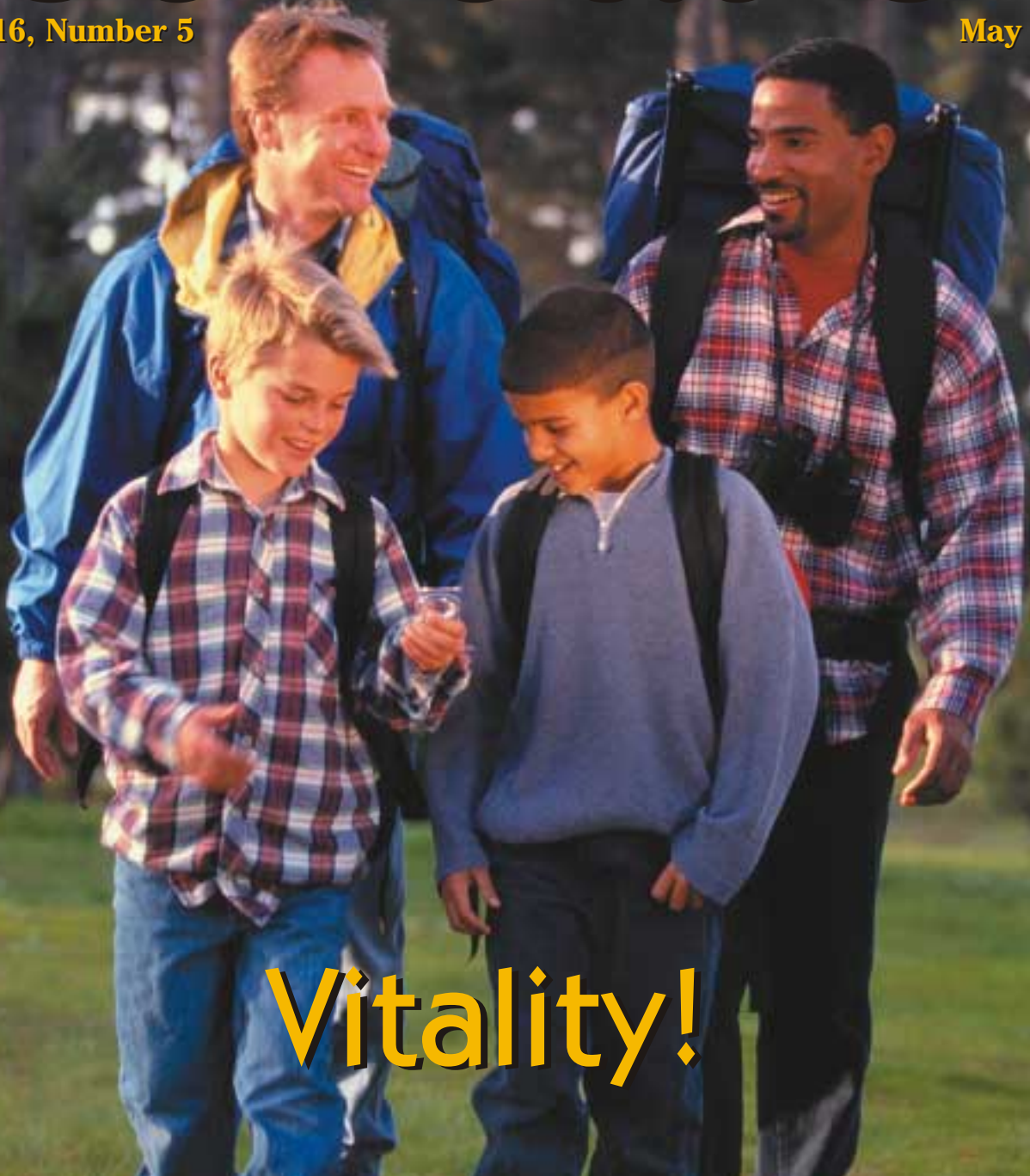


# Our Firm Foundation

Volume 16, Number 5

May 2001



## Vitality!

**The Seventh-day Sabbath**

**Christ Our Righteousness**

**The Immutable Law of God**

**The Non-Immortality of the Soul**

**The Three Angels' Messages**

**The Sanctuary**

# Our Great Responsibility

There is a great responsibility in becoming a Christian, but the greater light provided by God's gift of prophecy to His remnant church places even a greater responsibility on Seventh-day Adventist Christians. God provided this greater light to His remnant church so that we would not follow the history of the ancient church in their apostasy, but tragically, we, too, did not follow the counsel, the warnings, and rebukes of the prophet. Now it must be said that we have done worse than they, because of the greater light that we have:

"I saw that many who profess to believe the truth for these last days think it strange that the children of Israel murmured as they journeyed; that after the wonderful dealings of God with them, they should be so ungrateful as to forget what He had done for them. Said the angel: 'Ye have done worse than they.'"<sup>1</sup>

The great responsibility of the leaders, pastors, and lay leaders—yes, of every Seventh-day Adventist—can best be explained by these inspired words:

"If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that

taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezekiel 33:3-9.

"When existing evils are not met and checked, because men have too little courage to reprove wrong, or because they have too little interest or are too indolent to tax their own powers in putting forth earnest efforts to purify the family or the church of God, they are accountable for the evil which may result in consequence of neglect to do their duty. We are just as accountable for evils that we might have checked in others, by reproof, by warning, by exercise of parental or pastoral authority, as if we were guilty of the acts ourselves."<sup>2</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists have been commissioned by God to give the very last warning to the world. The three angels' messages and the sanctuary message are the very heart of the everlasting gospel. These messages reveal the individual's responsibility in victory over every temptation—every sin—so that we can at last sit down with Him on His throne.

Unless we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, live and preach the experience of victory, we will be responsible for the loss of every soul with whom we failed to share this great warning message when we had an opportunity to do so.

"Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them."<sup>3</sup>

Only those who accept the great responsibility as watchmen, and give the trumpet a "certain sound" of warning, will be saved. ✠

*Ron Spear—Executive Editor*

REFERENCES:

- <sup>1</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 129.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 516.
- <sup>3</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, 415-416.

## About Hope International . . .

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

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

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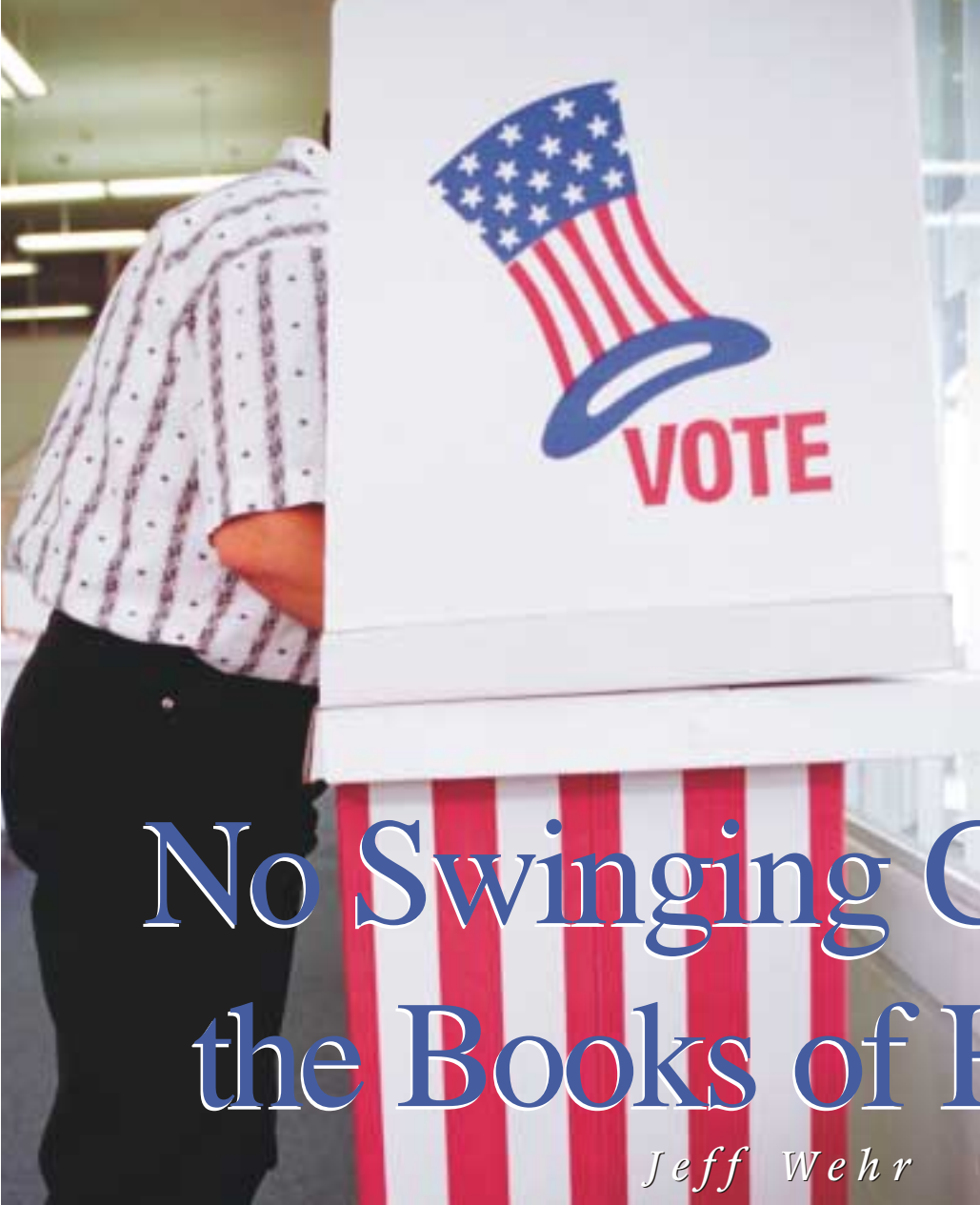
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# No Swinging Chads in the Books of Heaven

*Jeff Wehr*

In the United States Presidential elections this past fall there was great debate over the counting of the ballots in the state of Florida. Many people listening to the news soon learned a new word — “chad.” This word refers to the small pieces of paper or cardboard that are generated by punching holes in paper tape, computer data cards, or, in this case, voters’ ballots. When a ballot hole was not punched out clean, the chads remaining were said to be “dimpled,” “pregnant,” “hanging,” or “swinging,” depending on how much pressure the voter exerted.

What was the real intent of the thousands upon thousands of Floridian voters in all those swinging chads, hanging chads, and pregnant chads? — Based upon the ruling of the highest court in

the United States, we will never know. Yet even if they were all counted, we would still have an imperfect count in Florida. As fallible human beings, we could never shuffle through forty thousand, or six million ballots, and come up with a perfect score.

However, the books of heaven record our life story with perfect exactitude. There is no margin of error. There are no swinging chads, hanging chads, or pregnant chads in the books of heaven.

From these heavenly books we will be judged. The Bible says, “The books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Revelation 20:12.

From the book of life God will judge not only our works (see verses 11–12), but also our words (see Matthew 12:36–37), our thoughts (see 1 Corinthians 4:5), our motives (see Proverbs 16:2), and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil (see Ecclesiastes 12:14).

God sees the motive behind every thought, word, and deed. In this fallen world, we, as fallible and mortal men, often wrongly judge. However, in the High Court of Heaven there is a perfect examination and a perfect verdict.

## When Is the Judgment?

Almost everyone believes that there will be a day of reckoning, but very few understand just when and where that will be. The Bible confirms that God has designated a certain “day” to begin the judgment, saying, “[God]

hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world.” Acts 17:31.

According to the Bible, this “day” of judgment precedes the second coming of Christ. Jesus said, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12. When Jesus returns, He will reward each one based upon a previous review or investigation of his life record.

Now the question arises, Is there a time prophecy that tells us when God will begin to judge the world? — The answer is “Yes.” Over 160 years ago, men from all parts of the world began to study the prophecies of Daniel. They became particularly interested in the 2,300-day prophecy found in Daniel 8:14, which reads: “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

These Bible scholars knew that a day represented a year in Bible prophecy. See Numbers 14:33–34; Ezekiel 4:5–6. Therefore, the time prophecy stretched across a great expanse of 2,300 years—not days. But when would it start?

### **Gabriel Answers Daniel's Perplexity**

Shortly after having the perplexing vision in Daniel, chapter 8, Daniel prayed earnestly, confessing his sins and the sins of his people. See Daniel 9:1–19. While Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel came to him and said, “O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. . . . therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.” Verses 22–23.

After asking Daniel to consider the vision he had seen concerning the 2,300-year prophecy, Gabriel said: “Seventy weeks are determined [cut off] upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” Verse 24.

While Daniel was thinking about the 2,300-year prophecy, he was told that seventy weeks of time would be cut off for his people. What would the 70 weeks be cut off from?—No doubt, the 70 weeks would be cut off from the larger 2,300 years.

How long is seventy weeks? Remember, a day represents a year in Bible prophecy. With seven days in a week, 70 weeks would be 490 days—or 490 years in prophetic time. Daniel was told that 490 years would be cut off for his people from the larger 2,300-year prophecy.

When would the 490 years begin? Gabriel said: “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” Verse 25.

Notice that “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks,” a total of

69 weeks, would bring us to the time of Messiah the Prince. We know that 69 weeks equals 483 days ( $69 \times 7 = 483$ ). These 483 prophetic days would represent 483 literal years. From “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem,” 483 years would bring us to Jesus, the Messiah.

In 457 B.C., Artaxerxes, king of Persia, issued the decree that truly enabled the Jewish people to restore and build Jerusalem. His decree gave them not only political autonomy, but also religious freedom to reinstate the sanctuary and its services. See Ezra 7.

Through the sanctuary and its services, God taught His people the plan of salvation. With this understanding of the plan of redemption

The seventieth week naturally follows the sixty-ninth week. Therefore, the seventieth week—a prophetic week essential for the destiny of Daniel’s people as a nation—would cover the important years of A.D. 27 to A.D. 34.

We are told by Gabriel that “after [the seven weeks and] threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” Daniel 9:26.

In this passage, Gabriel describes two critical events in the history of the Jewish people that would follow the first 69 weeks ending in A.D. 27:

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*Through the sanctuary and its services, God taught His people the plan of salvation.*

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through the sanctuary services, the Jewish people had an opportunity “to make an end of sins,” “to finish the transgression,” and “to bring in everlasting righteousness” with the acceptance of Jesus as the world’s Redeemer.

By adding 483 full years to the year of 457 B.C., we come to the year of A.D. 27. What happened in A.D. 27?—This was the year that Jesus was baptized and began His three-and-one-half year ministry.

Soon after His baptism, Jesus declared, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:15. What time was “fulfilled”?—The first 69 weeks of the 70-week prophecy was fulfilled with perfect exactitude. The first 483 years did bring us to the time of “Messiah the Prince.”

### **The Seventieth Week**

Now there is one prophetic week or seven years left. What would happen during the time of the seventieth week?

First, Messiah would be “cut off”—or crucified. Second, the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary would be destroyed. Did these events occur after A.D. 27?

In A.D. 31, Jesus was crucified. In A.D. 70, the Romans destroyed the city and the sanctuary with a flood of Roman armies. As Jesus predicted, the temple was destroyed, with not one stone left upon another. See Matthew 24:1–2.

Gabriel continues his explanation, saying, “And he [Messiah] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [the seventieth week]; and in the midst of the [seventieth] week he [Messiah] shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation [of offerings in the sanctuary] to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he [Rome] shall make it [Jerusalem and the sanctuary] desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” Daniel 9:27.

When Jesus was “cut off” in the “midst of the [seventieth] week”—in

the middle of the last seven years in A.D. 31 – did He “cause the sacrifice [of animals] and the oblation [of meal or grain offerings] to cease”? – Yes, indeed! The Bible records that when Jesus died on the cross, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” signifying the end of the earthly sanctuary service. Matthew 27:51.

All those innocent little lambs sacrificed in the temple simply represented the death of Jesus as the Lamb of God. Once Jesus died on the cross, there was no longer any need for sacrificing those little

verted and became Paul, the apostle to the Gentile world. See Acts 9. So while the stoning of Stephen marked the end of the 70-week prophecy for Daniel’s people, it also marked the beginning of the gospel going to the whole world.

### **The Starting Point for the 2,300-Year Prophecy**

The 70-week prophecy provides a double blessing. It not only pointed to important events in the ministry of Jesus and the Jewish nation; it also provided the starting point for the 2,300-year prophecy. By

Exodus 25:9, 40. He was then admonished of God to make one like it for the people of Israel. The sacrificial services were then to be carried out to explain the work of the Messiah in saving man.

### **The Work of Christ, Our High Priest and Judge**

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He became our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Jesus is our High Priest who understands our sufferings and temptations. The Bible says, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace [in heaven], that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:15–16.

Now please note this very important point: When Jesus begins to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary, He will also be opening the books for judgment.

In the earthly sanctuary, the Jewish high priest symbolically represented the future work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. On the last day of the religious year the Jewish high priest performed the work of cleansing the sanctuary. That day was called the Day of Atonement. It was also known as the Day of Judgment. During the ten days preceding it, each person was to make certain that he had confessed all his sins, or else he was considered lost. The unrepentant were cast out from among the people. On the Day of Atonement, the people were judged, and the sanctuary was cleansed from all the confessed sins that had accumulated there throughout the whole year. See Leviticus 16.

Therefore, the 2,300-year prophecy pointed to the time when Jesus would begin to cleanse the heavenly sanctuary from all the sins that have been confessed. This time prophecy ended in the year A.D. 1844. In that year, the Day of Atonement, also known as Yom Kippur, fell upon October 22.

On this day God began the judgment of every man, woman, and

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*The sanctuary here on earth was only a copy of the one in heaven, which served as an “example . . . of heavenly things.”*

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lambs. In fact, to continue the sacrificial offerings of lambs would constitute a denial of the crucifixion of Christ—His sacrifice—for guilty humanity. By His death, Jesus truly instituted a new covenant.

### **The Last Half of the Seventieth Week**

So what happened between the years of A.D. 31 and A.D. 34? Following the crucifixion of Christ, the gospel was presented to the Jewish people as a nation. Even after their national rejection of Christ in A.D. 31, God in His mercy still gave them three-and-one-half years to repent corporately. But, tragically, in A.D. 34, the Jewish leaders, representing the Jewish nation, stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr. See Acts 7.

This tragic act sealed the fate of the Jews as a nation, but not as individuals. God would now turn to all the people of the world, both Jews and Gentiles, to become His people, Israel. See Galatians 3:7, 28–29. As Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38.

At the stoning of Stephen, we are introduced to Saul of Tarsus, a terrifying persecutor of the infant church. However, Saul was con-

adding 2,300 full years to the year of 457 B.C., we come to the year A.D.1844.

We had been given to understand that at the end of the 2,300-year prophecy in 1844, the sanctuary would be cleansed. The sanctuary referred to is God’s heavenly sanctuary. But, you ask, Where does the Bible speak of a heavenly sanctuary?

The book of Hebrews says, “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. . . . We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Hebrews 4:14; 8:1–2. See also Revelation 15:5.

The sanctuary here on earth was only a copy of the one in heaven, which served as an “example . . . of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” Hebrews 8:5; see also verse 6.

On Mount Sinai, Moses was shown the heavenly sanctuary. See

child. He began with Adam and Eve and has worked His way down through the succeeding generations of the human race. The life of every professed believer was to be reviewed, encompassing every thought and action. And before Jesus returns, every case, including the cases of those still alive at that time, will be determined for either eternal life or eternal death. See Matthew 25:31-46.

We need to ask ourselves some serious questions: Have I given all of my sins to Jesus? Have I asked for forgiveness?

If this were my last day, would I be prepared to face my life record in the judgment? Am I confident that beside my recorded sins in the book of life there is the word "forgiven"?

If you are not sure, please make the following ten commitments before going to bed tonight:

**First**, I will not go to sleep tonight until I know that I have made things right with God in confessing all known sins. See Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9.

**Second**, I will make things right with anyone that I have wronged. See Matthew 5:21-24.

**Third**, I will take time daily to study God's Word. See Matthew 4:4; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:15.

**Fourth**, I will take time to pray and commune with God each day. See Daniel 6:10; Matthew 6:5-13.

**Fifth**, I will begin cultivating a love and affection for heavenly things. See Colossians 3:1-2.

**Sixth**, I will strive to make my conversation with others pleasing to God. See Colossians 4:6.

**Seventh**, I will look for opportunities to do good that God the Father might be glorified. See Matthew 5:16.

**Eighth**, I will gather my family together daily for family worship and encourage each family member to be right with God. See Proverbs 22:6.

**Ninth**, I will depend upon the power of God through the Holy Spirit to overcome my weaknesses. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

**Tenth**, I will allow the love of Christ to flow through every thought, word, and deed. See 1 John 4:7-8. ❄

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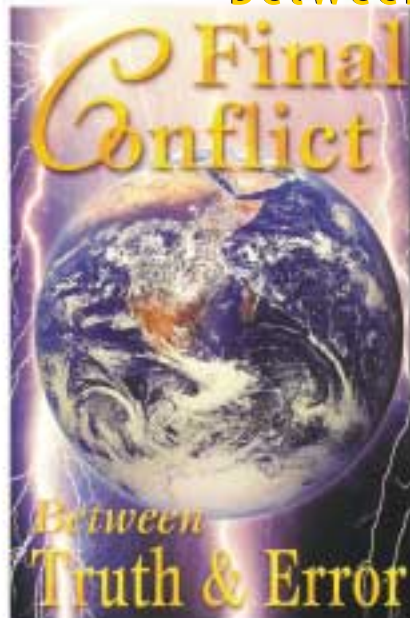
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# Courtesy at Home

*Ellen G. White*

Something is wrong in those families, says the *Bazar*, where the little courtesies of speech are ignored in the everyday home life. True politeness cannot be learned, like a lesson, by one effort, any time in one's life; it must be inbred. "Well meaning, but rough," is said of many a man; and too often the beginning of the difficulty lies with the parents in a family. Is it hard for the husband to give a smiling "Thank you" to his wife as she brings his slippers on his evening return home? Is it more difficult for the mother to say, "John, will you shut the door please"? than to use the laconic phrase, "Shut the door!" When Tom knocks over his sister's baby house, why should not "Excuse me, I didn't mean to," be the instinctive apology?

Many who would not be guilty of discourtesy to a stranger, or to a friend in the world without, lay aside much, if not all, their suavity of manner on entering the home circle. The husband and wife dispense with those little graceful

attentions which, though small, are never unimportant. The children are ordered hither and thither with crusty words; no "Thank you" rewards the little tireless feet that run on countless errands. The dinner is eaten in silence, broken only by faultfinding and reproof from the parents, and ill humor and teasing among the children. In the evening, the father devotes himself to his newspaper, and the mother to her sewing, interrupting themselves only to give such peremptory orders as "Less noise, children;" "Stop quarreling;" and, finally, "Go to bed."

In many families, there is no positive rudeness among the members, only a lack of those simple, affectionate attentions which awaken a spontaneous return; a want of that consideration and gentleness of demeanor which are wellsprings of comfort in every household. The well-bred host does not fail to bid his guest "Good night," and "Good morning;" why should not this simple expression of good feeling be always exchanged

between parents and children? The kindly morning greeting will often nip in the bud some rising fretfulness; and the pleasant "Good-by," from old and young, when leaving the house for office, shop, or school, is a fragrant memory through the day of separation. When the family gathers alone around breakfast or dinner table, the same courtesy should prevail as if guests were present. Reproof, complaint, unpleasant discussion, and scandal, no less than moody silence, should be banished. Let the conversation be genial, and suited to the little folks as far as possible. Interesting incidents of the day's experience may be mentioned at the evening meal, thus arousing the social element. If resources fail, sometimes little bits read aloud from the morning or evening paper will kindle the conversation.

No pleasanter sight is there than a family of young folks who are quick to perform little acts of attention toward their elders. The placing of the big armchair in a warm place



for mamma, running for a footstool for aunty, hunting up papa's spectacles, and scores of little deeds show unsurpassed and loving hearts. But if mamma never returns a smiling "Thank you, dear," if papa's "Just what I was wanting, Susie," does not indicate that the little attention is appreciated, the children soon drop the habit. Little people are imitative creatures, and quickly catch the spirit surrounding them. So, if, when the mother's spool of cotton rolls from her lap, the father stoops to pick it up, bright eyes will see the act, and quick minds make a note of it. By example, a thousand times more quickly than by precept, can children be taught to speak kindly to each other, to acknowledge favors, to be gentle and unselfish, to be thoughtful and considerate of the comfort of the family. The boys, with inward pride in their father's courteous demeanor, will be chivalrous and helpful to their young sisters; the girls, imitating the mother, will be gentle and patient, even when big brothers are noisy and heedless.

Scolding is never allowable; reproof and criticism from parents must have their time and place, but should never intrude so far upon the social life of the family as to render the home uncomfortable. A serious word in private will generally cure a fault more easily than many public criticisms. In some families, a spirit of contradiction and discussion mars the harmony; every statement is, as it

unconscious habit of teasing each other, half in earnest, half in fun. This is particularly uncomfortable for everybody else, whatever doubtful pleasure the parties themselves may experience.

In the home where true courtesy prevails, it seems to meet you on the very threshold. You feel the kindly welcome on entering. No rude eyes scan your dress. No angry voices are heard upstairs. No sullen children

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*When the family gathers alone around breakfast or dinner table, the same courtesy should prevail as if guests were present.*

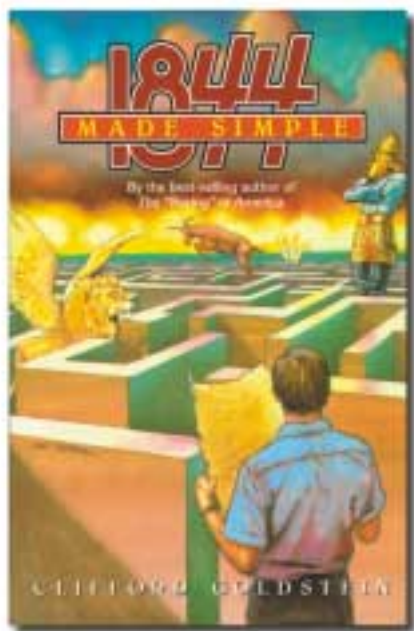
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were, dissected, and the absolute correctness of every word calculated. It interferes seriously with social freedom when unimportant inaccuracies are watched for, and exposed for the mere sake of exposure. Brothers and sisters also sometimes acquire an almost

are sent from the room. No peremptory orders are given to cover the delinquencies of housekeepers or servants. A delightful atmosphere pervades the house—unmistakable, yet indescribable. ✿

*The Health Reformer*, February 1, 1874.

## S a n c t u a r y   S t u d y   H e l p



# 1844 Made Simple

by Clifford Goldstein

What significance, if any, does the year 1844 have for Christians today? Is there a way to make sense of the confusing maze of beasts, dates, and kingdoms in Daniel?

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we need all the help we can get to encourage our full cooperation with Christ in fighting the battles we face daily.

The desire of God for every human being is expressed in these words: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” 3 John 2.

The Lord knows the strong link between body, mind, and soul. He wants our physical bodies as well as our souls to prosper and be in good health. Certainly this does not mean that our souls cannot prosper if we have some crippling disease or paralysis. Yet too many of us for too long have allowed circumstances, the flurry of life, and plain old laziness to erode away physical strength and health, which has had a corresponding effect upon real, practical Christianity.

### **Are We Representing the Truth in Its Beauty?**

There are many men and women today preaching or espousing truth while allowing their physical bodies to deteriorate. Some are overweight and in poor physical condition, while they are trying to convince people that they have a transforming gospel. There are many others who call themselves health reformers who are gaunt, pale, and sickly, and who do not attractively represent the true principles of health reform or draw others to Christ.

Do we fulfill the Lord’s “wish above all things” that we prosper and be in health when we are overweight, out of shape, gaunt, pale, and sickly? Friends, this is not a personal attack. It is present reality. So, what are we willing to do about it? Are we truly willing to cooperate with God and recognize the importance of our health and the fitness of our bodies as being a part of His purpose for us?

### **Make Time to Be Healthy**

Several years ago I found myself flat in bed with a herniated lumbar disc in my spine. My doctor told me that, along with the treatments I was receiving, I would have to walk four miles a day to build up strength and

# Vitality!

*Tom Waters*

**V**itality—even the word is invigorating! Are you experiencing vitality in your Christian walk? Are you experiencing it in your personal health? Or do you find yourself physically tired and dragging, with a corresponding lethargy in your Christian experience?

We need a very simple, yet practical, gospel. We need to focus on how the gospel works in our daily lives in this fast-paced, harsh world in which we live. I would like to share with you a simple way that

the gospel has affected my decisions for improving my physical health, and how those decisions have brought renewed strength and vitality to my whole experience.

For several years I have practiced regular, personalized exercise. My body’s needs, how much I eat, and other healthful choices that I will share with you in this article help me decide what, when, and how fast I will exercise. As a result, I am convinced that optimum physical health definitely promotes optimum spiritual health. We live in a tough world, and

avoid back surgery. I tried to explain to the doctor that I did not have time to walk four miles every day. He seemed quite untouched by my plea and simply told me that I would *make* time if I wanted to avoid surgery.

And I did! Why?—Because I found sufficient motivation. I wanted to have my health again, and I did not want surgery. Within a short time I was not only finding the benefit for my back, but I came home telling my family of the other benefits I was experiencing. My mind was getting clearer; my attitude was improving; I was more prepared to face the day, and I felt invigorated and less tired—even though I was rising at 4:30 a.m. to accomplish it.

Then my wife, Alane, started walking with me, and she also began experiencing the blessings. We walked together early in the morning, enjoying the silence and solitude that we have seldom found in other places.

After realizing the benefits of vigorous walking—I mean working up a sweat, not a casual stroll—and feeling some of that increased vitality, we were determined to make it a consistent addition to our day. This became our habit for a couple of years. However, as the weather patterns began to change, so did the conditions. More ice in the winter made it increasingly difficult to walk without falling. Then the springs in our area became muddier, making our feet heavy with clay. Our routine was changing with these changing conditions.

So we decided to purchase a walking machine for use in our home. I found that I could put my ear plugs in, tune out the world, lock into a steady pace, and then begin talking with the Lord. Often I would get on and say, “Good morning Lord; it’s good to be back.” My mind was not focused on counting the minutes, but in communing with the Lord—a true blessing! In addition to walking, I would do sit-ups, pushups, and jumping jacks. The sit-ups helped to strengthen my lower back. The jumping jacks provided good

circulation for the lymphatic system, which needs vigorous motion because it does not have a circulating pump like the blood does.

We are told that “walking, in all cases where it is possible, is the best remedy for diseased bodies, because in this exercise all the organs of the body are brought into use. . . . There is no exercise that can take the place of walking.”<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that walking is the only acceptable exercise, or that exercise should be limited only to walking. Walking is particularly good because “all the organs of the body are brought into use.” It is also an inexpensive, readily available, anywhere-you-are kind of general body exercise.

statements like: “I feel like a million bucks,” “I have more stamina now than I did in my twenties,” or “I feel so invigorated!” Those are expressions of vitality, and they exude from the blessings of cooperating in simple ways with the Lord.

### How to Increase Your Vitality

Let me share some other simple and effective things I have found to improve vitality. I am not intending to convey that just because they work for me, they will automatically work in the same way for you, or that what I am doing is the program for you. Rather, these are simply tips from my own personal experience that you may wish to try.

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*Because exercise has become a practical part of my walk with Christ, I want you to experience the blessings too!*

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Now our whole family is committed to building better health as a part of cooperating with God to be all that we can be for Him. Our program for health and fitness is an important part of experiencing the vitality that God wants His people to have. As with our Christian experience, we continue to learn what works well for each of us in what we eat, how much we eat, how hard we exercise, what specific exercise we do, and so on. We presently use a treadmill for our vigorous cardiovascular exercise, and then we add specific exercises that are targeted to bringing balance to all the basic muscle groups.

### It Pays!

*I feel great!* That is really the reason I am writing this article today. I know what benefits I have gained and how they have affected my body, mind, and soul. Because exercise has become a practical part of my walk with Christ, *I want you to experience the blessings too!*

Many times Alane and our children have heard me describe how I feel after I exercise, with

**Water** is a marvelous blessing from God, especially when it comes from a pure mountain spring! Upon rising in the morning I drink a quart of water. It hydrates the system, flushing out impurities; it also seems to get my mind working more clearly. No one else in my family drinks that much, but they each have at least two glasses before our first meal.

Water is great on the inside as well as on the outside! It has been my custom for many years to end my shower on the full cold temperature setting. This is truly an *invigorating* experience—at least in the mountains of Montana where we live! For years I was personally convinced that this practice added strength to my immune system’s arsenal. Then one of my physician friends confirmed for me that research has proved that the cold contrast after the hot water greatly enhances the white blood-cell forces, which fight against the body’s many invading foes. It took a few years of my influence (example and good results are positive motivators), but now the rest of my family members

also end their showers with cold water. Yes, even my dear wife!

**Food:** Some simple but beneficial changes in eating have added to our vitality as well. We have found that eating our heavier, main meal in the morning has helped us in several ways. Metabolically—in terms of the body’s breakdown and utilization of what we eat—we are digesting the heavier meal better and utilizing it more efficiently.

You see, the body is much more ready and able to handle the food at the beginning of the day than at the end. If the same meal is eaten at 5:00 or 6:00 in the evening, when the body’s utilization of the food is slowing down, then guess what happens? The body stores the

which ones do not—what combinations you personally need to avoid, and what constitutes good nutrition and good balance for you. Have you determined what foods agree with your system? This requires a willingness to be sensitive to the Lord and honest with yourself, while at the same time not setting up the same criteria for others. If I discover that eating onions or nuts in the afternoon have a disagreeable effect on me, I may share this information occasionally, but I do not urge others to conform. Do not make your personal experience or preference the criterion for others, and then push for their conformity. This in itself causes great digestive problems!

communion and connection with God, who longs to pilot them through the day. Adequate rest is vitally important to our vitality. It is the time when the organs are resting, repairing, and rebuilding themselves.

**Immune Boosters:** Because we travel so much and come in contact with so much sickness and various “bugs,” we continue to learn other ways to build up our immune systems. Three days before we go out for a family camp meeting we start juicing carrots, and then we repeat it again for three days after we return. We also take a high quality, food-grown vitamin C and a concentrated form of garlic tablets, along with other simple, but effective, personalized formulas.

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*Too often, when people go to bed late, they get up late, or just in time to get into their day, leaving out the time they need for communion and connection with God, who longs to pilot them through the day.*

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### **Get the Stress Out!**

The last area I want to share with you that has greatly improved my vitality is how I am learning to deal with stress. “Stress” is just what the word implies—pressure. It may be a person, a circumstance, or even an expectation that places pressure on us, or at least what we perceive as pressure. Though we may greatly reduce our potential stress, as long as we live in this world, we will be put in situations that put pressure or stress upon us. How we relate to the stress and whether our dependence is upon Christ, determines whether we “get stressed out” or “get the stress out.”

calories more efficiently as fat, and the digestion as a whole is more sluggish. So the same calories eaten in the morning are burned much better in the morning than when eaten in the evening. It really makes sense when you think about it.

Also, for people like me who more easily produce the bad kind of cholesterol, just switching the heavier vegetable meal from the afternoon to the morning, drops the bad cholesterol numbers. Of course, there are other factors as well, but that switch alone brings positive change—provided we eat the proper foods.

**Selection of food:** Eating raw fruits and vegetables first, before eating other food served at meals, also has proved to be a digestive blessing. We avoid mixing everything together or eating the salads and vegetables last. We eat a lot more raw foods that way, which translates into consumption of more whole, nutritious foods, and fewer calories overall.

It is also important to decide what foods work well for you and

There are wisdom and blessings, both spiritual and physical, in using in moderation what is good and in abstaining entirely from that which is harmful. Reading the ingredients or packaging labels may seem picky to some, but we have found the blessing in responding when the Holy Spirit urges us to abstain from something harmful. It also helps us to put our focus more on simple, healthful foods.

**Fresh Air and Sunshine:** Being out in the fresh air daily—and in sunshine whenever it is available—improves circulation and brings fresh oxygen to our brains. We think more clearly and feel much better when we get out-of-doors. This is especially important for those who struggle with negative thoughts or depression.

**Rest:** Retiring at a regular and reasonable time in the evening makes it much easier to get up in the morning and to begin the day right with God. Too often, when people go to bed late, they get up late, or just in time to get into their day, leaving out the time they need for

I have learned that I usually feel stressed because I am trying to meet other people’s expectations without consulting the Lord. Or I may be trying to manage things my own way, in my own strength, apart from the Lord—not necessarily against the Lord, but by slipping back into self-management.

On the other hand, when I face the same stress while being aware of the Lord, consulting Him, trusting Him, and resting in Him, *He takes the pressure* which I would normally internalize, and then the stress of the situation is transferred to Him. Only as I am truly surrendered to Christ do I experience the “peace,” as the apostle Paul says, “which passeth all understanding.” Philippians 4:7.

Putting these principles into practice has added to the vitality of my experience. Truly, I have never felt better! In fact, over the last six years I have not experienced the typical colds, flu, and sore throats that I used to have. I have had one serious cold with a fever that lasted about five days and one chest congestion with only minor symptoms. I am not sharing this with you to lift myself up (I could get sick tomorrow). My only purpose is to encourage you with information regarding the tangible benefits that may be obtained by cooperating with the Lord in balanced exercise and overall health, especially since *most Christians neglect vigorous exercise* more than any other area of God's laws of health.

Friends, do you want to have more vitality? Do you want to feel better than you are feeling now? Do you want more vibrant health for your body, your mind, and your soul? I am not challenging you to grit your teeth and determine to implement a program. Rather, ask: "Lord, what would You have me

do?" This aspect of our lives requires the same surrender and receiving of divine power as any other area. Without Christ, we will never find true success and vitality.

Then under His guidance try an invigorating exercise program. Get up a half-hour earlier and take a brisk walk, jog, or ride on your

actively involved in personalized, overall, health-and-fitness programs as a part of cooperating with the Lord's desire for us to "prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

It is my prayer that you, too, have been motivated and stimulated to answer His same desire for your life.

*Friends, do you want to have more vitality? Do you want to feel better than you are feeling now?*

bicycle—do something vigorous! I challenge each one of you to try it for just one week! Do it for seven days, and you will feel more vitality! Then continue to prayerfully personalize it, adjust it, and stick with it as a part of God's plan for your health and happiness.

Everyone at Restoration International has a commitment to developing body, mind, and soul. We are all

May God bless each one of you as you take hold of His strength to rise to new heights of vitality! ✠

*Tom Waters lives in Eureka, Montana. He is dedicated to sharing with others how to make the gospel practical in their everyday lives.*

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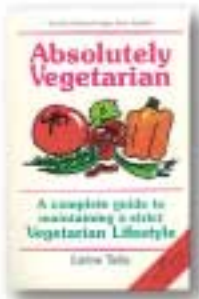
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# Acceptable Prayer

Ellen G. White



The world's Redeemer frequently went away alone to pray. On one occasion His disciples were not so far away but that they could hear His words. They were deeply impressed by His prayer; for it was charged with vital power that reached their hearts. It was very unlike the prayers which they themselves had offered, and unlike any prayers which they had heard from human lips. After Jesus had joined them again, they said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Luke 11:1.

If we would offer up acceptable prayer, we should realize that in our petitioning we are in the audience chamber of the Most High. We should cultivate solemn thoughts, realizing that we are coming into close connection with our Creator. It means much to pray to our Heavenly Father. We come to lay our imperfect tribute of thanksgiving at His feet in acknowledgment of His love and mercy, of which we are wholly undeserving. We come to make known our wants, to confess our sins, and to present to Him His own promises. He says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

Jesus gave instruction to His disciples as to how they should pray: "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." Matthew 6:5. They do not receive their reward from God, but from men, from whom they seek their reward. They feel a certain satisfaction in publicly proclaiming their piety, and this is

their reward. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." Verses 6-13.

What a contrast there is between this model prayer of Christ and the prayers formulated by human teachers! How brief, how expressive, how rich, how comprehensive! Praise and supplication are here mingled. Jesus has given to men a prayer in which every expression is full of meaning, to be studied and brought into practical life. The greatest mind may be charmed with its comprehensiveness, and the humblest intellect can understand its utterances. It is a prayer that expresses the essential subjects that we need to present to our Heavenly Father. Parents may teach this prayer to their children, and the Spirit may impress young minds with its truth. The children may gather the fact from this that our precious Saviour so loved them that He did not leave them in ignorance as to how to pray, but gave them a model prayer

which they may present to God in simplicity and sincerity of heart. Christ will hear the prayer that He Himself has taught to His disciples. Many times a day we may go as suppliants to God, and repeat this prayer with assurance that it will not fall to the ground.

It is not the work of any mortal to seek to particularize and explain all that is comprehended in the Lord's prayer. The wisdom of the greatest Teacher the world ever knew, is not to be darkened and mystified by words. Christ has given the prayer, and we should individually study its meaning, and be careful not to pervert its childlike simplicity. In the Lord's prayer, solidity, strength, and earnestness are united with meekness and reverence. It is an expression of the divine character of its Author.

The Lord Jesus says, "After this manner therefore pray ye." But how few heed the words of Christ and pray after this manner! Is it not best for Christians to be doers of the words of Christ, and not hearers only? We are not always to be confined to the utterance of these exact words. The Lord frequently pours upon His servants a spirit of prayer and of earnest supplication, and directs their attention to certain things embraced in certain parts of the prayer. But how many tedious prayers are offered in our churches, that are more like giving the Lord a lecture than like presenting to Him a petition. It would be better if these petitioners confined themselves to the prayer that Christ gave His disciples, rather than to pray in a tedious, ceremonious manner. Long prayers in a congregation are tedious to those who listen, and do not prepare the hearts of the people for the sermon which is to follow. The prayer of Christ was in marked contrast to these long prayers with their many repetitions. The Pharisees thought that they would be heard for their much speaking, and they made long, tedious, drawn-out prayers. They lifted up their hearts in pride, and cultivated a sense of their own superiority; but this made them appear very foolish in the sight of God, who knew their motives, and understood the selfishness and

arrogance of their hearts. The Lord knew that when opportunity offered, they did not hesitate to practice fraud; they used false weights and balances, and took advantage of the widow and the fatherless. He knew that they devoured widows' houses by charging exorbitant interest, and He could measure their pretentious claims to piety. They dared to parade their good deeds before the people, and for a pretense made long prayers, extolling and glorifying their own righteousness, which was as valueless in the sight of God as filthy rags. Let men take heed that they do not make religious exhibitions before the world of such a character that they will be a stumbling block to sinners.

The model prayer of Christ is in marked contrast to the prayers of the heathen. In all false religions, ceremonies and forms have been substituted for genuine piety and for practical godliness. Dead formalism characterizes the devotion of those who have lost vital godliness. Prayer is made a mockery, and those who engage in it without feeling the spirit of their needs, can receive no reward of God. He who would pray should enter into the meaning of his prayer, putting heart and soul into his request. Let the Lord's prayer be the real expression of your needs. Often to repeat this form of prayer will not be termed vain repetition. But even the Lord's prayer may become a mere form. Prayer, how misunderstood, how perverted it has been! How few realize how solemn a thing it is to approach the throne of God. Angels bow before that throne with veiled faces, yet men who are stained by sin rush heedlessly into the divine presence. Let us remember that the holy angels approach the throne of God in reverence and holy fear. It is because men do not know God or Jesus Christ whom He has sent, that they take improper attitudes and utter improper words in their petitions. Instead of coming in contrition before God, men come without reverence in the family circle and in the congregation of the people. How many come to the season of prayer full of self-importance, and their prayers sound more as if they thought they must give the Lord information, than as if they

expected to receive something from His hand. They do not approach God as humble suppliants, realizing that they are dependent upon Him for life and health, for food and clothing, and for every temporal and spiritual blessing. They misinterpret the apostle's words when he tells us to come boldly to the throne of grace. Many come into the presence of God without reverence or humility, acting more like bold, forward children than like meek and lowly followers of Christ. This is not the manner of boldness that the Scriptures advocate. The boldness that is here pointed out, is that which is born of faith in the

finite being who is unacquainted with the pure, chaste, elevated character of Christianity. We are to come before God in calm confidence; but let no one imagine that it argues that a man is fervent in spirit because he screams and groans and works himself up into a passion of feeling. We are to present our requests to God in faith, asking for the very things which we know that we need. When we have a sense of what God is, we shall realize our own unworthiness; but we shall also have confidence toward God, knowing what is His character of mercy and love. We shall come into His presence through the merits of

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*When we have a sense of what God is, we shall realize our own unworthiness; but we shall also have confidence toward God, knowing what is His character of mercy and love.*

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word of Christ when He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. It is the boldness that comes when you realize that you do not need to dwell upon your own unworthiness and walk in the shadow that Satan would cast between your soul and God. It is proper that you should feel your weakness and soul's great need, and it is at this very time that you may come to God in full assurance of faith, claiming the promise that the weary and the heavy laden shall find rest unto their souls. The boldness is confidence in God, not self-confidence. But all rashness, all irreverence, is to be far from those who would offer acceptable prayer. Then we may heed the words of one who speaks for God, when he says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." 1 John 5:14.

While we are to offer our petitions with confidence in God's promises, we are not to be rash, to practice circus-like maneuvering in the name of prayer. This is not acceptable to God or beneficial to those who hear. It is simply a performance of an erring,

Christ, and through Him have boldness and confidence. We may plead the promises of God without the fear of being presumptuous.

Christ reproved the scribes and the Pharisees because of their self-righteous prayers; and prayers of this order, that are made to be heard of men, call down no blessing from God. The Pharisees rehearsed the good works which they had done, in order that men might hear them, and they made a pretense of thanking God that they were better than other men. They flattered themselves, and did not come with a broken heart and contrite spirit. They made no acknowledgment of sin. Nothing good came from the treasure of their hearts in expressing love and gratitude to God. Filled with self-righteousness, they felt in need of nothing, and regarded themselves as having attained the standard. There was no humility of soul in presenting themselves before God. But humility is always recognized by Him who has said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Matthew 7:7. ❀

*Review and Herald, May 28, 1895.*



# A Sign of the Remnant

*John N. Loughborough*

**F**ollow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." 1 Corinthians 14:1. In the enumeration of the gifts, as the Lord places them in the church, the gift of prophecy is the second in order, as is seen by reading 1 Corinthians 12:28: "And God hath set some in the church, *first* apostles, *secondarily* prophets." (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.) As we look still further in Paul's writings, we see in his comparison of the gifts why this order is observed: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." 1 Corinthians 14:22. The work of an apostle is to lead out in raising up companies of believers, and in planting the standard of truth in various fields; then follows instruction through the gift of prophecy, for the counsel, encouragement, and building up of the church.

As we look at the apostle Paul's writings concerning the second coming of Christ, it will be observed that he connects the gift of prophecy

with the heralding of that event. In the Thessalonian letter he says: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. . . . But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4-5.

To that people who are not in the dark concerning the coming of the Lord, the apostle gives the following weighty exhortations: "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Verses 16-21. It is evident from this language that if the Spirit of the Lord is left to work as God designs, there will be among the believers of the second advent, *good* and *true* manifestations of the prophetic gift. Murdock's Syriac translation of this text reads: "Despise not prophesying." Greenfield, in his Greek lexicon, gives as the meaning of the word here rendered

"prophesyings," "the exercise of the gift of prophecy, in this sense." Verse 20. With this also agree the lexicons of Parkhurst, Robinson, and Liddell and Scott.

In writing to the Corinthians concerning the day of the Lord, and the end of all things, the apostle teaches the same great truth respecting the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit of God. He says, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you [*among* you, Syriac and Boothroyd]; so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 1:4-8.

From this Scripture we learn that those who are waiting for Christ's coming, and who are to be confirmed to the end, and who are found "blameless" at His coming, are to be favored with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.



That which prepares the way for this desirable condition is the confirming of “the testimony of Christ.” What is this “testimony of Jesus” which is “confirmed *in*” them, and “*among*” them? This is clearly defined in Revelation 19, where we have a record of John in vision on the Isle of Patmos. As he saw the glory of the angel who showed him those wonderful things, he took him to be an object for his worship, and he said: “I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the *testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*” Revelation 19:10. This being an inspired explanation of the “testimony of Jesus,” let us read the text given in 1 Corinthians 1, with this definition inserted: “The spirit of prophecy” was confirmed *in* you or *among* you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### The Remnant Church

Of the church waiting for Christ’s second coming, we read in Revelation: “And the dragon [the devil] was wroth with the woman [the church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17. Here, then, is the last of the church in her probationary state, two features being prominent in her work—the keeping of all the commandments of God, and having the spirit of prophecy.

That we are right in applying the “remnant” to the last phase of the church is apparent from the words found in Joel’s prophecy. When speaking of the end, the prophet says: “And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in

mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the *remnant* whom the LORD shall call.” Joel 2:30–32. So the “remnant” church, the church called out, and fitted for the Lord’s coming, will be keeping all of the commandments of God, and the gift, or spirit, of prophecy will be with them to “confirm” them to the end.

In the prophecy of Isaiah we have a testimony concerning this same people, and a statement respecting the opposition to their work. The prophet says: “Now go, write it before them in a table, and

What is a “seer”? In the book of Samuel is given an account of Saul and his father’s servants seeking for lost animals. In their journey they came to the town where Samuel the prophet lived, “and as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the *seer* here? (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)” 1 Samuel 9:11, 9. A “seer,” then, was one who communicated

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*Here is presented what is to be found in the last days, a people teaching the law of God, and the gift of prophecy as connected with their work, which work is the exalting of the Holy One of Israel, and making plain His pathway of light and truth.*

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note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever [Hebrew: the latter day, margin]: that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.” Isaiah 30:8–11.

Here is presented what is to be found in the last days, a people teaching the law of God, and the gift of prophecy as connected with their work, which work is the exalting of the Holy One of Israel, and making plain His pathway of light and truth. Those opposing them desire an easier path, and “smooth things,” consequently they reject the law of God and the teachings of His Holy Spirit through the *gift* of prophecy.

That it is this *gift* that is here spoken of, and not *teachers* in the ordinary sense, is evident from the word here used to designate them. They “say to the *seers*, See not.”

knowledge from God to the people; for when they went to him, they went to inquire of God. Then in the light of this testimony of Isaiah, *such* a prophetic gift is to be connected with the proclamation of the law of God in the latter days.<sup>2</sup>

### The Time of Deliverance

In the prophecy of Ezekiel we have a comparison of the final deliverance of God’s people with the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. He says: “And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.” Ezekiel 20:34–37.

Instead of this people being in a literal wilderness, as were the

Israelites, they come into the “wilderness of the people.” In the twelfth chapter of Revelation, is a view of the Lord’s church going into the wilderness for twelve hundred and sixty years. Revelation 12:6–14. In the Song of Solomon the church is represented as coming out of the wilderness, and here the inquiry is raised, “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning [not on civil law, nor earthly supports. No, but] upon her beloved?” Song of Solomon 8:5. Again: the church is spoken of as “she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” Song of Solomon 6:10.

With the church brought out of the wilderness of the people, the Lord says He will plead as He pleaded with Israel in the literal wilderness. By looking at the testimony in Exodus 16:28–29, we see how He began to plead with them there. He said: “How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.”

20. This bringing of the people into the “bond of the covenant” shows a Sabbath reform as a part of the pleading with those brought forth from the wilderness of the people.

As the deliverance of this people is to be after the manner of the deliverance of the Israelites, it is well to consider another point connected with their deliverance, which is mentioned by the prophet Hosea. He says, “By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.” Hosea 12:13. If there is to be a similarity to this in the final deliverance, it must be that the gift of prophecy, as has been shown in the Scripture citations, is to act its part in preparing a people for that event. As we are nearing the time of that final deliverance, and are in the very period when a people should be heralding the glorious advent of Christ, the inquiry naturally arises, Where is to be found the gift of prophecy?<sup>3</sup>

### The Prophetic Gift

“Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 1:6–7.

This “testimony of Jesus,” as we have learned from Revelation 19, is

various ways, and in a marked manner. In many instances, not only in America, but in other lands, the Lord has been gracious to His people who have been engaged in heralding the glad tidings of our returning Lord, by speaking to them through the gift of prophecy. Attention is here called to some instances of this character in America.

The first to be noticed is that of a godly man—a well-educated and talented minister by the name of William Foy, who resided in Boston, Massachusetts. At two different times during the year 1842, the Lord came so near to him that he was wrapped in holy vision. One of these occasions was on January 18, and the other was on February 4. By invitation he went from city to city to tell of the wonderful things he had seen; and in order to accommodate the vast crowds who assembled to hear him, large halls were secured, where he related to thousands what had been shown him of the heavenly world, the loveliness of the New Jerusalem and of the angelic hosts. When dwelling upon the tender, compassionate love of Christ for poor sinners, he exhorted the unconverted to seek God, and scores responded to his tender entreaties.

Brother Foy’s work continued until the year 1844, near the close of the twenty-three hundred days. Then he was favored with another manifestation of the Holy Spirit—a third vision was given—one which he did not understand. In this he was shown the pathway of the people of God through to the heavenly city. He saw a great platform, on which multitudes of people gathered. Occasionally one would drop through this platform out of sight, and of such a one it was said to him, “Apostatized.” Then he saw the people rise to a second platform, and some of these also dropped out of sight; and finally a third platform appeared, which extended to the gates of the holy city. A great company gathered with those who had advanced to this platform. As he expected the Lord Jesus to come in a very short time, he failed to recognize the fact

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*We see that the prophetic gift was to be with the people who were proclaiming and waiting for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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By this comparison we see that as the Lord carries on this work of leading His people from “the wilderness of the people,” He will plead with them to keep His holy Sabbath. He also said that He would bring them into the “bond of the covenant.” See Ezekiel 20:37. God’s “covenant commanded” is the Ten Commandments. See Deuteronomy 4:13. The bond-seal, or sign of authority, of that covenant, is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. See Exodus 31:13, 17; Ezekiel 20:12,

“the spirit of prophecy”; and from the Scripture just quoted, we see that the prophetic gift was to be with the people who were proclaiming and waiting for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

About 1833, but more especially since 1840, a message has been sounding through the earth proclaiming the coming of Christ near at hand, “even at the door.” In connection with this proclamation the Lord has been pleased to manifest the power of His Spirit in

that a third message was to follow the first and second messages of Revelation 14. Consequently the vision, to him, was inexplicable, and he ceased public speaking. After the close of the prophetic period, in the year 1845, he heard another relate the same vision, with the explanation that "the first and second messages had been given, and that a third was to follow."

Another instance of the manifestation of the gift of prophecy is found in the case of a young man who resided in Poland, [Maine], by the name of Hazen Foss. He was a man of fine appearance, pleasing address, with a good academic education. In the month of September, 1844, about six weeks before the close of the twenty-three hundred days, the Lord gave him a vision, in which he, like Brother Foy, was shown the "three platforms" in the heavenly pathway. Some messages of warning to individuals were also given him, which he was instructed to deliver. In connection with this he was shown the trials and persecutions that would follow if he was faithful in relating what had been shown to him. As he also was expecting the Lord to come "in a few more days" (as they then sang), he did not understand the *third step* ("platform") in the journey; and shrinking from the cross, he refused to relate the vision. The view was repeated to him; and in addition to the first, he was told that if he still refused to tell what had been shown him, the burden would be taken from him, and given to one of the *weakest* of the Lord's children, one who would faithfully narrate what God would reveal. Again he refused. A third vision was given him, a very short one, in which he was told that he was released, and was shown the person upon whom the Lord had laid the burden, "one of the *weakest* of the weak, who would do the Lord's bidding."

This startled the young man, who at once appointed a meeting on McGuire Hill, Poland, Maine, for the purpose of relating what had been revealed to him. The people crowded together to see and hear him. He

carefully related his experience—how he had refused to relate what the Lord had shown him, and what would result from his refusal. "Now," said he, "I will tell you the vision." But, alas! it was too late. It had gone from him. Not a word could he recall. He wrung his hands in anguish, saying, "God has fulfilled His word. He has taken the vision from me. I am a lost man." From that time the man lived without hope, and died in 1893.<sup>4</sup>

night rest could be obtained only by being bolstered up in bed in an almost sitting posture. Frequent spells of coughing and hemorrhages from the lungs had greatly reduced her physical strength. Her weight at that time was only seventy pounds.

In this weakened condition, she was instructed, in vision, to go and relate to others what the Lord had made known to her. She was directed to go to Poland, Maine, the place where Foss had failed when

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*The Scriptures show clearly that such a gift is to be connected with the last work of the people of God; that it is to go before in preparing the way for the development of all the gifts, so that the church will "come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

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### **The Weakest of the Weak**

Within two months after the close of the twenty-three hundred days (about January 1, 1845), Miss Ellen G. Harmon, of Portland, Maine, then only about seventeen years of age, began to receive revelations from the Lord. She was at that time in a very critical condition of health, being indeed, as Foss was told, the instrument God would choose, "*the weakest of the weak.*" From a wound received when she was about nine years of age, she nearly bled to death, and ever afterward was unable to attend school. For several weeks before her first revelation she had scarcely been able to speak above a whisper. One physician diagnosed her case as dropsical consumption, with the right lung decayed, and the left one considerably diseased: and to aggravate her condition, her heart was also affected. All this made her recovery doubtful; in fact, he thought she could live but a very short time at most, and was liable to drop away at any moment. It was with great difficulty that she could breathe when lying down, and at

trying to relate the vision given to him. Here she related what the Lord had shown her. In an adjoining room, Foss heard the narration; and after the meeting he remarked to others, "The vision Ellen related is as near like what was shown to me as two persons could tell the same thing." The next morning on seeing Sister Harmon, he said, "That is the instrument on whom the Lord has laid the burden." To Miss Harmon he said, "Be faithful in bearing the burden laid upon you, and in relating the testimonies the Lord shall give you, and you will get through to the kingdom"; and then, in anguish, he said, "Oh, I am a lost man!"

The gift of prophecy, as manifested through Miss Harmon (now Mrs. E. G. White, she having been married to Elder James White in August, 1846) has been connected with the third angel's message for about fifty-three years. [Written in 1899.]

The Scriptures show clearly that such a gift is to be connected with the last work of the people of God; that it is to go before in preparing the way for the development of all

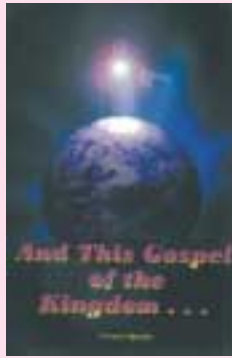
the gifts, so that the church will “come behind in *no* gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Such a gift of prophecy was to be connected with a message proclaiming obedience to all God’s commandments.

The students of Scripture prophecies have ever claimed that “when the time comes for the fulfillment of a prophecy, the genuine fulfillment is there, and not a counterfeit.” The Lord’s time came for the third angel’s message—for a people to arise, teaching the observance of all the commandments of God—a message with which should also be connected the Spirit of Prophecy. There is just such a message now being given to the world, and the gift of prophecy is connected with it; not to give a new revelation to take the place of the Scriptures, but simplifying and making clear the truths taught therein, and urging the importance of more earnest study of the Sacred Word.

It comes in these times, when there is a “form of godliness” without the power, to show us where we are liable to be swerved from the way of God’s eternal truth. It comes as a counselor and guide in the management and extension of the work.<sup>5</sup> †

REFERENCES:

- <sup>1</sup> *Review and Herald*, June 27, 1899.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, July 4, 1899.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, July 11, 1899.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, July 18, 1899.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, July 25, 1899.

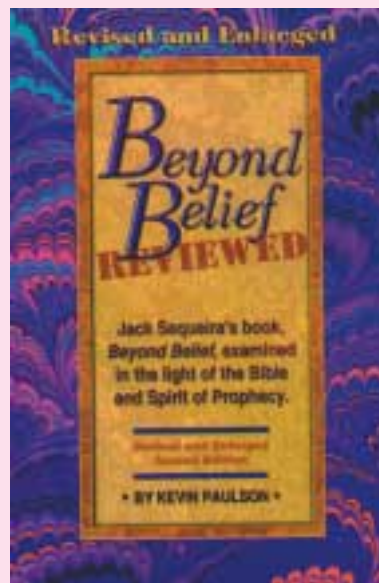


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The Editors

## Bible Marking Directions

1. In this month's study our Bible marking key letters are **PT**, which represent "**The Present Truth**."
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 Present Truth, 1PT: 2 Peter 1:12.**
3. Turn to the first reference and, in the margin near it, write the second reference. Then turn to the second reference and, in the margin near it, write the third reference, and so on to the end of the lesson. When you come to the last reference write "**End PT.**"

### **1PT: 2 Peter 1:12.**

The apostle tells us to be "established in the present truth." What is present truth? Present truth is truth that is especially applicable in our time. Though all Scripture is truth and always worthy of our attention, some messages have been especially applicable at certain times.

### **2PT: 2 Peter 2:5.**

Noah's message to the antediluvians was present truth for them. See Genesis chapters 6–9. The destiny of every individual alive at that time depended on his response to that present truth. Would they obey and be saved, or would they ignore the message and be lost?

### **3PT: Matthew 3:1–2.**

Present truth in John the Baptist's day was that the people needed to repent and prepare to receive the Messiah. The precious Word of God had been entrusted to their care. They had long basked in the favor of God. Would they hear the message and repent—or not?

### **4PT: Matthew 24:33.**

We are now living in the last days, and God has a special message of present truth for our day. Now, just as others before us, we are being offered a choice. Will we "eat, drink and be merry" until destruction carries us away, or will we receive the message and obey it to our salvation?

### **5PT: Revelation 14:15.**

This verse describes the coming of Jesus at the last day to reap the harvest of souls and bring an end to the wickedness of this present evil world. We know that time is now very short. What more can we do to prepare ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and the world for this day?

### **6PT: Revelation 14:6–12.**

Just before Christ comes in the clouds, this message is to be presented to the world, telling men to fear God and give glory to Him. It emphasizes the importance of Sabbathkeeping and calls His people out of Babylon. God will raise up men to preach this special message to the people of every nation during the closing era of earth's history.

### **7PT: Acts 10:5–6.**

Like Peter, we must be aware of what we ought to do at this time. We must now heed the special message of Revelation 14:6–12 and carry it to all people that we possibly can that they also may have opportunity to receive it.

### **8PT: Luke 1:4.**

When you accept the message of Revelation 14, you can be absolutely sure that you have the right message for this hour. It is present truth for these final hours of our probation. What will we do with this "present truth"? ❀

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



# Ye Must Be Born Again

*Lisa L. Epperly*

**Y**ou know the story of Nicodemus—how he came to Jesus by night to question Him. And you remember what Jesus told him: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3. In response to Nicodemus’ answer, Jesus continued, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” Verses 5–7.

“Ye must be born again.” Being born again is beginning life anew with a clean record. “The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether.”<sup>1</sup> It is not enough to be cleansed from sin; we need to have a way to overcome it. We need the gospel.

What is the gospel? Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation.” Romans 1:16. (All

emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.) The gospel is the power of God to enable us to keep the born-again experience. Until the world begins to witness the cleansing work of the gospel in us, the end cannot come. See Matthew 24:14.

Yet, even when we have the gospel, even with the Bible, there is still something that we need.

Let me illustrate it this way: Suppose I have a flashlight. A flashlight—just like a Christian—is a source of light. Can it shine if it is empty?—No, it cannot! So I put in a power source. It has everything that it needs, right? But how much good is it if I do not turn it on? It takes my choice to push the button in order for it to do any good. Just so, simply *having* the gospel is not enough; we must *choose* to accept its power in our lives. We can have all the power we want, but we must *choose to connect to* that power in order for it to do us any good. Therefore, we need to understand the concept of surrender.

The word surrender is not very popular with Christians these days. Why?—Perhaps they do not really

understand how it works, or maybe they do not see its importance.

Paul’s comment, “I die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31), is explained in Romans 6:11: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This dying—considering oneself dead to irritation, to frustration, and to one’s own will and way—is of vital importance to us. The result is seen in verses 12, 6–7: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.” “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

These verses help us understand 2 Corinthians 4:10: “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” We must surrender self in the morning, and then maintain that surrender throughout the day. But now that we have made this choice, shall we let the trials of the day overwhelm us?—No. Remember, “There hath no temptation taken

you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, 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.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7. Do you know how this works? When faced with a temptation, we *choose* to whom we will yield: God or Satan. "There is no excuse for sinning."<sup>2</sup> "No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act before passion can dominate over reason or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin."<sup>3</sup>

Simply put, The gospel is the power, but surrender is my choice. For example, I typed the rough draft for this article at work. I had to stay after hours to finish the article. It took me longer than I expected, and when I finally finished and began to print, it printed out ever so slowly! What feelings do you think welled up in my natural heart?—Impatience, frustration, irritation. But as those feelings came into my mind, the Lord called to my heart: "My child, you do not need to give in to these feelings. You can have perfect peace." By God's grace, I chose to submit to Him, and I did have peace. Even when page two printed over page one, I chose not to get frustrated! I chose to surrender even that.

Our old life of sin does not need to hold us captive! Isn't this good news? Think about these statements: "When self is renounced, then the Lord can make a new creature."<sup>4</sup> "When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. . . . The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance."<sup>5</sup> *This is the experience of the new birth!*

### **Do Not Let Go**

The only problem is that we do not know how to keep this experience. We do not understand the concept of daily surrender. If we surrender every morning, and then

choose to keep that surrender throughout the day, we can have the victory over every temptation. This is being born again. Have you read what John said in his first epistle about being born again? "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." 1 John 5:4. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:9.

When we are born again, we have the experience David recorded in Psalm 40:8: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

That verse is a beautiful illustration of what our lives can be. Surrender can be a delight! However, this text is not David's words

saying, "Father, it is time for Me to go down to earth and live as a man. I know that I will be faced with all kinds of trials when I get there. I am going to surrender My will to You now, so that when I get to that sin-darkened earth, I will already be surrendered to You—and I will not let go." Think about it: Jesus surrendered His will to His Father, and *He never let go.*<sup>7</sup> "[Jesus] began life, passed through its experiences, and ended its record, with a sanctified human will. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet because He kept His will surrendered and sanctified, He never bent in the slightest degree toward the doing of evil, or toward manifesting rebellion against God."<sup>8</sup> He never

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*If we surrender every morning, and then choose to keep that surrender throughout the day, we can have the victory over every temptation. This is being born again.*

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at all. It is actually a prophecy of what would happen in heaven before Jesus came to this earth. Let us look at the context of this verse: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Verses 6–8.

We are left in no doubt as to who is saying these words, and under what circumstances, when we look in Hebrews: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. . . . Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. . . . By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hebrews 10:5, 7, 10.<sup>6</sup> Do we understand the significance of what is happening here? Jesus is surrendering His will to His Father! In essence, He is

had to be "born again" because when He was born, His will was already surrendered!

Christ is our Example. Just as He gave His will to God before He left heaven, we can give our wills to God when we are born again. We do not have to continue in sin. We *can* overcome! "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13. "Unto him that is able to keep you from falling. . . ." Jude 1:24. "Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character on His church."<sup>9</sup> "We are to keep advancing heavenward, developing a solid religious character. . . . We can be assured that we shall receive the Holy Spirit if we individually try the experiment of testing God's Word. God is true; his order is perfect."<sup>10</sup> We can be perfect through the power of the Holy Spirit. After all, He said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48.

Jesus was perfect because He surrendered to His Father, and He never let go. When we are born again — when we are perfectly surrendered — in God’s eyes we are perfect. God called Job “a perfect and an upright man.” Job 1:8. But do you know what Job said? “If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul.” Job 9:20–21.

### Powerful Promises

God has given us all the power we need to overcome: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious

“God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character. . . . The life of Christ on earth was a perfect expression of God’s law, and when those who claim to be children of God become Christlike in character, they will be obedient to God’s commandments. Then the Lord can trust them to be of the number who shall compose the family of heaven.”<sup>12</sup>

“And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience.

beings that He made to populate this earth were perfect. Then the serpent deceived Eve, and the rest is history. Imagine what Satan probably said: “Look, God, I know that perfect, sinless beings can keep the law, but here are two beings who have fallen. They are sinners now. It is impossible for them to keep the law. Just let me have them.”

God said, “No, I am going to give them another chance.”

Satan said, “It won’t work! By telling them to keep the commandments, You are asking the impossible!”

So God said, “So it may seem. However, in time I will become a man and though tempted just like they are, I will show them how to overcome. I tell you, there will be people through all ages who will not fall for your lies.”

Jesus came to earth four thousand years later. The people of this earth were so degraded by sin, it seemed that Jesus’ task would be impossible. He would have to take “upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity.”<sup>15</sup> He had to be like us, so that He could know how to be our Saviour. He had to have our sinful, fallen nature, or He could not have been our Example.

Now we have a problem; some tell us that Christ did not have our sinful nature. They say that if He had a nature just like we have, He would have sinned. They even say that this is a doctrine taught in the Spirit of Prophecy.

If Christ had a sinless, unfallen human nature, He was not like us, and then His victory means nothing to us; and we are doomed! We *cannot* overcome sin. The new birth is a *fraud*. Jesus was stating an impossibility in Matthew 5:48, and *Satan’s accusations are right after all*. Thank God this is not true! Thank God we can have full assurance of our salvation, heedless of such misguided theories.

It appears that the doctrine that Christ had a sinless human nature was first introduced into the Seventh-day Adventist Church by the Holy Flesh movement in Indiana. You probably have read of this

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*To overcome as Christ overcame, we must partake of the divine nature as He did.*

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promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:3–4. “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:57. “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus . . . make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight.” Hebrews 13:20–21. Perfection *is* attainable; we *can* be perfect.

To overcome as Christ overcame, we must partake of the divine nature as He did: “As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan’s temptations.”<sup>11</sup>

Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, *sin will become hateful to us.*<sup>13</sup> Do you want this experience?

Whenever the subject of perfection is presented, someone always declares, “But I have *tried*. It really cannot be done.” When we say that, we are repeating the lies of the devil. We are saying that the devil is right, and God is wrong. “Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God’s commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we cannot obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and by His perfect obedience He proved that *humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God’s precepts.*”<sup>14</sup>

### Jesus Takes on Satan’s Challenge

I want to take you back in time to when God created our world. The



movement in the Spirit of Prophecy.<sup>16</sup> If so, you know how dangerous it was. S. N. Haskell wrote to Ellen White concerning their belief on the nature of Christ: "When we stated that we believed that Christ was born in fallen humanity, they (the Holy Flesh people) would represent us as believing that Christ sinned, notwithstanding the fact that we would state our position so clearly that it would seem as if no one could misunderstand us. Their point of theology in this particular respect seems to be this: They believe that Christ took Adam's nature before he fell."<sup>17</sup>

Did Christ sin or not? — We would all agree the answer is No. The real issue is, "By becoming like Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, can *we* cease from sin?"

In a few short quotes, we should be able to see that the belief that Christ took Adam's unfallen nature before he sinned is false:

"Having taken our *fallen nature*, He showed what it might become."<sup>18</sup>

"He would take *man's fallen nature*."<sup>19</sup>

"It was in order of God that Christ should take upon Himself the form and *nature of fallen man*."<sup>20</sup>

In addition, the Bible states: "Forasmuch then as the children [of Adam] are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. . . . For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. . . . For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Hebrews 2:14-18. "Concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Romans 1:3.

Can we get much plainer than that? Consider this passage: "It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like

every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. . . . He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the Example of a sinless life."<sup>21</sup>

"Okay," you may be thinking, "You have proved your point. But is it all that important? Really, what is the point?" It is this: "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

or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. . . . It is *now* that this work is to be accomplished for us."<sup>24</sup>

No matter what you have done, if you are not just and holy when Jesus makes His declaration of Revelation 22:11, He will say to you, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:23.

But there is hope! "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*

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*Jesus cannot come until we are perfect. He has delayed His coming so long because He is waiting for a people who will put sin out of their lives.*

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Christ."<sup>22</sup> Jesus cannot come until we are perfect. He has delayed His coming so long because He is waiting for a people who will put sin out of their lives. The latter rain cannot come until this happens.

If Jesus did not have a sinful nature like we do, there would be no evidence that we can keep the law. Then Satan's accusations against God could be right after all.

I want to tell you, if you are not perfect when probation closes, *you will be lost*. I know that it is not popular to say such things, but I did not write this article to be popular. I wrote it because so few are preaching the straight testimony, and our people need to be warned.

"Character cannot then [in the time of Jacob's trouble] be made or transformed. . . . The righteous are those who keep the commandments of God, and they will be forever separated from the disobedient and unrighteous who trampled underfoot the law of God. The pure ore and the dross will no longer commingle."<sup>23</sup>

"When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters,

which is in heaven." Verse 21. When we are born again and do God's will, then there will be a revival that will outshine Pentecost, and then Jesus can come!

Which side will you be on? ✨

*Lisa Epperly works in Hope International's Copy-editing Department.*

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- <sup>5</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, 420.
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- <sup>7</sup> See *The Desire of Ages*, 22-23.
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- <sup>15</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, 117.
- <sup>16</sup> See *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, 31-39.
- <sup>17</sup> S. N. Haskell, letter to Ellen White, September 25, 1900; quoted in *Adventism Vindicated*, 62.
- <sup>18</sup> *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, 134.
- <sup>19</sup> *Early Writings*, 150.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, 39.
- <sup>21</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, 49.
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- <sup>24</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, 355.



Alane Waters

# Self-Respect

*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*

True self-respect and dignity are based on principles that are holy and good. When children have true self-respect, they know that they are sons and daughters of God and that He has given them talents to be used in His service.

Self-respect is wholly different from Satan's counterfeit — self-esteem. Many, even among Christians, say we should be building self-esteem in our children. Self-esteem teaches our children to think that they are better than others — more beautiful, intelligent, or talented — but true self-respect helps our children to realize their value in the sight of God and to respect others because they, too, are children of the Heavenly King.

What are some of the symptoms of self-esteem? Children begin to talk about themselves — so much that they are the focus of their own conversation. When we listen to them, they talk about how much farther they can throw the ball than the neighbor boy, or how much faster they can run. Do you see how these are symptoms of a problem in the heart? These are weeds that are beginning to grow, but God wants us to pull them out and replace them with the good seeds of righteousness.

Philippians 2:3 says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." This is the Bible principle. If we would teach our children to esteem their brothers or

sisters better than themselves — to be sensitive to their needs, wants and joys — we must cultivate self-respect and dignity in our children.

God wants us to look for ways to build our children's true self-respect, to help them see that they are children of God and have been created for one purpose — to bring glory to God and to direct others to Him.

How can we cultivate self-respect? In this brief study we will look at several ways that I have discovered in my personal experience working with my children, and with many others.

## Give Encouragement Instead of Empty Praise

The way we talk to our children influences, to a great degree, whether they will develop self-respect or its counterfeit, self-esteem.

We build self-esteem when we say, "Oh, you are so cute! You have the most beautiful blue eyes I have ever seen." Or, "Oh, you are so smart, I have never seen a ten-year-old who could do long division as well as you have done." Those comments build the child's self-esteem, and begin to set up a comparison between themselves and other children. It also sets the stage for their worth to be measured by the wrong focus on externals, whereas a comment of encouragement will help reinforce the deep traits of character so necessary to real Christianity.

We might say instead, "Honey, you have persevered with math. You have done the drills over and over and every day it gets easier as you apply the principles while having your heart surrendered to Christ." With statements like this, you are teaching the child that he can accomplish much by hard work and perseverance, and that this brings a satisfaction of its own. This type of

encouragement works on the heart — not the head.

## Give Children Responsibility

Even very small children desire to be useful and helpful, to feel needed. Giving our children proper occupations in the home fills this desire. Even children as young as two and three years of age can be mother and father's helpers in the littlest of things. If daddy is outside changing the oil in the car, the little child will love to help. Small tasks — such as handing daddy the new oil filter, or even just sitting beside daddy and watching — will make him feel that daddy needs and loves him. But if father says, "Go on, son, I have no time for you. I am busy now," and shows no interest in the child, true self-respect will begin to wither away. Then the natural, carnal heart will look for ways to feel better through self-esteem.

## Teach Children to Help Themselves

Has your child ever said, "Oh, Mommy, this is just too hard"? We need to help our children develop proper self-respect by teaching them how to work diligently and overcome the things that seem too hard for them.

Through the little, day-to-day tasks that challenge their abilities, children learn to help themselves. As we point them to the Saviour, they will learn to look to Him for the strength that they need to overcome the difficulties they face in life.

## Help the Child Face Obstacles Bravely

When my oldest daughter was just a toddler, she loved animals. Whenever we visited friends who had pets, she loved to play with them, and even large animals did not intimidate her. Then one day we went walking in the park, and we met a very big dog. He

liked people, and when he saw little Allison he became excited and ran right up to her, knocking her over, sending her tumbling. In an instant the dog was all over her, and she was terror-stricken.

That one experience set a whole new trend in Allison's perspective of dogs. Whether it was a little one or a very big one, whenever she saw a dog she panicked. This told me that I needed to work with her to help her face a dog again and to gain confidence and peace so that she could enjoy God's creatures. I would take her by the hand and carefully we would pet the dog together. Slowly she overcame her fear. She gained true self-respect and dignity as she learned that she could overcome her fears.

### Teach Respect for Others

There are other simple ways that we can cultivate the character trait of self-respect and dignity. Teaching our children to respect other people will build their own self-respect.

When an adult speaks to his child, the child should respond clearly and respectfully. True shyness and reserve will always be polite and courteous. The child should not hide behind mother, while mother says, "She is shy." As parents, we can teach and train our children that in our presence they are safe to respond to those who address them.

In closing, here is a precious promise: "As the mother's heart yearns for the help she knows she cannot give, the grace she cannot bestow, and she casts herself and children into the merciful arms of Christ, He will receive and bless them; He will give peace, hope, and happiness to mother and children. This is a precious privilege which Jesus has granted to all mothers."<sup>1</sup> †

*Next month we will look at how to cultivate purity.*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Adventist Home*, 274.



## Cultivating Christian Character in Children

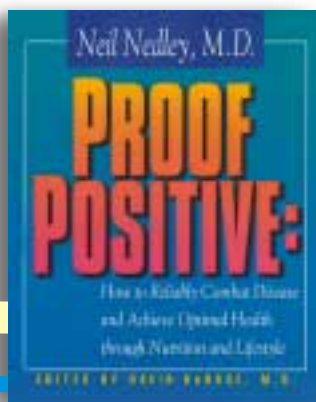
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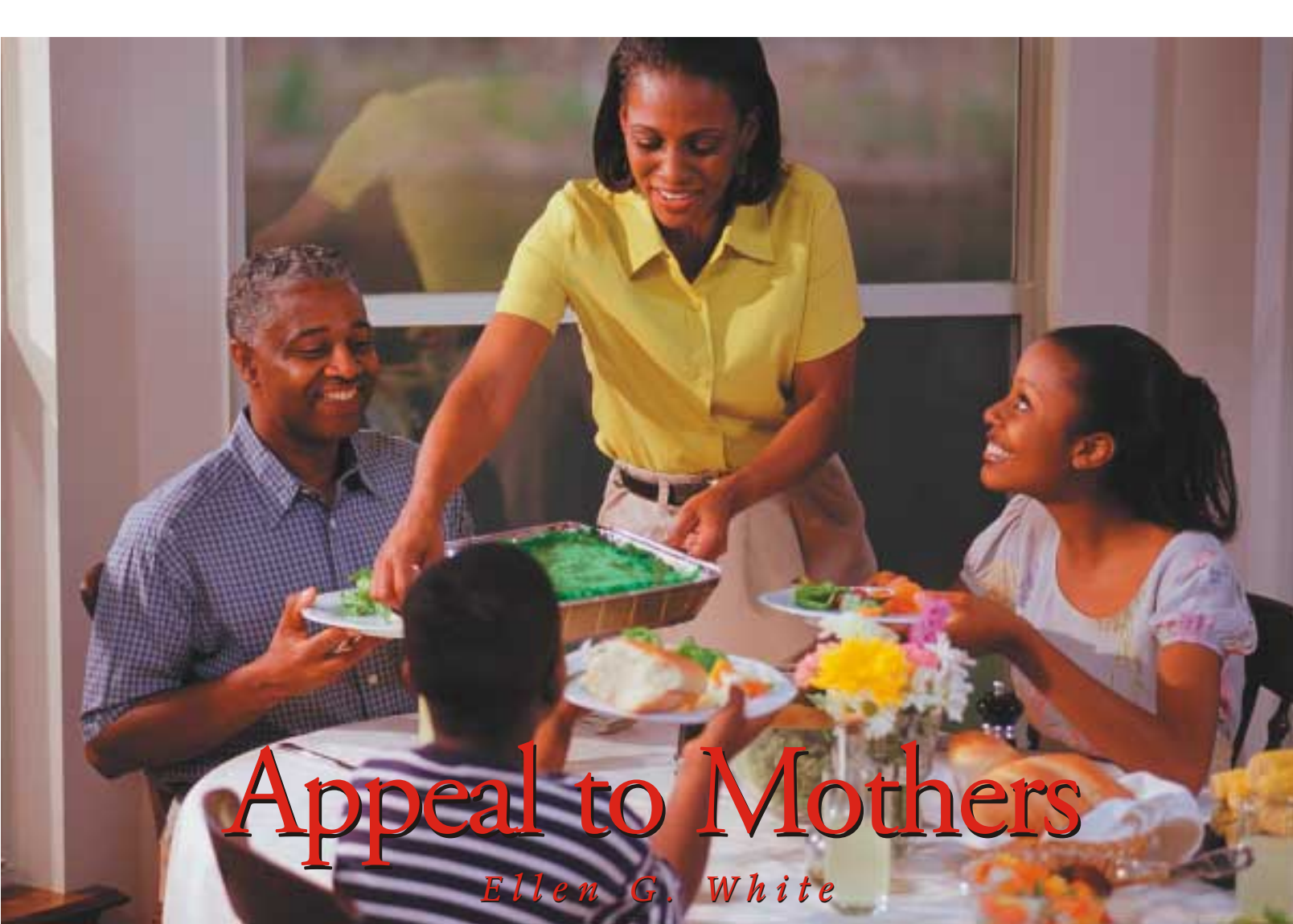
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# Appeal to Mothers

*Ellen G. White*

**M**others, God would have your children start out on the journey of life with a good inheritance. He has a work for man to do in the world; and in order to perform this work for the benefit of his fellow men and the glory of God, he must have physical, mental, and moral power.

Many whom God would use as His instruments have been disqualified at their birth by the previous wrong habits of the parents. When the Lord would raise up Samson as a deliverer of His people, He enjoined upon the mother correct habits of life before the birth of her child.

The angel of God appeared to the wife of Manoah and informed her that she should have a son; and in view of this he gave her the important directions: "Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing." Judges 13:4.

And he informed her that her son would be a Nazarite from his birth, and that God would work through him to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. The woman sought her husband, and after describing the heavenly visitant, she repeated the message of the angel. "Then Manoah entreated the LORD . . . let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born." Verse 8.

And when, in answer to this petition, the angel again appeared, Manoah's earnest, anxious inquiry was, "How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?" Verse 12. The angel answered, "Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware. She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I

commanded her let her observe." Verses 13-14.

In instructing this one mother, the Lord gave a lesson to all who should be mothers till the close of time. Had the wife of Manoah followed the prevailing customs, her system would have been weakened by violation of nature's laws, and her child would have suffered with her the penalty of transgression. The basis of a right character in the future man is made firm by habits of strict temperance in the mother prior to the birth of her child. The divine command was very explicit, prohibiting the use of the fruit of the vine. Every drop of liquor taken by the mother as a gratification of the appetite is endangering the physical, mental, and moral health of her offspring, and is a direct sin against God.

This lesson should not be regarded with indifference. Parents

who indulge in excess of eating and drinking, or in the gratification of the animal propensities, transmit their corrupted blood and vitiated appetites to their children, who have less self-control and less power to resist temptation than the parents had. Many children die in infancy, while many more are ruined for time and eternity, in consequence of the sinful indulgences of the parents.

The thoughts and feelings of the mother will also have a powerful influence upon the legacy she gives her child. Strong traits of character, as well as perverted appetites, are transmitted from parents to children. Thus, many have received as a birthright almost unconquerable tendencies to evil. If the mother allows her mind to dwell upon herself, if she becomes peevish and faultfinding, the disposition of her child will testify to the fact. If she suffers strange freaks of appetite to control her, she will see the same reproduced in her offspring.

The enemy of souls understands this matter much better than many parents do, and he is ever ready with his temptations, while custom and tradition have a strong influence upon the mind of the mother. She does not always flee to God for grace that she may be an overcomer, but follows impulse rather than principle; and she sees reflected in the character of her child her own defects prior to its birth. Fathers as well as mothers are involved in this responsibility. Unwise advisers will urge upon the mother the gratification of every wish and impulse as essential to the well-being of her offspring. But in the light of facts presented to us in Bible history, the mother is by the command of God Himself laid under the most solemn obligation to restrain perverted appetite.

One great cause of the degeneracy of the race is the deplorable ignorance of parents in regard to the effect of their own condition upon the future well-being of their children. The mother is frequently overtaxed; too many burdens are allowed to rest upon her prior to the birth of her children. Care is not exercised to make her surroundings

as cheerful and pleasant as possible. An opposite course should be pursued. We should not then see so many with diseased bodies and ill-balanced minds, unfitted for any responsible position.

The strange lack of principle which characterizes the men and women of this generation is heart-sickening to those who are endeavoring to advance the cause of reform. They do not seek to become intelligent in regard to the laws which govern them. They do not study how they may preserve to themselves a good physical constitution, which is the foundation of mental and moral power. The anxious inquiry is, "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we

The constant inquiry of everyone should be, What is duty? What shall I do to benefit my children and society, and to glorify God? If we would reach a high standard in moral and spiritual attainments, we must live for this every day. Our present course of action may be determining the course of hundreds. We must render an account to God for the good we might have done but failed to perform because we had placed ourselves, through sinful indulgence, in a position of physical and mental weakness, where He could not accept our service. Many have but little sense of their sin in robbing God by selfish extravagance, and indulgence of perverted appetite. The cause of reform today is

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*In the light of facts presented to us in Bible history, the mother is by the command of God Himself laid under the most solemn obligation to restrain perverted appetite.*

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be clothed?" See Matthew 6:31.

If we tell the liquor-drinker and tobacco-devotee that his indulgence in these poisons is gradually and surely wearing away the life forces, he will say, "I know it, but I cannot give up the indulgence. I would rather die before my time and enjoy these stimulants while I do live." Those who are content thus to shorten their own existence must answer to God for the life which He gave them to devote wholly to His service.

But man's accountability extends beyond his own well-being. Those parents who gratify inclination at the expense of health, in the use of tea, coffee, tobacco, and liquor, because the habit has become second nature, are not only working against their own physical life and moral advancement, but they leave their appetite, and their want of moral power to overcome these indulgences, to their children. Thus the evil of their course is accumulating and multiplying; society is demoralized, the church is cursed, and God is dishonored.

suffering for the want of men and women of integrity and moral worth.

The will of God has been plainly expressed to all mothers; He would have them, by precept and example, advocates of health reform. They should plant their feet firmly upon principle, in no case to violate the physical laws which God has implanted in their beings. "Standing by a purpose true," with firm integrity, mothers will have moral power and grace from Heaven to let their light shine forth to the world, both in their own upright course and in the noble character of their children.

We have now brought before the reader what God has spoken in reference to the course of the mother before the birth of her children. But this is not all. The angel Gabriel was sent from the heavenly courts to give directions for the treatment of children after their birth, that parents might become intelligent upon this important subject.

About the time of Christ's first advent, an angel appeared to Zacharias with a cheering message,

telling him that his wife should bear a son, whose name should be called John. "And," said the angel, "thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." Luke 1:14-15.

Thus Gabriel enjoined upon Zacharias that John should be brought up with strictly temperate habits, that he might be fitted for the important work of reform which God would lay upon him to prepare the way for Christ. When the voice of the reformer was lifted up in the wilderness, intemperance in every form existed among the people. Indulgence in wine and luxurious food was lessening physical strength and debasing the morals, so that the most revolting crimes did not appear sinful. While the voice of John was to be heard in stern rebuke to the people for their sinful indulgence, his own abstemious habits were also to be a reproof of the excesses of his time.

Important results were to be realized in the lives of Samson and John, which could not be reached without strict obedience to the laws of life and health. Hence, temperate habits were indispensable to them. The communications from Heaven were not given solely for those two marked characters, but were to be handed down through successive generations to our time.

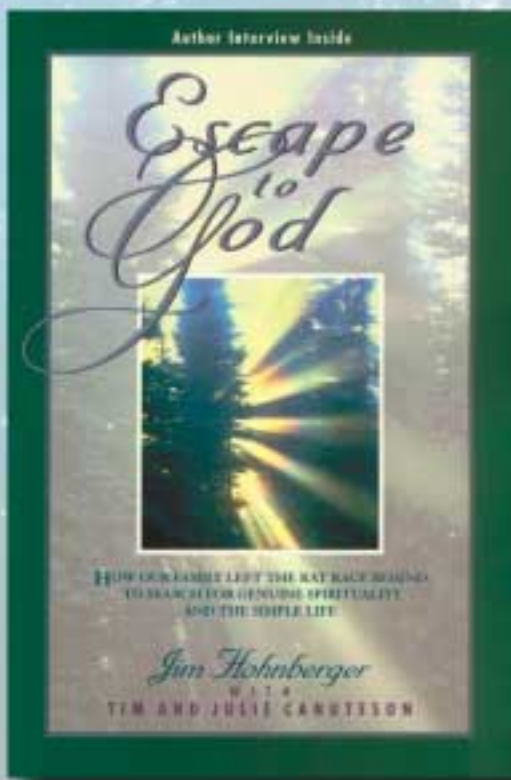
If parents would have their children come up with pure morals and firm integrity of purpose, with power to sway rather than to be swayed, they must have a full sense of their own responsibilities, and ever stand for the right. The education and training of their children must commence in infancy if they would qualify them for usefulness in this life, and give them a fitness for the immortal life.

The training of John was not to be in accordance with the ordinary customs of society. He was to be instrumental in giving new direction to the thoughts of the people of his day, and awakening them to the

necessity of a nobler type of manhood. God would have the character of His servant molded after the Divine Model. The wilderness was his [John's] schoolroom, the mountains his familiar haunts. There he learned to deny himself, and to cultivate simplicity of diet and of dress. His habits of life were so pure and natural that his ideas were not perverted, and his character was not warped by the wrong influences which he was afterward called to meet.

The great book of nature, with its inexhaustible stores, was open before the prophet. He was fitted through privation and hardship to control his physical and mental powers, that he might stand among the people as unmoved by surrounding circumstances as the rocks and mountains of the wilderness. The world's Redeemer said of John, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Matthew 11:11. ✠

*Good Health*, February 1, 1880.



## Jim Hohnberger: *Escape to God*

As this world grows more old and tired, we are faced with the question, Why are we still here? Why hasn't Jesus come to take us home? We, the people of God's remnant church, have the truth—isn't that enough?

No, it isn't. We haven't learned to let God be in full control of our lives. We haven't given ourselves to Him and let Him be all and 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 doesn't 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.

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# letters to the editor

## Have a letter to share?

contact [editor@hopeint.org](mailto:editor@hopeint.org) or see page 3 for our mailing address.



I have recently subscribed to your magazine, and I want you to know how much I enjoy reading your articles! Your ministry gives me an alternative to reading worldly books and magazines. Your articles are very practical and help me understand spiritual things better.

I am interested in your free tape of the month, the Present Truth Monthly.

I am thankful to God for ministries like yours.

*K, Florida*

I just want to thank whoever is responsible for making it possible for me to get a free subscription to *Our Firm Foundation*. I am on a fixed income and am handicapped, so I don't have a lot of money, and I don't get out too often.

I enjoy reading your magazines very, very much, and have learned a lot from the wonderful articles in them. Since I have been reading *Our Firm Foundation*, my life circumstances have been easier to live with, and my walk with Jesus has grown much closer.

I pray that God will continue to bless you and give you the strength to carry on the work that is preparing us for His coming.

I hope you don't mind that I share my magazines with friends when I am done with them.

Thank you again!

*RB, New York*

Enclosed is my love gift for your ministry. I know every cent will be spent for witnessing for Jesus. May our dear Lord and Saviour bless and keep you in His loving care, for Satan wants you out of his way.

I thank Jesus each day for you and all at Hope International. I enjoy your videotapes, cassettes, and books.

*EL, North Carolina*

### From Overseas

My greetings to you in the love of our dear Lord Jesus Christ!

I thank the Lord for raising you up along with a few others to assist in God's work, assisting His church in this remnant time of the end. Your service to feed God's people with spiritual light answers the Lord's command in Matthew 28:19-20.

You have come at a time when apathy and darkness have engrossed God's people, not only in America, but all over the world. Otherwise it will be our fault that our Lord seems to delay to come, if we stay indifferent to His work.

I am an Adventist evangelist. The burden of my toil includes teaching in evangelistic efforts, conducting meetings in halls, instructing and teaching the laity the Bible and the pillars of the Advent faith in the third angel's call. I lack accurate documents. I do not have an accurate Bible with a concordance and marginal references. In the past fourteen years I have seen no circulation of the King James Version Bible in all the book centers here.

We also need Spirit of Prophecy books, and alas, nowhere can we find them. Sad to say, the people are in lamentable spiritual alertness; yet the Lord is coming very soon! It is time to give the trumpet a certain sound, to prepare a people ready for the Lord. The social, economic, and cultural status of my country makes it very difficult for me to order or buy the above stated materials for God's work. I do not have any income whatsoever. It is just self-sacrificing. I am a desperately poor man. So please for your love to the Lord Jesus, may you find some possibility of helping me with the said spiritual weapons.

*LM, Malawi*

The brightness of this day has given me this opportunity to write you this letter. I hope you are fine by the grace of God.

Please, the reason why I am writing you this letter is that I am a pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but we have more than 50 people using 10 Bibles. Please, you see that it can't be possible for us to use only 10 Bibles. The Bible says Ask and it shall be given. Please try and send me some materials.

*FN, Ghana*

I am very glad to write you this letter. I hope by the grace of God you are well as I am here. I had your address recently from my friend's letter he received from you. Indeed, I have appreciated your tracts, which contain a lot of messages needed at this final hour.

Please, kindly help me to get some of the tracts to distribute among people for the message of our Lord Jesus Christ to be spread quickly.

People argue that our worship on Sabbath is a form of worship given to the Israelites when they were in exile, but not for us. In addition, most of them preach Sunday as an instituted worship for our generation, which has no root or any Biblical evidence. For this, they are confused of the real day of worship (the Sabbath).

After going through your booklet entitled *Earth's Final Warning*, it explains vividly all the proofs and evidence of the changing of the Sabbath to the Sunday worship, and I have admired it. I hope if by God's will you provide some for me to distribute, it would do the work of God effectively, and most people will understand it as I am and come to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope when you receive this message, you will do your possible best and honor in Christ to help me with the tracts and Bibles to help us, the youth in the school and beyond, to understand the Word of the Lord.

*GE, Ghana*



# Come to Camp Meeting!

July 24–29, 2001

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If your answer is Yes, then please plan now to join us in worship and fellowship.

**Don't miss the special sale pricing on all publications purchased at camp meeting!**

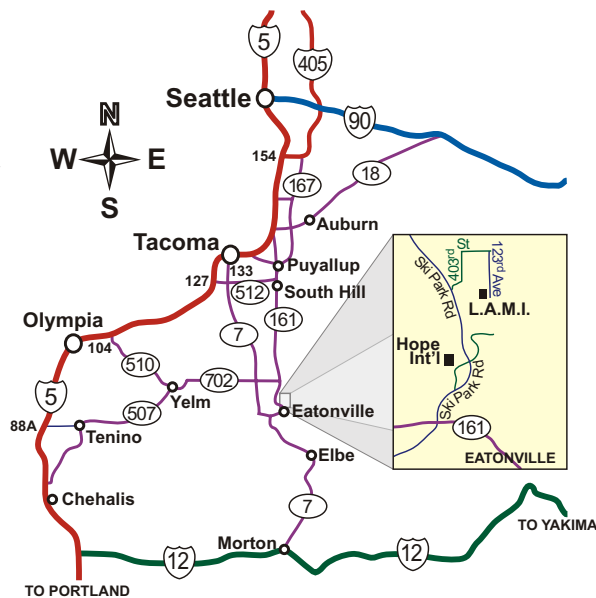
If you plan to attend our camp meeting in Eatonville and wish to stay on our grounds, you are more than welcome. Water, restrooms, and limited showers will be available, but hookups for water, sewer, and electricity are not available. Please plan on a real *camp* meeting.

As usual, there will be no charge for staying on our campus, but we cannot provide either lodging or food. Please do not take it for granted that we will be able to provide special services for those who need them. If you have special needs, please call and let us know—we will do our best to accommodate all who desire to attend.

If you do not plan to stay on our grounds, the following list of motels may be helpful:

- **Mill Village Motel**—2 miles south of Hope International. (360) 832-3200.
- **Motel Puyallup**—25 miles north of Hope International. Call (800) 921-2700.
- **Northwest Motor Inn**—25 miles north of Hope International. Call (800) 845-9490.
- **Eagle's Nest**—10 miles south of Hope International. Call (888) 877-2533

**Speakers will include:** Ray DeCarlo, Clark Floyd, Cody Francis, Hal Mayer, Ron Spear, Colin Standish, Russell Standish, Agatha Thrash, Jeff Wehr.



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