people on the subject of health reform, for many have backslidden from their former loyalty to health reform principles.

"God's purpose for His children is that they shall grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ. In order to do this, they must use aright every power of mind, soul, and body. They cannot afford to waste any mental or physical strength.

"The question of how to preserve the health is one of primary importance. When we study this question in the fear of God we shall learn that it is best, for both our physical and our spiritual advancement, to observe simplicity in diet. Let us patiently study this question. We need knowledge and judgment in order to move wisely in this matter. Nature's laws are not to be resisted, but obeyed....

"God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people. . . .

"There are some professed believers who accept certain portions of the Testimonies as the message of God, while they reject those portions that condemn their favorite indulgences. Such persons are working contrary to their own welfare and the welfare of the church. It is essential that we walk in the light while we have the light. Those who claim to believe in health reform, and yet work counter to its principles in the daily life practice, are hurting their own souls and are leaving wrong impressions upon the minds of believers and unbelievers."1

Consider the following health principles, statements from the Spirit of Prophecy, and comments thereon, and see where you stand:

"The least departure from the strictest integrity under any circumstances because it is convenient will harden the conscience and prepare the way for the violation of moral obligations in other ways. If we treat the health of the body, which is our highest earthly interest, without due consideration, we prepare the way for temptation and the violation of higher claims."2

How easy it seems to be for those of us who travel a lot to use our unusual hours, "jet lag," or inconvenient flight schedules, to justify snacking, eating between meals, or some other violation of a health principle! We need to remember that "we cannot love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength while we are loving our appetites, our tastes, a great deal better than we love the Lord."3

### **Simple Counsels Often** Neglected

Let us look at some simple rules from the Spirit of Prophecy and determine to practice them unfail-

- 1. "Many make a mistake in drinking cold water with their meals. Food should not be washed down. Taken with meals, water diminishes the flow of the saliva; and the colder the water, the greater the injury to the stomach." 4
- "Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet."5
- "Cheese should never be introduced into the stomach." 6
- "Let the diet reform be progressive. Let the people be taught how to prepare food without the use of milk or butter. Tell them that the time will soon come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream, or butter, because disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men. The time is near when, because

of the iniquity of the fallen race, the whole animal creation will groan under the diseases that curse the earth." 7 Brothers and sisters, is there any doubt that that time has come?

- "In health and in sickness, pure water is one of Heaven's choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system and assists nature to resist disease." 8 Too often our choice for a beverage may be juice or soda pop, both of which will activate the digestive process. We should activate the digestive system only during meal times.
- "Three meals a day, and nothing between meals - not even an apple – should be the *utmost limit of* indulgence. Those who go further violate nature's laws, and will suffer the penalty."9
- "The true fasting which should be recommended to all, is abstinence from every stimulating kind of food, and the proper use of wholesome, simple food, which God has provided in abundance. Men need to think less about what they shall eat and drink of temporal food, and much more in regard to the food from Heaven, that will give tone and vitality to the whole religious experience." 10
- "I am astonished to learn that, after all the light that has been given in this place, many of you eat between meals! You should never let a morsel pass your lips between your regular meals. Eat what you ought, but eat it at one meal, and then wait until the next." 11
- "After disposing of one meal, the digestive organs need rest. At least five or six hours should intervene between the meals; and most persons who give the plan a trial, will find that two meals a day are better than three."  $^{12}$
- 10. "Many indulge in the pernicious habit of eating just before sleeping hours. . . . If a third meal be eaten at all, it should be light, and several hours before going to bed." 13
- 11. "The stomach, when we lie down to rest, should have its work

all done, that it may enjoy rest, as well as other portions of the body. The work of digestion should not be carried on through any period of the sleeping hours."14

12. "Make your breakfast correspond more nearly to the heartiest meal of the day." 15 Have breakfast like a king, lunch like a queen, and dinner like a pauper.

"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." 16

Brothers and sisters, God is looking for a people who through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit will develop the character to finish this work so that Jesus can come. He needs a people who will follow Him in every requirement found in the Inspired Word. Will we be that people, or will appetite conquer us as it has so many others? We have been promised that if we overcome in the area of appetite, we will be able to overcome in every other area of our life. 17

"Submit vourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7. Praise God! \$

- <sup>1</sup> Testimonies, vol. 9, 153-154. (All emphasis supplied by author unless otherwise noted.)
- <sup>2</sup> Our High Calling, 266.
- Testimonies, vol. 2, 70.
- Counsels on Health, 119.
- <sup>5</sup> The Ministry of Healing, 296.
- Testimonies, vol. 2, 68. Ibid., vol. 7, 135.
- <sup>8</sup> The Ministry of Healing, 237.
- 9 Review and Herald, May 8, 1883.
- <sup>10</sup> Counsels on Diet and Foods, 188.
- 11 Testimonies, vol. 2, 373.
- <sup>12</sup> Counsels on Diet and Foods, 173-174.
- 13 Ibid., 174.
- 14 Ibid., 175.
- 15 Ibid., 173.
- <sup>16</sup> Review and Herald, May 27, 1902.
- <sup>17</sup> See Counsels on Diet and Foods, 59.





## This Generation Shall Not Pass

### Vernon Sparks

ome 160 years ago, the Millerite Movement carried to the thenknown world the message of Christ's soon return. Through the study of Biblical prophecy they came to understand that Christ would return to this earth on October 22, 1844. But they were bitterly disappointed. Those who searched the Scriptures for the reason for their disappointment came to an understanding of the Biblical truth that Christ entered into the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary on October 22, 1844, there to officiate in the Antitypical Day of Atonement, at the end of which Christ would indeed return in glory to this earth. For another 160 years our ministers and evangelists have been preaching of Christ's soon return.

In our evangelistic meetings we have explained countless times the signs of Christ's return recorded in Matthew 24:29–30: "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: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." We have given the date of May 19, 1780, for the fulfillment of the first two signs and November 13, 1833, for the fulfillment of the stars falling. For many decades we have emphasized the soon coming of Christ by referring to the words of Christ in Matthew 24:33-35: "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Yet time has lingered, and generations have passed away. Some question, "Have Christ's words passed away?" Certainly, this facet of our message is becoming less credible and more difficult to present.

It is obvious that the same generation that witnessed the dark day and blood-red moon of May 19, 1780, witnessed, the falling of the stars 53 years later. By 1876, however, that generation was passing away. That year, James White, commenting on the above words of Christ, stated:

"Some suppose that our Lord designed to teach that some who were witnesses of the dark day in 1780 would live to witness the second coming of the Saviour. But it is our opinion that the Lord designed to teach that the people who should live at the time of the fulfillment of the last sign (the falling stars of 1833), and should hear the proclamation of the coming of Christ, based partly upon the fulfilled signs, should witness the scenes connected by His coming." <sup>1</sup>

However, even that generation described by James White reached the century mark in 1933—some 68 years ago—and Christ has not yet come. Have we been teaching error—"cunningly devised fables"? What has gone wrong? Is there a reasonable explanation for this apparently embarrassing aspect of our message? As difficult and

painful as it may be, we need to be accountable for the message that we are giving to the world. We need to give a reasonable explanation for Christ's words "this generation." Could there be something in the prophecy that has been overlooked, underemphasized, or perhaps not recognized as a sign yet to be fulfilled?

### No Real Delay

The position of many Adventists is that there has been no real delay in Christ's coming. It is only an apparent delay because of our finite understanding and knowledge. God has a timetable, and Christ's second coming will prove to be right on schedule. In 1994, the Review and Herald Publishing Association published a 120-page book by Pastor Arnold Wallenkampf entitled *The Apparent Delay*. He states the following on page 91:

"Neither our procrastination of planting the gospel seed nor our sinfulness will obstruct or derail God's plan for our planet or for the universe. God knows the moment for the harvest, and it will be at the time He has seen and set rather than when we think it ought to have been."

Twenty-one years earlier, the same publishers printed a contrasting view in the 126-page book entitled *Too Late Getting Off.* Its author, Marjorie Lewis Lloyd, stated on pages 54–55:

"As I was growing up, the words 'This generation shall not pass' were heard loud and clear. There was general agreement among Seventh-day Adventists as to what those words meant. The generation that saw the stars fall would not completely disappear until our Lord would come. Many a sermon echoed that theme.

"And then the words seemed to fade from Adventist preaching like a band marching into the distance. The drumbeat was gone.

"Why? Hushed voices discussed it. 'It's been too long now. God couldn't keep a person alive this long.'

"I disagreed. Violently. And I will defend to the death my conten-

tion that God could keep a man alive for a thousand years if necessary to fulfill His Word."

Is there merely an apparent delay in Christ's return? Or is there a real delay—and if so, what is the cause? The answer may be a matter of life and death.

### What Did the Prophet Say?

The messenger of the Lord tells us that the generation of the great disappointment of 1844 could have witnessed Christ's second coming:

"Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith, and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, loud cry that was to lighten the whole earth.<sup>4</sup>

God's messenger clearly states that Christ would have come before 1896 if His people had done their appointed work His way:

"If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory." <sup>5</sup>

In 1901, God, through Ellen White, made it clear that Christ's delay is the result of our insubordination, and not due to any fault of His:

Clearly, our insubordination has delayed Christ's return.

But the problem goes deeper. Insubordination is the result of failure to experience true conversion.

receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world . . . Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward." <sup>2</sup>

In 1856, the Laodicean message was first acknowledged to be applicable to us as a people. The Spirit of Prophecy intimates that Christ would have come within a few years if the revival started in response to the Laodicean message in 1856 had continued:

"I was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God's people at the present time, and the reason it has not accomplished a greater work is because of the hardness of their hearts. . . . Nearly all believed that this message would end in the loud cry of the third angel. But as they failed to see the powerful work accomplished in a short time, many lost the effect of the message. . . . If the counsel of the True Witness had been fully heeded, God would have wrought for His people in greater power." 3

In 1896, Ellen White wrote that in 1888 we resisted the light of the

"The people who had great light did not have corresponding piety, sanctification, and zeal in working out God's specified plans. They have lost to their own disadvantage what they might have gained to the advancement of the truth if they had carried out the plans and will of God. Man cannot possibly stretch over that gulf that has been made by the workers who have not been following the divine Leader. We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action."6

### Sanctification Hastens Christ's Coming

Clearly, our insubordination has delayed Christ's return. But the problem goes deeper. Insubordination is the result of failure to experience true conversion, a failure to allow Christ's character with the fruits of the Spirit to grow in us. By

allowing the transformation of sanctification to take place, we hasten Christ's return. When we fail to cooperate with the sanctification process, we delay His return to the extent that our cooperation would have hastened it.

"'When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' Mark 4:29. Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

"It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus

Yes, God's people must be fully surrendered to the Refiner before they will be prepared to meet Him in the clouds of glory:

"Says the prophet: 'Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire. . . . ' Malachi 3:2. Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of

God and their own diligent effort

they must be conquerors in the battle

From the days of the prophet Daniel, the prophetic clock indicated that the great Antitypical Day of Atonement would begin on October 22, 1844. On that day, right on schedule, Christ entered the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary for the Antitypical Day of Atonement service, and the Angel's message of Revelation 10:6 "that there should be time no longer" went into effect.

"This time, which the Angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world's history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which should precede the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844." 10

Although thousands of years beforehand, God revealed the exact beginning of the Antitypical Day of Atonement, there are no time prophecies leading to its end. Events such as the beginning of that Day of Atonement are unconditional. Events, however, which are codependent upon actions of man are conditionally prophesied. Thus, Christ's prophesy that "this generation shall not pass" is conditional upon His finding a generation willing to participate with Him in the cleansing of His Sanctuary from

The dark sun, the moon without light, and the falling stars of Matthew 24:29 preceded the beginning of the Antitypical Day of Atonement. The generations that witnessed any or all of these three signs could have been "this generation" of verse 34. As we have seen, Christ could have cleansed the sanctuary and returned to earth within a few years after 1844, 1856, or 1888, if any of those generations had worked with Him in the putting away of sin.

### **Another Sign Yet to Be Fulfilled**

But there is a fourth event mentioned in Matthew 24:29 that

Christ could have cleansed the sanctuary and returned to earth within a few years after 1844, 1856, or 1888, if any of those generations had worked with Him in the putting away of sin.

Christ. See 2 Peter 3:12, margin. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain." 7

Though the truth that the Antitypical Day of Atonement began in 1844 is one of our unique beliefs, we have failed to enter into the Dayof-Atonement experience. We must arouse and be serious in our warfare against sin:

"We are now living in the great Day of Atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart."8

with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth...

"When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing."9

Tragically, too many generations of Seventh-day Adventists have been content with "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:5. Yes, however embarrassing it is, we must admit to ourselves, to our audiences, and to God that we—by our sins, our Laodicean defects – have delayed the coming of the Lord in glory for the past nearly 160 years.

### Was God Caught **Unprepared?**

Praise God, our reluctance to participate with Christ in the cleansing of the sanctuary has not caught Him unprepared.

will help us to more fully understand "this generation" of verse 34: "and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." The servant of the Lord tells us that this phrase is not referring to the first three events listed, but rather to a separate shaking of the heavenly bodies at the voice of God:

"December 16, 1848, the Lord gave me a view of the shaking of the powers of the heavens. I saw that when the Lord said "heaven," in giving the signs recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, He meant heaven, and when He said "earth" He meant earth. . . . The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God." 11

This is the voice of God from the throne stating "It is done." It shakes the heavens and the earth and delivers the 144,000 from the terrors of Jacob's trouble. 12 This is the generation that will have entered with Christ into the cleansing of the sanctuary experience by putting away sin. This is the "generation [that] shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." With the Day of Atonement ended and probation closed, "this generation" - the 144,000 – live through the time of Jacob's trouble without a Mediator and see Jesus come in the clouds of glory, and without seeing death, they are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. "This generation" will be a special group throughout eternity.

Matthew 24:29–35 is stating that it was God's plan for the 1844 generation of believers, which had witnessed the dark day of 1780 and the falling stars of 1833, to also be the 144,000 that would witness the shaking of the powers of heaven at the voice of God and without seeing death, see Jesus come. But it was a conditional prophecy dependent upon the participation of that generation in the Antitypical Day of Atonement.

God offered the experience of the 144,000 to every succeeding generation of believers from that day to this. Thank God, He offers it still! He offers it to you and to me - to our generation. We are to strive to be "this generation":

"We are to look to the man Christ Jesus, who is complete in the perfection of righteousness and holiness. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the pattern Man. His experience is the measure of the experience that we are to gain. His character is our

The pointed testimony must live in the church. And this alone will answer to the message to the Laodiceans. Wrongs must be reproved, sins must be called sins, and iniquity must be met promptly and decidedly, and put away from us as a people." 14

By God's grace and power, let us determine that our generation will not also perish in the wilderness.

God offered the experience of the 144,000 to every succeeding generation of believers from that day to this. Thank God, He offers it still! He offers it to you and to me—to our generation. We are to strive to be "this generation."

model. Let us, then, take our minds off the perplexities and the difficulties of this life, and fix them on Him, that by beholding we may be changed into His likeness. . . . As we look to Him and think of Him, He will be formed within, the hope of glory.

"Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand." 13

We need to confront ourselves with our Laodicean condition:

"These wrongs and sins, which have brought the people of God in their state of wretchedness, blindness, and poverty, must be seen, and they arouse to zealous repentance, and a putting away of these sins which have brought them into such a deplorable condition of blindness and fearful deception.

Let us strive individually and corporately to enter in with Christ into the cleansing process of the Antitypical Day of Atonement in order that we might be "this generation" that "shall not pass." \$

### References:

- <sup>1</sup> The Second Coming of Christ: or A Brief Exposition of Matthew Twenty-Four, 34-35.
- Selected Messages, book 1, 68.
- <sup>3</sup> Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 186.
- <sup>4</sup> See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 234–235. <sup>5</sup> *Review and Herald*, October 6, 1896.
- Spalding-Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White, 202.
- Christ's Object Lessons, 69.
- <sup>8</sup> The Great Controversy, 489-490.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 425.
- 10 The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7A, 971.
- <sup>11</sup> Early Writings, 41.
- <sup>12</sup> See The Great Controversy, 636-637.
- <sup>13</sup> Review and Herald, March 9, 1905.
- <sup>14</sup> Review and Herald, September 16, 1873; see also Testimonies, vol. 3, 260.

### Laodicea: Her Authority, Organization, and Destiny by Vernon Sparks

In these last days of earth's history, God has brought through a remnant of His people. The Bible tells us that this church of Laodicea will have great turmoil, but in the end she will be reunited with her Lord. The author examines many of the problems related to organization and authority that have arisen in the Adventist Churchboth in leadership and laity. Then, drawing from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, he addresses these issues in a clear and effective manner.



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### Jeff Wehr

### Catholics Dominate U.S. Congress

News Item: "Catholics still dominate the U.S. Congress. There are 150, including 91 Democrats and 59 Republicans, among the 535 members of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress. . . . Catholics have been the largest religious bloc in the legislative branch since 1964." *Religion Today News Summary*, January 8, 2001.

Prophetic Perspective: The time is near at hand when religious powers will pressure our lawmakers to pass the papal Sunday law. With a high percentage of the members of Congress being either Catholics or Protestants of the Religious Right, the stage is set for easier passage of Sunday legislation.

### Ecumenism, Here and Now

News Item: "On May 25, 1995, Pope John Paul II released a 105page Encyclical letter entitled *Ut* Unum Sint ('that they may all be one') — words from Christ's prayer (John 17:21, KJV). The pope said, 'In our ecumenical age, marked by the Second Vatican Council, the mission of the Bishop of Rome is particularly directed to recalling the need for full communion among Christ's disciples.' This is true 'especially as the year 2000 approaches, a year which Christians will celebrate as a sacred Jubilee' commemorating the Incarnation." John Paul II, Ut Unum Sint (Boston: Pauline, 1995), 11-15, quoted in *Christ Is Coming*,

In the same document, John Paul II wrote, "'What unites us is much greater than what divides us.' In other words, seek unity on what the churches have in common. The pope assures his readers that 'we are on the way toward full unity.' . . . John Paul II notes that 'with increasing frequency Christians are working together to defend human dignity, to promote peace, to apply the Gospel to social life, to bring the Christian spirit to the world of science and of the arts. They find themselves ever more united in striving to meet the sufferings and the needs of our time:

hunger, natural disasters and social justice.' " Ibid., 122.

John Paul includes the following as absolute truths: "(1) the relationship between Sacred Scripture, as the highest authority in matters of faith, and Sacred Tradition, as indispensable to the interpretation of the Word of God; (2) the Eucharist, as the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, an offering of praise to the Father, the sacrificial memorial and Real Presence of Christ and the sanctifying outpouring of the Holy Spirit; (3) Ordination, as a Sacrament, to the threefold ministry of the episcopate, presbyterate and diconate; (4) the Magesterium of the Church, entrusted to the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him, understood as a responsibility and an authority exercised in the name of Christ for teaching and safeguarding the faith; (5) the Virgin Mary, as Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual Mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity." Ibid.

Prophetic Perspective: The pope is correct in stating that "Love for the truth is the deepest dimension of any authentic quest for full communion between Christians." Ibid. However, he is wrong in his enumeration of certain church traditions as being the truth.

The existence of the Papacy depends in part upon the five erroneous positions described above. From first to last, we find that the Papacy puts emphasis on church tradition; while they call the "Sacred Scriptures" the highest authority, they insist that "Sacred Tradition" is necessary for rightly understanding the Word of God. The Eucharist, which is controlled by the priests and seen as essential for salvation, continues to emphasize the bread and wine as the literal flesh and blood of Jesus. While ordination of the episcopate, presbyterate, and diconate lay the foundation of the Papal hierarchy, the Magesterium places the pope at its pinnacle. And lastly, the devotion, veneration, and worship of the Virgin Mary not only continues to grow numerically in

terms of those who believe in the "apparitions" and "messages" of "Mary," but she continues to be exalted higher and higher in the "order of heaven." Today, Mary is called the Co-Mediatrix. This is nothing short of being called a Co-Redeemer with Christ!

Rome presents Mary as the one who can promote unity among Christians. As John Paul wrote, "Why should we not all together look to her as our common Mother, who prays for the unity of God's family and who 'precedes' us all at the head of the long line of witnesses of faith in the one Lord, the Son of God, who was conceived in her virginal womb by the power of the Holy Spirit?" John Paul II, The Encyclicals of John Paul II (Redemptoris Mater), ed. J. Michael Miller, C.S.B. (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1996), 386, quoted in ibid., 124.

The favorable response of Protestants to the ecumenical overtures of Rome was foretold. Sister Ellen White wrote that among Protestants, "the opinion is gaining ground that, after all, we do not differ so widely upon vital points as has been supposed, and that a little concession on our part will bring us into a better understanding with Rome." The Great Controversy, 563. But in the end, "when the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result." Ibid., 445. For more information on this personage known as the "Virgin Mary," see the following articles in past issues of Our Firm Foundation: "The Apparitions of Mary" in the July 1999 issue and "Into the Ranks of Spiritualism" in the Special Issue of the year 2000. We also recommend that you read the booklet The "Star" of the New Evangelization of America by Danny Vierra. It is available from Hope International.



### **Television Is Dangerous**

News Item: "TV is growing more wicked every day. Religion Analysis reported a study by the Parents' Television Council. It said, 'Since 1989 references to sex organs have increased seven-fold, foul language has increased five and a half times, and references to homosexuality are 24 times more common.' You are deceiving yourself if you think you can watch any of this stuff and maintain real spirituality. We have said over and over, it is time for Christians to throw out the TV. It is hard to believe that serious Christians can watch it. Parents, it would do you and your children a lot of good if you did away with it and spent more time with them, caused them to read good books, etc. 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.' What a difference it would make if Christians threw out the TV and other things which are harmful, or just a waste of time, and spent that time in prayer, Bible study and soul winning." The Christian News, December 4, 2000, 3.

Prophetic Perspective: It is true that television viewing steals away time from both soul winning and close, personal communion with God. Imagine exchanging two hours of television viewing with study and prayer. Two hours per day represents 730 hours per year. Divide 730 hours by the 16 waking hours in a day, and you have 45 days of time. Imagine losing 45 days of communion with God in the space of a year. Imagine the havoc 730 hours of worldly television will have on your character!

I believe many Christians watch television because they do not have a daily routine to commune with God. Many Christians do not have personal devotions. They have not made a decided effort to have study and prayer in the morning and/or evening. But if we stick with having a personal study time with Jesus, we will reap rich rewards.

### Adventists, Evangelicals Plan Dialogue

News Item: "The Seventh-day Adventist Church and a group of evangelical Christians are planning a series of talks to 'move beyond false stereotypes' and find common ground between the two theologically conservative groups.

"Seventh-day Adventists plan to meet in September 2001 with the World Evangelical Fellowship, an umbrella organization representing 160 million Christians in 111 countries.

"Both sides agree there are no plans to find agreement on issues of theology or doctrine, but rather to better understand each side's historical understanding of the Christian faith." *The Christian News*, December 4, 2000, 2.

Prophetic Prospective: Will efforts to find common ground silence the three angels' messages? Instead of sounding the trumpet with a "certain sound," will we be playing a different tune? We have a message to bear to every kindred, nation, tongue, and people. Time is short. The time is now to proclaim the message for this time and to apply it to our own lives.

### **Clasping Hands**

News Item: "'Southern Baptist Charles Colson is the most effective propagandist for the Roman Catholic Church in America.' So says Dr. John W. Robbins in the October 2000 Trinity Review.... Colson has praised the Pope, and often collaborated with Catholics (ECT, and other unity endeavors). He chose a Catholic to replace him at the helm of Prison Fellowship." The Christian News, December 4, 2000, 2.

Prophetic Perspective: Tragically, leading Protestants in America are paving the way for the healing of the deadly wound. Day by day, the Papacy gains ground not only in the political arena, but also into the hearts and minds of Americans across this great land.

### **Top Ten Religion Stories of 2000**

News Item: "Religion reporters at the nation's newspapers have named the selection of Democratic vice-presidential candidate Sen. Joseph Lieberman — an Orthodox Jew — as the top religion story of 2000. . . .

"Rounding out the top ten news stories:

"The pope's trip to the Middle East, which included meetings with Yasser Arafat and Holocaust survivors and an expression of sorrow for anti-Semitic violence by Christians.

"The eruption of violence in the Middle East in the fall, with the fragile peace process between Israelis and Palestinians crumbling.

"The fight over the role of gays and lesbians in the mainline Protestant churches....

"The decision by the Southern Baptist Convention to exclude women from the pulpit....

"A controversial theological document issued by the Vatican that said only the Roman Catholic Church holds the 'fullness of salvation' and that non-Catholic churches are 'deficient.'

"The cracking of the shaky unity in the Southern Baptist Convention, with moves by individual state conventions to cut financial contributions to the national church. . . .

"The pope's 'mea culpa' on behalf of the sins of the church over the past 2,000 years.

"A historic agreement between Lutherans and Episcopalians that will allow both churches to swap clergy and share in common mission projects, particularly in urban and rural areas.

"The election of the Rev. Vashti McKenzie as a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the first woman bishop in the predominantly black denomination." *The Christian News*, December 25, 2000, 23–24. \$

# Lessons from the Folding Machine



### Sue Bennett

Jesus often used parables to teach spiritual lessons. I would like to share with you some lessons I learned while using our folding machine.

Before the flyers can go through the folding machine, they must be printed and put onto the jogger to "jog" them into straight, neat piles of 100 leaflets. If they do not go onto the jogging machine, they will not go through the folding machine properly.

Here was my first lesson: Sometimes God allows little trials to come into our lives, but this is for our own good—they will help us to face and survive the bigger trials coming later.

"Through trials and persecution, the glory—character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The church of God, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience

bitter disappointments; but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory." <sup>1</sup>

Each neat stack of 100 leaflets is put face down onto the metal slot. Within approximately 17 seconds, one hundred flyers come out the other end of the machine, precisely folded and ready to be collected together, straightened into a neat stack, bound with an elastic band, and placed into a cardboard box. Each stack must be placed neatly into the box, or 21 bundles will not fit inside. When the box has 21 bundles of leaflets inside, the lid should go on tightly and be taped down. If the leaflets have not been placed carefully inside, then the lid of the box will not fit on properly and the boxes will be different sizes. Different sized boxes will not sit squarely on the pallet, and as a result, the pallets will be difficult to load with 50 or more boxes.

Here was my second lesson: How will we "fit" together in heaven if we have not been "neatened" here on this earth? This earth is our folding-machine experience.

But God has taught me other lessons. The machine is so noisy that I cannot hear the telephone - even if it is in the same room. However, I can hear the very soft singing sound as the bundle of 100 flyers come to the end, and it is time to put another bundle onto the machine. If I do not stop what I am doing and turn round immediately and put my hand gently onto the stack of what is left of the 100 flyers as it goes through the machine, then the last 4 leaflets sometimes get blown straight up—and then it is impossible to get them to go through the machine to be folded.

How can I hear such a soft sound? My ears are tuned to hear that sound, for I know I need to move quickly and help the last few flyers through the machine. If we are not tuned into listening for the Holy Spirit's voice, our ears will not hear the word behind us.

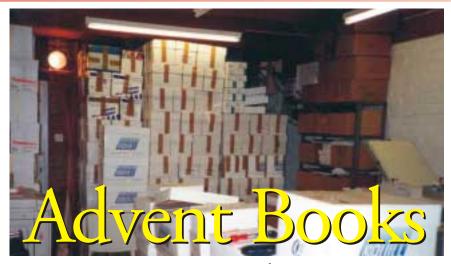
There was another lesson as well. I put a restraining, guiding hand on the last of the flyers to help them go through the machine. God is always ready to help us, but He never forces and always waits for us to ask.

One time I noticed that the leaflets would not go through the machine. I discovered that the first leaflet to go through the machine had a tiny fold in it. This meant that the whole stack could not go through the machine. The machine had to be switched off and the fold carefully flattened out. As soon as this was done, the flyers went through as usual. That one little fold on one leaflet meant that 100 flyers could not go through the machine. Are we, by one tiny sin in our lives, causing ourselves and others to stumble and fall?

Occasionally one of the leaflets does not fold properly. There are two folds in a "Z" fold; but if a leaflet has for some reason only been folded once, it will not sit neatly with the others that have two folds. This reminds me of the story in the Bible where every guest at the wedding had on the wedding garment, except for one who stood out—just like a leaflet with one fold

continued on next page

### **Share Your Faith!**



Ionathan Bennett

**Advent Books** is a ministry dedicated to sending out leaflets advertising free copies of The Great Controversy to every home in the British Isles.

God impressed me to start this ministry 7 years ago. We ordered a printing of leaflets for our first mail shot [bulk mailing] for The Shetland Isles (off the north of Scotland) – a mere 3,518 leaflets. We did not have our own printer [duplicator] in the early days, and we folded the leaflets by hand. Later we borrowed a tabletop folding machine. When these circumstances failed to meet our needs, God led us to purchase our own printer, and then our own commercial suction-feed folding machine—capable of folding 25,000 sheets per hour.

By God's providential leading, we now have two printers, and our paper is delivered by the pallet load. In order to have the best possible

price for delivery, we signed a contract with Royal Mail for them to deliver one million leaflets in a year. There have been times when we have received as many as 50 replies per day.

We also offer free postal Bible Studies. When sending out *The Great* Controversy, we include Bible-study offer cards. This way people have the chance to take Bible correspondence courses and other studies by mail. We have also been including another leaflet, which advertises the other Spirit of Prophecy books we offer – Patriarchs and Prophets, The Ministry of Healing, The Desire of Ages, and Steps to Christ.

After some perplexities and much prayer, God has led us to order our own printing of The Great Controversy with our advertisements for other Spirit of Prophecy books, and with our English address included. We stepped out in faith and ordered 15,000 copies of the

books, and received them early in

Once all the planned mail shots have been delivered, over 15% of the British Isles will have been covered but there will still be another 85% to do, which will cost over \$1.7 million! This may seem like a large project, but we have only to remember God's leading in the past and realize that already over 4,360 copies of The Great Controversy have been delivered to people's homes in our target area. As a result, we have received over 1,400 requests for postal Bible Studies.

We receive many letters from people in appreciation for the books we have sent to them. One such letter is from a lady in Wales: "The Great Controversy is quite stunning. I am only on chapter 12, but I suspect it is one of the most important books I have ever read."

If you have been looking for a way to get involved in the Lord's work, please contact us—either for more information or to support this dynamic, worthwhile, God-led project. \$

You may write to: Advent Books, P.O. Box 5794, Blaby, Leicester, LE8 4DX, England. E-mail: adventbooks@bigfoot.com

Do you have an experience that illustrates how to share the three angels' messages with others? Have you found an effective way to distribute presenttruth literature? Write it down (in 300-750 words), and send it to the Managing Editor of Our Firm Foundation. We pray that many others will be better instructed and inspired to help spread the gospel to all the world.

THE EDITORS

in a bundle of leaflets with two folds.

Why does one sheet of paper not fold properly when thousands of others fold just fine? It may be that the sheet is a bit damp, or the grain may not be quite the same as the others. But do we grumble when things do not go well for us? Did Jesus or the disciples complain when they were being persecuted? -No. Jesus "opened not His mouth" when He was being persecuted, and the disciples sang praises to God when they were in the prison. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. So if we are going

to see our faults and power to put them away. But we must be alert, watching at the metal plate and testing the screw.

Once, after folding all the printed flyers, we still needed a few to complete the planned mail shot. Although I had never done it before, I decided to print some flyers and immediately put them through the folding machine. Usually the flyers are printed one day and folded the next. This is the proper procedure. The printed sheets needed to be thoroughly dry, but since they were not, they bogged down the folder.

God never gives us trials before we are ready. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful,

If we are going through trials, let us keep our eyes on Jesus and the rich reward that will be ours if we are faithful and endure unto the end.

through trials, let us keep our eyes on Jesus and the rich reward that will be ours if we are faithful and endure unto the end.

One day none of the flyers would go through the machine. I tried to gently nudge them from the back but then they came through ripped, torn, and generally in a big mess.

I telephoned the supplier, and by the process of elimination we arrived at the cause. Each stack of flyers is knocked up against a metal plate when it is laid in the slot. With thousands of them hitting the metal plate all the time, it had moved ever so slightly. I had to undo the screw that held it in place, put the metal plate back, and retighten the screw. The flyers then went through the folding machine as they had done before—neatly folded into a "Z" fold.

One little sin will keep us out of the Kingdom. We may not even know where the problem lies; but we can know if we get in touch with our Supplier — Jesus. The Holy Spirit will give us the information to enable us who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13.

The newly printed flyers are stacked in a box, awaiting the folding machine. Stacks of one hundred flyers are separated by little strips of paper, so that each stack can be picked up easily. The strips are usually made from the paper in which the reams are packed. As each stack of flyers is picked up, the strips are hastily tossed into a box lid.

One day as I was folding, I found myself thinking of something that had happened years ago—something that had hurt me very much. I dwelt on that hurt and soon found anger creeping in. While tossing one of the paper strips in the box lid, something caught my eye. This strip had something typed on it, and the words were laying in plain view. I was able to read the first few words before getting on with the folding. But the next time I picked up a

bundle of leaflets, I carefully removed that strip of paper. When I had finished the morning's folding, I read it and felt very humbled. I thanked God for His intervention—for the miracle of that one piece of paper being in the right place, the right way up and for the rebuke contained in these words:

"All who indulge sinful traits of character, or willfully cherish a known sin, are inviting the temptations of Satan. They separate themselves from God and from the watchcare of His angels; as the evil one presents his deceptions, they are without defense and fall an easy prey. Those who thus place themselves in his power little realize where their course will end. Having achieved their overthrow, the tempter will employ them as his agents to lure others to ruin." <sup>2</sup>

Where did this strip of paper come from? I do not know; we did not print it. In any case, it made a deep impression on my mind, and I asked God to help me forgive as He has forgiven me. I also asked Him to erase the circumstance from my mind. Later I found the quotation from the CD ROM—but we still do not know where the strip of paper came from!

Does God speak to you while you are doing mundane tasks? Are you listening? \$

### References:

- <sup>1</sup> Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 31.
- <sup>2</sup> The Great Controversy, 558–559.



## The Meaning of Hell

### 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**

- I. In this month's study our Bible marking key letters are MH, which represent "The Meaning of Hell."
- 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 Meaning of Hell, 1MH: 1 Corinthians 15:55.
- 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 MH."

### IMH: I Corinthians 15:55.

In most cases, the Greek word hades is translated as "hell." It is more correctly translated "grave," as in this text. The Hebrew word from which "hell" is translated is always sheol, which means "grave." One time in the New Testament "hell" comes from the Greek word tartarus (2 Peter 2:4), which means a dark abyss – referring to this dark world. Twelve times "hell" comes from gehenna, which refers to the lake of fire into which the wicked will be cast. The word "hell" never means a lake of fire that is burning now, or that will burn the wicked endlessly.

### 2MH: Revelation 14:9-11.

This passage refers to the suffering of the wicked during the seven last plagues. See also Revelation 18:8, 21.

### 3MH: Jonah 2:6.

To Jonah, inside the whale's belly, three days and three nights was "forever." So forever can have either a limited duration or an infinite one. The context will define which.

### 4MH: I Samuel I:22.

In this instance "forever" means "as long as he lives." See also 1 Samuel 1:28; Exodus 21:1–6; Genesis 44:32; 1 Chronicles 28:4.

### **5MH: Ezekiel 18:4.**

The just punishment for sin—the one prescribed by the faithful

and true Judge—is not eternal life in misery, but death—the second death, which lasts for eternity. See Revelation 21:8; Romans 6:23. So the punish*ment*—not the punish*ing*—of the wicked will last just as long as the eternal life of the righteous.

### 6MH: 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

Destruction is called a punishment; so everlasting destruction must be everlasting punishment.

### 7MH: Psalm 37:9-10.

We may search for the wicked, but we will not be able to find them. Therefore, they cannot be now or forever burning somewhere in the universe.

### 8MH: Isaiah 47:14.

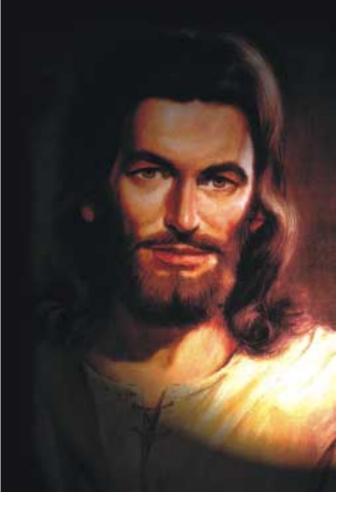
When God gets through with the wicked, there will not be enough fire in hell to warm a man's hands. The wicked will be reduced to ashes. See Malachi 4:1–3. The Bible tells us that the wicked will die and perish—be destroyed and consumed.

### 9MH: Revelation 5:13.

God will have a clean universe, free from sin and sinners. All of those who are saved will gladly praise the Lord God of the universe for His love in redeeming them from sin. Let us strive to be among that throng of blessed worshipers! \*

Adapted by Lisa L. Epperly from *Helps to Bible Study*, by J.L. Schuler.





# The Standard of Righteousness

Ron Spear

In this final crisis hour of the great controversy, the remnant people of God are called to meet His great standard of righteousness. Few truly understand this standard: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48. As I write, the words of Jesus ring in my ears: "For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14.

In order to be perfect, we must be born again: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.

Being born again means that our old nature dies, and we are raised to be different people than we were before: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17.

While meditating on the steps in the process of the new birth, David wrote: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Psalm 51:10. 12–13.

How do we know if we are truly converted? We can know, if we are following Paul's example: "I die daily." 1 Corinthians 15:31.

What does it mean, to "die daily"? Dying daily produces a new life in the soul. With the old man dead, we rise to newness of life. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Romans 6:4–5.

If we have not surrendered our will to God, to be molded into His will, we cannot experience this newness of life. Under these circumstances, self is still in control, and the Holy Spirit of God is grieved.

God sees us as we are. He knows our motives, intents and purposes.

But we are often blinded to our wrongs. The human heart is deceitful above all things. See Jeremiah 17:9. Only those who are completely surrendered can begin to understand the deceitfulness of an unconverted heart.

Listen to God speak to us on this important subject:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Professors of religion are not willing to closely examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith; and it is a fearful fact that many are leaning on a false hope. Some lean upon an old experience which they had years ago; but when brought down to this heart-searching time, when all should have a daily experience, they have nothing to relate. They seem to think that a profession of the truth will save them. When they subdue those sins which God hates, Jesus will come in and sup with them and they with Him. They will then draw divine strength from Jesus, and will grow up in Him, and be able with holy triumph to say: 'Thanks be to God,

which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Corinthians 15:57." <sup>1</sup>

Since our heart is so deceitful, we need a new heart. God promises to take away the deceitful heart within us, and to give us a heart that will serve Him with no selfish motives:

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezekiel 36:26–27.

### **A Daily Experience**

Let us remember that the humility of Christ is the power of Christ. This power works in us, leading us to be born again daily. This experience develops the wisdom of Christ. When we have His wisdom, we are ready to be His witnesses.

"When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—a changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride." <sup>2</sup>

Again, the prophet of the Lord describes the standard of perfection and righteousness that God is looking for in His remnant people:

"Love is the basis of godliness." Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within when the sunshine of Heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance."3

"Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, persistently

cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. Every sinful indulgence strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The man who manifests an infidel hardihood, or a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. . . .

"Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us." 5

Dear reader, our High Priest still holds the censer in His hand—He is still ministering for us in the heavenly

Let us remember that the humility of Christ is the power of Christ. This power works in us, leading us to be born again daily.

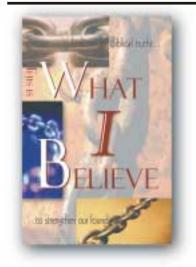
evil, and we do not desire to be set free, if we will not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' 2 Corinthians 6:2. 'To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' Hebrews 3:7–8." <sup>4</sup>

"'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'
Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.' John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the Word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to

sanctuary. Praise God! However, probation will not linger much longer. "Get ready, get ready, get ready," said the angel. \*Now\* is the time to awake out of our Laodicean slumber! Let us study the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy with earnest prayer to the Lord to save us from ourselves and to transform us into His image. This is the only way for us to be saved from eternal destruction. May we each be ready when Jesus comes! \*\$

### References:

- <sup>1</sup> Testimonies, vol. 1, 188.
- <sup>2</sup> The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1164-1165.
- 3 *Christ's Object Lessons*, 384, emphasis in original.
- <sup>4</sup> Steps to Christ, 34.
- Christ's Object Lessons, 100.
- <sup>6</sup> See Early Writings, 66.



### This Is What I Believe

by Ron Spear

Have we as a church been faithful to God's Word? In this book Elder Spear responds to questions posed by the General Conference by sharing some 20 convictions, each supported by the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. You will see a blend of love and deep concern in Ron Spear's heart for God's last-day Remnant Church.

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Please see page 3 for shipping and sales-tax information.



### Cultivating Self-Control

Alane Waters

This month we share with you the next in a series of articles that look at 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

Briefly defined, self-control means that our children learn to resist the wrong thoughts, feelings, hasty words, and selfish desires of their hearts. Many children have not been taught self-control. As soon as their wills are crossed, they snarl, scream, or pout. A child who has true self-control will not only obey when he is asked to do something that he may not feel like doing, but he will resist the natural agitation that arises in his heart as he chooses to allow the Spirit of God to control him

### When Should We Begin?

Self-control and obedience should be taught together. How do we begin this work? First, we establish the principles by teaching our children what God's Word says about these character traits. Even young children can be given a "thus saith the Lord," if they are shown the practical application to their lives. Then we must show how these principles are at work in our own hearts. If the children see the parent lacking self-control - responding with a quick temper or hasty words—they will rebel against any instruction that tells them they must not behave in the same way. If we want our children to learn how to have self-control, then we, as the parents, must have control of ourselves in child rearing.

Ideally, we should begin teaching self-control and obedience when our

children are infants, but if this has not been done, and your children are now toddlers or even youth, you should begin now.

We know a single mother who had a teenage boy with so little selfcontrol that if any little thing crossed his will, he became extremely angry and violent. When his mother gave her heart to the Lord and accepted the grace of God to help her, she began praying and consistently working to help her son overcome his evil temper. After a few incidents in which that son was brought to full and complete repentance, he came to his mother weeping and said, "Mother, thank you! I never knew I could have the victory over my temper." The power of God is strong enough to quell any passion of the human heart if we are willing to work in cooperation with Him.

### **Develop a Family Schedule**

One of the most effective ways to help cultivate self-control in the family is to develop a schedule. Regularity in the home is vital to teaching our children self-control. If there is no consistency in a child's home life, the foundations are being laid for the passions and the appetites to be out of control. A basic schedule, with times for rising, worship, meals, work, play, and sleep is not militaristic. It is Heaven's principle, for order is Heaven's first law. 1 Regularity in the child's schedule will help him to know what is expected and when it is expected – helping to make the child content.

### Give Nothing for Which the Child Whines or Cries

"One precious lesson which the mother will need to repeat again and again is that the child is not to rule; he is not the master, but her will and her wishes are to be supreme. Thus she is teaching them self-control. Give them nothing for which they cry, even if your tender heart desires ever so much to do this; for if they gain the victory once by crying they will expect to do it again. The second time the battle will be more vehement." <sup>2</sup>

Many parents have unknowingly trained their children that if they scream, mother or father will jump. This scenario often takes place at the table when the child is hungry and Mother does not bring the food as quickly as he thinks she should. This can be overcome if you will say, "Honey, you need to wait patiently. If you are going to scream, mother will take you away from the table." Then be sure to follow through with what you have said. After just a few minutes away from the meal, the child will learn to be very happy sitting quietly at the table.

Often parents are inattentive to their children's needs, and ignore them until the screaming or fussing begins. By doing this, we are teaching them that if they are to get mother's attention, they must throw a fit. Yet, when you are working diligently to train and help your children, there are times when they should not be allowed to interrupt. If they come fussing and whining, and you are legitimately occupied, say, "No. You may not interrupt me," and do not give a listening ear until the child is willing to have selfcontrol and wait patiently. Then, at the appropriate time—and this should be within a few minutes, if possible - respond to the child and give him your full attention.

To cultivate self-control in our families, we must bring the lessons into every aspect of life. During family recreational time, children

can be taught to play fairly and maintain their control. If they begin to fuss because things are not going their way, you should clearly state your expectations and the appropriate consequences if their behavior continues. You might say, "If you continue to have that attitude you will need to wait out until the next game, but if you want to be happy and play fairly, then you can join the family in this game." Loving, but firm instruction, used consistently by parents yielded to the Holy Spirit's guidance, will accomplish the goal that you desire.

Cultivating self-control is vitally important in helping our children build characters for eternity. When we cooperate with God, we will find His power aiding us in our work. As we help our children to cultivate these important character traits, our characters will also develop more perfectly so that, as unbroken families, we will be ready to meet our Lord when He comes. \$

Next month we will look at some ways to cultivate self-respect.

### REFERENCES:

- <sup>1</sup> See Review and Herald, June 10, 1902.
- <sup>2</sup> Child Guidance, 92.



Cultivating Christian Character in Children

Alane Waters

In this series Alane presents the important role of the parent as the gardener of the heart. Then 18 different character qualities are discussed, showing some of the common pitfalls, as well as how to practically plant and cultivate the right seeds of character.

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## Spiritual Life in the Church

Ellen G. White

The question is often asked, Why is there not more power in the church? — why not more vital godliness? The reason is, the requirements of God's Word are not complied with in verity and in truth; God is not loved supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves. This covers the entire ground. Upon these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Let these two requirements of God be obeyed explicitly, and there would be no discord in the church, no inharmonious notes in the family. With many the work is too superficial. Outward forms take the place of the inner work of grace. They are whited sepulchers - beautiful without, as far as claims to piety and a profession of the truth are concerned, but within full of uncleanness. The theory of the truth has converted the head, but the soul temple has not been cleansed from its idols.

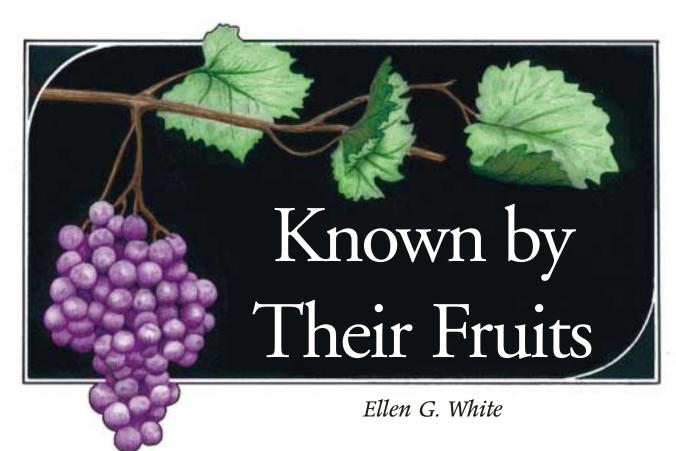
When the commandment came home to the mind and heart of Paul, he says, "Sin revived, and I died." Romans 7:9. In these days of pretense there are many sham conversions. True conviction of sin, real heart sorrow because of wickedness, death to self, the daily overcoming of defects of character, and the new birth—these, represented as old things, Paul says had passed away, and all things had become new. Such a work many know nothing of. They grafted the truth into their natural hearts, and then went on as before, manifesting the same unhappy traits of character. What is now needed is the plain testimony borne in love from lips touched with living fire.

Church members do not show that living connection with God that they must have in order to win souls from darkness to light. Make the tree good, and good fruit will be the result. The work of the Spirit of God upon the heart is essential to godliness. It must be received into the hearts of those who accept the truth, and create in them clean hearts, before one of them can keep His commandments and be doers of the Word. "Marvel not," said the great Teacher unto the astonished Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:7.

The Bible is not studied as much as it should be: it is not made the rule of life. Were its precepts conscientiously followed, and made the basis of character, there would be steadfastness of purpose that no business speculations or worldly pursuits could seriously influence. A character thus formed, and supported by the Word of God, will abide the day of trial, of difficulties and dangers. The conscience must be enlightened, and the life sanctified by the love of the truth received into the heart, before the influence will be saving upon the world.

What is needed is men of action for the time, prompt, determined, firm as a rock to principle, and prepared to meet any emergency. Why we are so weak, why there are so many irresponsible men among us, is because they do not connect with God; they have not an indwelling Saviour, and do not feel the love of Christ ever fresh and new, calling forth deep gratitude to God, and unfeigned love for souls for whom Christ died. No earthly relationship is as strong as this love. Nothing can compare with it. It elevates, ennobles, and develops all that is great and beautiful in humanity. It is constantly elevating the human to the divine. This life should be a living representative of Jesus Christ. 🕏

Review and Herald, August 28, 1879.



mpressions and feelings are no sure evidence that a person is being led by the Lord. Satan will, if he is unsuspected, give feelings and impressions. These are not correct and safe guides. All should acquaint themselves thoroughly with the evidences of our faith, and the great study should be, how they can adorn their profession and bear fruit to the glory of God. None should take a course to make themselves disgusting to unbelievers. They should be chaste, modest, and elevated in their conversation. Their lives should be blameless. A reckless, trifling, joking spirit should be rebuked. It is no fruit of the grace of God upon the heart for a person to talk and pray with talent in meeting, and when out of meeting give up to a rough, careless manner of talking and acting. Such are a reproach to the cause of God, and are miserable representatives of our faith.

The truth should be presented in a manner which will make it attractive to the intelligent mind. We as a people are not understood. We are looked upon as degraded, and are accounted as poor, weak-minded, and low. Then how important for all those who teach, and all who believe the truth, to be so affected by its sanctifying influence as to show unbelievers, by their consistent, elevated lives, that they have been deceived in this people! How important that the cause of truth be stripped of everything like a false and fanatical excitement, that the truth may stand

upon its own merits, revealing its native purity and exalted character!

It is highly important for those who preach the truth to be refined in their manners. They should shun oddities and eccentricities, and present the truth in its purity and clearness. See Titus 1:9: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." In verse 16 Paul speaks of [a] class who profess that they know God, but in works deny Him, and are "unto every good work reprobate." He then exhorts Titus, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." Titus 2:1-2. "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." Verses 6-8. This instruction is written for the benefit of all whom God has called to preach the Word, and also for the benefit of His people who hear the Word.

The truth of God will never degrade, but will elevate the receiver. It will refine his taste, sanctify his judgment, and perfect him for the company of the pure and holy angels in the kingdom of God. There are those whom the truth finds coarse, rough, odd, boastful, who take advantage of their neighbors if they can, in order to benefit themselves. They err in

many ways, yet when the truth is believed by them from the heart, it will work an entire change in their lives. They will immediately commence the work of reformation. The pure influence of truth will elevate the whole man. In his business deal with his fellow men he will have the fear of God before him, will love his neighbor as himself, and will deal just as he would be dealt by. His conversation will be truthful, chaste, and of such an elevating character that unbelievers cannot take advantage, or say evil of him justly, neither be disgusted with his uncourteous ways and unbecoming speech. He will carry the sanctifying influence of the truth into his family, and let his light so shine before them that they by seeing his good works may glorify God. He will in all the walks of life exemplify the life of Christ.

The law of God will be satisfied with nothing short of perfection, of perfect and entire obedience to all its claims. To come halfway to its requirements, and not render perfect and thorough submission and obedience, will avail nothing. The worldling and the infidel admire consistency, and have ever been powerfully convicted that of a truth God has been with His people when their works have corresponded with their faith.

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:20. Every tree is known by his own fruits. Our words, our actions, are the fruit we bear. There are those who hear the sayings of Christ, but do them not. They profess, but their fruits are such as to disgust unbelievers. They are boastful, and pray and talk in a self-righteous manner, exalting themselves, and virtually thanking God, like the Pharisee, that they are not as other men. They recount their good deeds, yet these very ones are crafty, and overreach in business deal. Their fruits are not good. Their words and acts are wrong, and yet they seem to be blinded to their destitute, wretched condition.

The following scripture is applicable to those who go along under such a deception: "Not every

one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:21–23.

Here is the greatest deception that can affect the human mind—for persons to believe that they are right when they are wrong. They think that they are doing a great work in their religious life. Finally Jesus tears off their self-righteous covering, and vividly presents before them the true picture of themselves, in all their wrongs and deformity of religious character. They are found wanting

God has blessed His people who have moved forward, following His opening providence. He has brought out a people from every class upon the great platform of truth. Infidels have been convinced that of a truth God is with His people, and have humbled their hearts to obey Him. The work of God progresses and moves steadily on. Notwithstanding all the evidences that God has been leading the body, yet there are, and will continue to be, those who profess the Sabbath, who will move independent of the body. They will believe and act as they choose. Their views are confused. Their scattered state is a standing testimony that God is not with them. By the world, the Sabbath and their errors are placed upon a level, and thrown away together. God is angry with those who pursue a course to make

Here is the greatest deception that can affect the human mind—for persons to believe that they are right when they are wrong.

when it is forever too late to have their wants supplied.

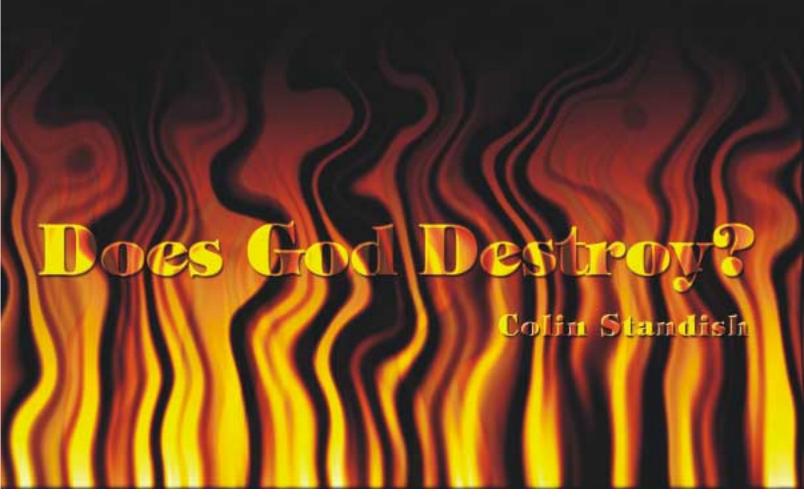
God has provided means to correct the erring; yet if those who err, choose to do as they think best, and follow their own judgment, and despise the means God has ordained to correct the erring and unite them upon the truth, they will be brought into the position described by the words of our Lord quoted above.

God is bringing out a people, and preparing them to stand as one, united, to speak the same things, and to carry out the prayer of Christ for His disciples: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17:20-21.

the world hate them. If a Christian is hated because of his good works, and for following Christ, he will have a reward. But if he is hated because he does not take a course to be loved, hated because of his uncultivated manners, and because he makes the truth a matter of quarrel with his neighbors, and because he has taken a course to make the Sabbath as annoying as possible to them, he is a stumblingblock to sinners, a reproach to the sacred truth; and unless he repents, it were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck, and he cast into the sea.

No occasion should be given to unbelievers to reproach our faith. We are considered odd and singular, and should not take any course to lead unbelievers to think us more so than our faith requires us to be.

Review and Herald, August 3, 1886.



he Moral Influence theory and its associated claim that God does not destroy have swept through not only certain academic areas of our church, but also among some self-supporting workers.

During the Sanctuary Conference held at Andrews University in 1997, Dr. Woodrow Whidden, Professor of Religion at Andrews University, made a stirring attack upon the manifest error that God does not destroy. I quote from his position paper:

"Other nettlesome questions rear their wondering heads: Was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah simply the chance circumstance of an unfortunate conspiracy of atmospheric conditions? See Genesis 19:24. Ellen White says 'the Lord rained brimstone and fire out of heaven.' 1 Was the judgment of God on Korah, Dathan and Abiram only a tragic vawning of a long dormant seismic 'fault' line in the Sinai desert? See Numbers 16:23–35. Ellen White calls this judgment 'the signal manifestation of God's power.'2 Were the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira only timely coronaries?

See Acts 5:1–11. Ellen White refers to their deaths as the 'signal manifestation of the wrath of God.' and goes on to say that 'The same God who punished them, today condemns all falsehood.' Will the 'lake of fire' be merely a passive act on God's part? Referring to the 'lake of fire,' Ellen White says that 'God is to the wicked a consuming fire.' "

### What About the Cross?

Dr. Whidden also documented the evidence that divine wrath was manifested at the cross:

"But what about the cross? Was it or was it not a manifestation of God's holy wrath against sin? If the plain, straightforward words of Ellen White mean anything, the following challenge needs to be very squarely faced: any well meaning person who feels that the 'moral influence' theory cancels out the substitutionary theory of atonement as a manifestation of God's 'wrath' against sin, needs to be prepared to rip the chapter 'Calvary' out of *The Desire of Ages*. I realize that my challenge is a bit shocking, but sometimes words are just too plain to

be ignored! Please carefully note the following citations from this climactic chapter of Ellen White's most spiritual work:

"'Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. . . . The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. . . . Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. . . .

"'Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the *Father's wrath* upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.'6"

"'He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself.'7"

Again Dr. Whidden declared: "In addition to these forcefully clear statements, Ellen White makes it abundantly evident that there is precious little emphasis on the passive justice of God:

"'Justice demands that sin be not merely pardoned, but the death penalty must be executed. God, in the gift of His only begotten Son, met both these requirements. By dying in man's stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon.'8"

"'As Christ bore the sins of every transgressor so *the sinner who* will not believe in Christ as his personal Saviour . . . will bear the penalty of his transgression.'9"

"Is there any substantive difference between pulling a plug on somebody's life support system and switching on the 'juice' to an electric chair? Again, I believe the answer is self-evident! For Ellen White says, our God is love; but His love is expressed in active justice, not just passively. He is certainly our 'friendly' neighborly 'God' (see Graham Maxwell's Servants or Friends, Redlands, CA: Pineknoll Pubs., 1992. I took this metaphor of God the friendly neighbor from an advertisement for this book which appeared in a recent edition of Christianity Today), but He is more than just some benignantly concerned neighbor poignantly beckoning over the back fence pleading with us to knock off the 'foolishness' of our romp in the fields of sin. He is also the Holy God who has acted and will once again act in just wrath against the rejecters of His merciful offer of redemption. Again there are just too many references to God's active execution of justice to say that justice is merely a passive 'letting us go.' '

While Dr. Whidden's arguments cannot be disputed, let us, nevertheless, examine the Scriptures, which even more forcibly dispel this dangerously unbiblical error. How can we rationalize God's prophecy to the antediluvian world with the belief that God does not destroy?

### **Key Statements From Inspiration**

"And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. . . . And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die." Genesis 6:7, 17.

Jehovah, identifying Himself as the Creator with the words "I even I," emphasizes that it is He, the Creator, who destroys life. The unity of this verse is impelling. The God who created was the God who destroyed. No other power did the destroying.

Those whose belief that God does not destroy, base their claim, at best, on a doubtful use of Scripture. Some Moral Influence theorists are willing to concede that God has destroyed the earthly life of disobedient humans, but they hold that Satan is responsible for the *eternal* death of the wicked. Though Satan's

Satan, makes the issue plain. How many times does our God have to use the word "I," before we will be convinced that He most certainly *does* destroy? Speaking to the fallen Lucifer, God declared:

"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy

Either our God is truthful in stating that the fire of the second death comes from Him out of heaven, or He is a liar.

deceptions and temptations have been responsible for myriads of humans rebelling against God, there can be no doubt that God destroys the wicked eternally.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." Revelation 20:9.

Either our God is truthful in stating that the fire of the second death comes from Him out of heaven, or He is a liar. Scripture clearly tells us that it is impossible for God to lie. See Titus 1:2. Revelation 20:9 is a plain "Thus saith the Lord." Dare we challenge God's trusted Word? Why does He declare this to be His strange act if He does not—as an act of love—destroy the unrepentant?

The eradication of sin and sinners forever from the universe, together with the destruction of

traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." Ezekiel 28:15–19.

"I will destroy thee!" "I will cast thee to the ground! I will lay thee before kings!" "I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee!" "I will bring thee to ashes!" Finally, God declares to Satan, "never shalt thou be any more."

If God's Word means anything to us, the time is long overdue that we ceased to be carried away by "the treacherous sophistry of the rabbis."  $^{10}$ 

The voice of the Lord's messenger is as impelling as that of Scripture. Below are two unequivocal statements. The first deals with the destruction of Korah and his

company. Many times when the children of Israel rebelled, they gave the credit to Satan for the judgments of God. By this, they committed the unpardonable sin. What a fearful warning to those who are flirting with the same concept today!

"But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency. The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, 'Ye have killed the people of the Lord.' Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. It was this act that sealed their doom. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man's heart is

effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace." 11

The second statement distinguishes the judgments of God from the judgments of Satan:

"A single angel destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians, and filled the land with mourning. When David offended against God by numbering the people, one angel caused that terrible destruction by which his sin was punished. The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits." 12

### Does It Matter What We **Believe?**

Again, we assert that the notion that God does not destroy is extremely dangerous. Many souls, by accepting it, will be lost. First, it implies that our wonderful God is a liar. Such accusers of God will have no place in His kingdom.

Second, this concept has led some to form outrageous arguments. These people assert that Satan – not God – destroys the wicked at the time of the executive judgment.

When asked what happens to Satan, they reply, "Satan commits suicide." How earnestly these people need to evaluate their conclusions in the light of the Spirit of Prophecy! 13

Third, there is no way anyone can die the second death without an act of God. He continuously upholds all life in the universe. At the very least, He must remove His sustaining "hand." (However, Scripture, as we have seen, testifies that He does much more than simply remove His hand.) If, because we have a false sense of His tender mercy, justice, and love, we insist that God plays no part in the death of the wicked, then it would be logical to progress (as many have before us), to the doctrine that all will be saved. For example, one such proponent declared: "God would be a greater monster than Adolph Hitler if He destroyed the wicked." He then declared, "Ultimately even Satan will be saved!" Such a doctrine encourages a lack of preparation to stand before the judgment bar of God.

Our God is love. See 1 John 4:8. That the plan of salvation may be complete – that the universe may be cleansed once more and that the universal distress of eternal beings is forever eliminated - God, in an act of unimaginable love, destroys sin and sinners forever.

"The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein." Nahum 1:5.

Indeed, solemn and eternally consequential are the dangers of speculation beyond God's revealed Word. 🕏

### References:

- Patriarchs and Prophets, 162.
- Ibid., 401.
- The Acts of the Apostles, 73.
- Ibid., 76.
- <sup>5</sup> The Great Controversy, 673.
- The Desire of Ages, 753.
- Ibid., 756 (emphasis supplied).
- The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7A, 470 (emphasis in original).
- Ibid., 471 (emphasis in original).
- <sup>10</sup> Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 102.
- <sup>11</sup> Patriarchs and Prophets, 405.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Great Controversy*, 614. <sup>13</sup> See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 405 (quoted

### Come to Camp Mee

It is not too early to make a note on your calendar for Hope International's upcoming camp meetings. If you can attend any of the following meetings, we trust vou will come and find many rich blessings! We will announce the list of speakers as it is finalized.

> Portland, TN: Eatonville, WA: Angelus Oaks, CA: Angwin, CA:



May 18-20 July 24-29 September 13-16 September 20–23

### letters to the editor

### Have a letter to share?

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

I am an 80-year-old senior lady who was reared in the SDA faith near one of our medical institutions. In my late teens and into my early 40s I was out of the faith, but never gave up my belief in God. I fell away partly because of allowing some imperfections in professing Christians to sway me. In later years I determined to take the Bible itself as my foundation of belief and put my trust in God alone. I returned to the SDA church with a different viewpoint, and it has served me well to place my faith only in Jesus Christ and to trust in Him and God alone. After being out of the faith for many years, when I came back I expected to find a church which had progressed further in its Christianity, but I was disappointed and surprised to find it more worldly than when I had left it. This further helped me to realize that my one-toone trust and belief in God was the only stability in this world, whatever the church professes, and that it is an individual matter to be right with God – and that is battle enough, with one's self.

I came across your publication *Our Firm Foundation* through a friend who gave me some copies, and I recognized it as more like the old *Review and Herald* I remember as a child. It is "food for the soul." This I appreciate very much!

God bless! Keep me on your mailing list.

WL, California

I have to say that the best thing that happened to me was when my elder introduced me to your publication. It has been a blessing indeed! We really need a lot more ministries like yours that will proclaim the truth in a time when people are so lukewarm. Changes are being made within the world every day and it seems as if Seventh-day Adventists do not realize what is about to take place. I hope that God will give you

all strength to stand up for the right though the heavens fall. I am requesting your prayers as well that God will move within my life so that I will go out and witness to others who are in the world of darkness. Thank you for all that I have received from you, and I hope and pray that as we see the closing scenes coming to a wrap-up, we will earnestly search the Scriptures and apply them daily to the call.

S, via e-mail

### From Overseas

I write to express my heartfelt appreciation to you for the very nice books and articles you sent to me. I received them the 13<sup>th</sup> of this month. I thank you very much and pray that the Lord will continue to bless you in all your endeavors.

I have started distributing some of them, especially the magazines, and I hope to touch the hearts of as many people as the Lord will allow. I have also started reading the books, especially the *Early Writings*, which is one of the books I have for a long time been longing to get.

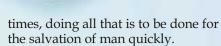
May God bless you all!

IA, Ghana

I would like to thank God so much for this privilege He has given me to write this letter to you.

Let me take this time to express my gratitude for all the copies of *Our Firm Foundation* I received.

In Zimbabwe currently we are facing a problem of needing more truth-filled literature and all along, since I got the magazines, the Lord has marvelously spoken, in all the rebukes, lessons, reproofs, counsels, and all that is inspirational in this magazine. Light has been presented in such a way that only willful ignorance can make one not to discern the truth and follow God's way. I wish Hope International God's tremendous blessings in standing up for Jesus in these evil



God bless you in the master's service. Maranatha! Jesus is coming!

MM, Zimbabwe

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

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

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

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

God's richest blessing upon you all!

DS, Zimbabwe

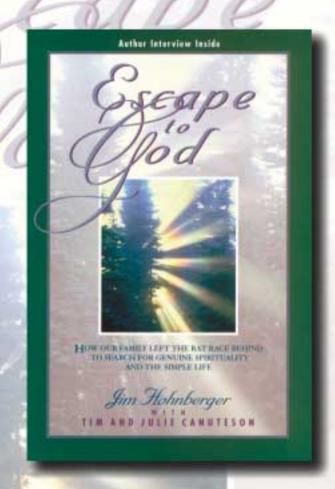
Greetings in the name of Messiah! I saw some of your magazines—the *Prophetic Truth* and the *Truth for Today*, and their contents enthused me so much that I earnestly desire to have them in abundance. I am passionately requesting for these literature and magazines. They would serve me, my congregation, and many others.

I am a seventh-day Sabbath observer, and it is my fervent desire to acquaint myself with sound doctrines of the Scriptures. This is to enable me to stand solidly and to preach boldly and refute the adulterated doctrines that have permeated Christianity. I rely on divinely-oriented churches and organizations such as yours to accomplish this task.

PO, Nigeria

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Escape to God

by Jim Hohnberger

As this world grows more old and tired, we are faced with the question, Why are we still here? Why has Jesus not come to take us home? We, the people of God's Remnant Church, have the truth—isn't that enough?—No, it is not!

We have not learned to let God be 100% in control of our lives. We have not given ourselves completely over to Him. We have not let Him be all in all in our lives. We have the truth—but we hold it in an unrighteous experience.

This book, *Escape to God*, takes you through the process of surrender—step by step—until you are ready and willing to go all the way with God. And it does not just give principles—it also applies those principles practically, with real-life experiences from the lives of real people. If applied, the principles it contains will change your life!

One exceptional feature of this book is that it can be shared with non-Adventists as well. Everyone will benefit from it!

Order your copy from Hope International today for \$13.99.

Please see page 3 for shipping and sales-tax information.

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