



Our Firm Foundation

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our

Utterable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Sanctuary

Volume 16, Number 6

June 2001

The Promise of the Spirit

Lost Forever

The Fruits of True Religion

The Judgment

A Vital Connection

*From Rags
to Riches*

The Brotherhood in Christ

“I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 1:9.

John was the only remaining apostle. He was the beloved disciple—the one with whom Jesus personally conversed when revealing the book of Revelation. John was also the author of the Gospel of John and the three epistles that bear his name. He was, no doubt, the most highly esteemed Christian at the time. But in the humility of Jesus, John does not give himself titles; it is enough for him to say, I John, your brother and copartner in tribulation.

Whatever may be our positions in ministry or in the church, we are first and foremost brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28.

There is to be among God’s children a common brotherhood in Christ—a common suffering for Jesus, and a common hopeful, patient waiting for His coming. No barren and inhospitable places can separate those who love the truth as it is in Jesus. We are bound together by the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The very testimony that brings on persecution

is the same testimony that unites us in Christ by a bond that can never be severed.

However, the unconverted heart was then, is now, and always will be, at enmity with God and in disagreement with truth and with the true followers of Christ. The carnal heart cannot taste the sweetness of brotherhood in Christ. Underneath the forms of godliness lies resentment, malice, and revenge.

While the malice of the unconverted can banish the body of the faithful, they are unable to bind the soul committed to Jesus. In fact, the Patmos imprisonment was to John the place of the most sublime communion with Heaven. The chains of a resentful power became the wings of prophetic splendor. The circumstances of the natural life did not hinder him from being lifted up to the higher life. Shut out from the world, estranged from human companionship, he became conversant with the celestial order in heavenly places. After all, was not John “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” [the Sabbath]? Revelation 1:10.

Today, you may find yourself in a most terrible predicament, but you can nevertheless be “in the Spirit.” You may not like what others say about you falsely, but you can choose to be “in the Spirit.” You need not be chained by unsanctified human passion. In all places and at all times you may be “in the Spirit.”

But the life of the Spirit is rooted in humility. It will not seek to please

itself, but will be focused on pleasing “his neighbour.” Romans 15:2. For Christ Himself came not to be served, but to serve. Those “in the Spirit” will not seek the highest positions, but will “esteem other better than themselves.” Philippians 2:3. The faithful will become all things to all men that they may save some. See 1 Corinthians 9:22.

There are but a few important elements of the brotherhood of Christ. Bound by truth, bound by love, bound by a common vision to further God’s kingdom, bound by the same loving Father and Saviour, and bound by the same Spirit, we are able to move forward in confidence. The three angels’ messages will be proclaimed to the whole world. Every individual will receive enough light to make an intelligent decision between the seal of God and the mark of the beast. There will be a unity among the believers never seen since apostolic times. There will be a brotherhood in Christ that not even the greatest time of trouble can weaken. Rather, we will gather warmth from the coldness of others. We will gather courage from their cowardice. See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 136.

Dear friends, let us all choose to be faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us enjoy the sweet communion that can be ours. Let us prepare to go home to heaven! Amen. ✠

Jeff Wehr, Associate Editor

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

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

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From Rags to Riches

Vernon Sparks

The United States of America has become the envy of the world. One of the principle reasons is that it is truly a land of opportunity — a land where the “poor” can live like kings and queens in comparison to the truly poor of the developing world. It is a land where the disadvantaged and downtrodden of the earth, with some diligence and perseverance, can have a life of relative ease and comfort.

On a fairly regular basis we hear of a new “lucky” multimillionaire — the winner of some lottery. In the world of business and finance the opportunities to succeed are unrivaled. During the final years of the millennium just past, America experienced its longest sustained economic growth for many decades. It is estimated that from 1989 through 2001, the number of millionaire Americans will have nearly doubled — from three million to some five million, or 4.7% of the population.¹ Indeed, America, of all places in the world, is a land where one has the opportunity of going from rags to riches. Such opportunities and possibilities certainly appeal to the natural heart of all mankind.

Such appeals, however, are greatly tempered for the Christian by the words of Christ: “It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the

kingdom of God” (Luke 18:25); and “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Mark 8:36. The riches of the kingdoms of this world are fleeting. In the time span of eternity, their duration and enjoyment are but for a moment at best. It is infinitely more important and “profitable” for us to focus, and help others around us to focus, upon the eternal riches offered to us by the kingdom of Heaven. Christ’s kingdom provides the opportunity to go from rags to riches, not to just 4.7% of the population, but to every downtrodden and disadvantaged individual — to every sinner — of this earth.

The astute investor will recognize and follow the counsel of Christ when He said: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:19-21.

The True Riches of Heaven

We are unwise and foolish if we focus our attention upon this fleeting, temporal life to the failure of obtaining eternal life with its

everlasting joys — yes, even “streets of gold.” The redeemed will be given entrance through the gates of pearl into the New Jerusalem with its streets of pure gold, its river of life, and tree of life, and will truly have gone from rags to riches, for there is no comparison between the moth-eaten, rusted riches of this temporal life and the everlasting riches of Christ’s eternal kingdom!

Too many of us fail to understand that if we are to go from rags to riches in eternity, we must first go from spiritual rags to spiritual riches *in this present life*. The servant of the Lord stated it succinctly: “All who are to be saints in heaven will first be saints upon the earth.”²

This theme is amplified in the following words: “The character you bear in probationary time will be the character you will have at the coming of Christ. If you would be a saint in heaven, you must first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in society. Jesus does not change the character at His coming. The work of transformation must be done now. Our daily lives are determining our destiny.”³

In what way is being a saint on earth like going from spiritual rags

to riches? The true riches of heaven are not the streets of gold, nor the river of life, nor even the tree of life with its resulting eternal life. The only thing that has true, intrinsic value in heaven, and that gives value to every other aspect of heaven and eternal life, is the character of God and its reproduction in the other inhabitants. His character alone is the only thing with intrinsic value in the entire universe. Without the character traits of God reproduced in every inhabitant, heaven and the earth-made-new, with all the pearls, gold, precious stones, and *even eternal life*, would be but wealthy versions of our present hell on earth. The saints in heaven will possess the character aspects of the Godhead, and, if we are to be saints there, we must allow Christ to reproduce His character in us now—in this present life.

The stated requirement for eternal life is perfect obedience—unblemished righteousness: “Christ does not lessen the claims of the law. In unmistakable language He presents obedience to it as the condition of eternal life—the same condition that was required of Adam before his fall. The Lord expects no less of the soul now than He expected of man in Paradise, perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement made in Eden—harmony with God’s law, which is holy, just, and good.”⁴

Hope for the Naturally Bankrupt

We cannot naturally fulfill such a requirement. Our natural, corrupt character, at best, is well described with the following words: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Isaiah 64:6.

God often represents the quality of our character, or spiritual wealth, in terms of garments. Thus, “filthy rags” graphically illustrates our natural spiritual value—our total unfitness for heaven. Our sinful

natures are completely incapable of perfectly obeying God’s law and thus possessing unblemished righteousness. Of ourselves, we are spiritual paupers—morally bankrupt—without the slightest chance of obtaining eternal life in God’s eternal kingdom.

The message of the True Witness to Laodicea describes our natural spiritual condition of bankruptcy as being naked. Christ counsels us to obtain from Him “white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and

members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 7:23–25.

Yes, Christ is the solution to our spiritual poverty, our nakedness. The two major aspects of going from rags to riches—justification and sanctification—are both accomplished by Christ. Through faith in

Of ourselves, we are spiritual paupers—morally bankrupt—without the slightest chance of obtaining eternal life in God’s eternal kingdom.

that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.” Revelation 3:18.

Those who overcome will be clothed in white raiment: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Verse 5.

John the revelator was shown the scene of the redeemed “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” Revelation 7:9.

We were told: “The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience.”⁵

Paul tells us that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. Jeremiah tells us that of ourselves we cannot change our character or our ways: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” Jeremiah 13:23.

Yet Paul also tells us where there is hope: “I see another law in my

His death in our stead and in His High Priestly ministry, we are pardoned and made fit for heaven.

No Pardon Without Transformation

Christ’s substitutionary death makes the plan of salvation possible, but His death avails us nothing other than probationary life unless we also accept His life as our Pattern and are sanctified or transformed into that mold by the ministry of the Holy Spirit:

“The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating Agent, and without this, the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty Agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies

to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.”⁶

There is no pardon for sin until we are willing to be rescued from the power of sin. We are not counted righteous until we are willing to be *made* righteous. Pardon and justification are not given without associated transformation—the new birth and sanctification:

“The Word of God gives us no encouragement that a sinner is pardoned in order that he may continue in sin. He is pardoned on condition that he receives Christ, confessing and repenting of his sins

through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.”⁸

The Mind of Christ

We must accept Christ’s image and mind if we are to accept His pardon:

“To be pardoned in the way that Christ pardons, is not only to be forgiven, but to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Lord says, ‘A new heart also will I give you.’ Ezekiel 36:26. The image of Christ is to be stamped upon the very mind, heart, and soul. The apostle says,

Our only hope is to cease from sin. Christ’s implicit obedience in us is the condition of our salvation.

and becoming renewed. Many who pass under the name of Christian are not converted. Conversion means renovation. The sinner must enter into the renovating process for himself. He must come to Jesus. He must give up the wrong habits in which he has indulged. He must bring his unsubdued, unchristlike tendencies under the control of Christ, else he cannot be made a laborer together with God. Christ works, and the sinner works. The life of Christ becomes the life of the human agent. It is through the renewing power of the divine Spirit that man is fashioned into a perfect man in Christ.”⁷

We receive our pardon on the condition of future obedience, and that justification can be *retained* only through continual obedience:

“While God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ’s righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience,

‘But we have the mind of Christ.’ 1 Corinthians 2:16.”⁹

Our only hope is to cease from sin. Christ’s implicit obedience in us is the condition of our salvation:

“It is thought strange by some that our salvation should demand our entire submission to the law of God. But the Lord could not do a more cruel thing than to save man in his rebellion. No man can be saved unless he comes under the rule of Christ. Salvation means to us complete surrender of soul, body, and spirit. Because of the unruly elements in our nature, our passions often gain the mastery. The only hope of the sinner is to cease from sin. Then his will is in harmony with the will of Christ. His soul is brought into fellowship with God. Those who enlist in the army of Christ must in all things submit to His authority and consult His will. *Implicit obedience is the condition of salvation.* God’s law must be obeyed in every particular. It is our salvation to make His law our rule, His life our pattern, His glory our chief aim. To keep ourselves in the love of God, to be bound to obedience by His requirements, this is to be free in Christ.”¹⁰

Christ met the claims of the law by His life of perfect obedience two thousand years ago. Christ also meets the claims of the law through the perfectly obedient lives of those He transforms today:

“God has given to the world and to angels the evidence of the changeless character of His love. He would part with His only begotten Son, send Him into the world, clothed in the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn sin and to die upon Calvary’s cross to make it manifest to men that there is provision in the counsels of heaven for those who believe in Christ, to keep the commandments of God. Aside from Christ, man cannot in spirit and in truth keep one of the commandments of God, but in Christ Jesus the claims of the law are met, *because He transforms the nature of man by His grace*, creates in the heart a new spiritual life, implants a holy nature, and men become Christlike in character.”¹¹

Christ’s Imparted Righteousness

Both justification and sanctification are obtained by grace through faith in the righteousness of Christ: “The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ.”¹²

Christ’s mediatorial work in heaven obtains not only God’s pardon, but also His transforming—sanctifying—power for us. God’s pardon and this transforming experience are what qualify us for the immortal inheritance:

“Jesus says. . . . Through faith in My name He [the Father] will impart to you the sanctification and holiness which will fit you for His work in a world of sin, and qualify you for an immortal inheritance in His kingdom.”¹³

“We are all to be tested here in this life to prove whether, if admitted to heaven, we shall repeat the same course that Satan pursued there. But if the character which we develop during our probation is according to the divine Pattern, it *qualifies* us to

receive the welcome, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord.' Matthew 25:21."¹⁴

Christ's glory—His character—is revealed in His law and also in the perfected characters of His saints:

"The glory of Christ is revealed in the law, which is a transcript of His character, and His transforming efficacy is felt upon the soul until men become changed to His likeness. They are made partakers of the divine nature, and grow more and more like their Saviour, advancing step by step in conformity to the will of God, till they reach perfection."¹⁵

The sanctifying or transforming righteousness of Christ is actually imparted or given to us:

"The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven."¹⁶

The saints are qualified for heaven by having the fruits of the Spirit reproduced in their characters:

"Your compassionate Redeemer is watching you in love and sympathy, ready to hear your prayers, and render you the assistance which you need in your lifework. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, and charity are the elements of the Christian character. These precious graces are the fruits of the Spirit. They are the Christian's crown and shield."¹⁷

Yes, indeed, the pure white robe of Christ's spotless character becomes the white robe of the saints in this present life. The righteousness of Christ—His character—must become our righteousness on earth if

and His character alone is what will make the earth-made-new heaven on earth.

What an opportunity we have! We can *now* possess that which alone has intrinsic value and which

The righteousness of Christ—His character—must become our righteousness on earth if we are to be saints in heaven.

we are to be saints in heaven. John speaks of those who have purchased the white raiment from Christ and who now possess His fine linen robe of righteousness:

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:6-8.

Let us now exchange our filthy rags, our corrupt, moth-eaten, rusted natural characters for the pure character of Christ. His character is what makes heaven worth desiring,

provides value to everything else in the universe—the character of Christ. Let us *now* go from rags to riches! ✠

Vernon Sparks writes from Tellico Plains, Tennessee.

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- ¹ See Owen Ullmann, "New Wealth Is Making 'Death Tax' Hit Home," *USA TODAY*, January 25, 2000.
- ² *Review and Herald*, August 4, 1891.
- ³ *Adventist Home*, 16.
- ⁴ *Christ's Object Lessons*, 391.
- ⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 88.
- ⁶ *The Desire of Ages*, 671.
- ⁷ *Loma Linda Messages*, 103-104.
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The Promise of the Spirit

Ellen G. White

Just before leaving the disciples, Christ gave them the promise, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:16-17.

Had men been consulted in regard to their choice of the blessing to be bestowed, they would have asked for some inferior good. But the Lord took the matter into His own hands, and promised His Spirit—a blessing which, when received, satisfies every need.

Christ had an infinite variety of subjects from which to choose in His teaching, but the one upon which He dwelt most largely was the endowment of His Holy Spirit. What great things He predicted for the church because of this endowment! Yet what subject is less dwelt upon today? What promise less fulfilled? Prophecies are dwelt upon, doctrines are expounded, but the promise of the Spirit, the fulfillment of which is necessary for the success of God's work, is incidentally touched upon, and that is all. Other blessings and privileges have been

set before the church, but the thought entertained regarding the promise of the Spirit is that it is not for the church now, that at some time in the future the church will receive this Gift. But this promise belongs to us now as surely as it belonged to the disciples.

God's people seem to be incapable of comprehending and appropriating this promise. They seem to think that only the scantiest showers of grace are to fall on the thirsty soul. They act as if they must rely on their own efforts for salvation, and as a result they have little strength for the work of overcoming. They have little light to give to the souls dying in the darkness of error. Church members have long been content with little of the blessing of God. They have not felt the need of reaching for the exalted privileges provided for them at infinite cost. Their spirituality is feeble, their experience dwarfed and crippled; and therefore they are disqualified for the work of the Lord. They are unable to present in the power of the Spirit the great and glorious truths of God's Word.

It is not because of any restriction on God's part that the riches of His grace do not flow to men. His

gift is godlike. He gave with a liberality that men do not appreciate because they do not love to receive. If all were willing to receive, all would be filled with the Spirit. By resting content with small blessings, we disqualify ourselves for receiving the Spirit in its unlimited fullness. We are too easily satisfied with a ripple on the surface, when it is our privilege to expect the deep moving of the Spirit of God. Expecting little, we receive little.

How Do You Treat Christ's Representatives?

The necessity of the Holy Spirit's working should be realized by all. Unless this Spirit is accepted and cherished as the Representative of Christ, whose work it is to renew and sanctify the entire being, the momentous truths that have been intrusted to human beings will lose their power on the mind. It is not enough for us to have a knowledge of the truth. We are to walk and work in love, conforming our will to the will of God. Of those who do this the Lord declares, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Hebrews 8:10. God is the mighty, all-powerful Agency in this work of transforma-

tion. By His Holy Spirit He writes His law in the heart.

Thus divine relationship is renewed between God and man. " 'I will be to them a God,' " He says, " 'and they shall be to me a people.' There is no attribute of My nature that I will not freely give in order that man may reveal My image." When we allow God to work His will in us, we shall harbor no sin. In the refining furnace all dross will be consumed.

When the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost, it was like a rushing, mighty wind. It was given in no stinted measure; for it filled all the place where the disciples were sitting. So will it be given to us when our hearts are prepared to receive it.

Let every church member kneel before God, and pray earnestly for the impartation of the Spirit. Cry, "Lord, increase my faith. Make me to understand Thy Word; for the entrance of Thy Word giveth light. Refresh me by Thy presence. Fill my heart with Thy Spirit that I may love my brethren as Christ loves me."

God will bless those who thus prepare themselves for His service. They will understand what it means to have the assurance of the Spirit, because they have received Christ by faith. The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. When this work is done for church members, the church will be a living, working church.

We are to seek most earnestly to be of one mind, of one purpose. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, and nothing less can bring us to this place. Let us by self-renunciation prepare our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit that a great work may be done for us, so that we can say, not, "See what I am doing," but, "Behold the goodness and love of God!"

A Spirit-Filled Church

After Christ's ascension, the disciples were gathered together in one place to make humble supplication to God. And after ten days of heart searching and self-examination, the way was prepared for the Holy Spirit to enter the cleansed,

to be the instruments in God's hands for revealing truth to the world. Divine power was given them; for a risen Saviour breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." John 20:22. Imbued with this Spirit, they went forth to witness for the truth. And so God desires His servants to go forth

Let every church member kneel before God, and pray earnestly for the impartation of the Spirit. Cry, "Lord, increase my faith."

consecrated soul temples. Every heart was filled with the Spirit, as though God desired to show His people that it was His prerogative to bless them with the choicest of Heaven's blessings. What was the result?—Thousands were converted in a day. The sword of the Spirit flashed right and left. Newly edged with power, it pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. The idolatry that had been mingled with the worship of the people was overthrown. New territory was added to the kingdom of God. Places that had been barren and desolate sounded forth His praises. Believers, reconverted, born again, were a living power for God. A new song was put in their mouths, even praise to the Most High. Controlled by the Spirit, they saw Christ in their brethren. One interest prevailed. One subject of emulation swallowed up all others—to be like Christ, to do the works of Christ. The earnest zeal felt was expressed by loving helpfulness, by kindly words and unselfish deeds. All strove to see who could do the most for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." Acts 4:32.

In the twelve disciples the leaven of truth was hidden by the Great Teacher. These disciples were

today with the message He has given them. But till they receive the Holy Spirit, they cannot bear this message with power. Till they receive the Spirit, they cannot realize what God can do through them.

The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour. There is no striving for the highest place. Self is renounced. The name of Jesus is written on all that is said and done.

We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we prepare ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—the perfection of His character? When the Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, "It is finished." ✠

Review and Herald, June 10, 1902.



The Holy Spirit

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

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

The Editors

Bible Marking Directions

1. In this month's study our Bible marking key letters are *HS*, which represent "The Holy Spirit."
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 Holy Spirit, 1HS.
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 HS."

1HS: John 16:7–8.

Jesus promised His disciples that when He left the earth, He would send them the Comforter—or the Holy Spirit—who would convict them of sin. Man cannot convince another man of sin. We need the Holy Spirit to help us discern our own hearts and to convince us of our sins.

2HS: 1 John 5:7.

The Scriptures teach repeatedly that the Holy Spirit is part of the three-person Godhead. See Matthew 3:16–17; 28:19; Ephesians 4:4–6.

3HS: 2 Peter 1:21.

No mortal man thought up the ideas presented in God's Holy Word. The Holy Spirit inspired these holy men of old.

4HS: John 14:26.

The Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth (see John 15:26–27)—teaches us and leads us into a greater understanding of His Word. When He abides in us, we can discern deeper truths from God's Word. See 1 John 2:27. The same Spirit that inspired the words of Scripture will inspire those who study those words.

5HS: John 14:16–17.

The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, or Helper. He is the Divine Agency in the work of overcoming sin. See Romans 8:11, 13. He was with Joseph. See Genesis

41:38. Just think what a comfort that was to Joseph when he was all alone in Egypt!

6HS: Romans 8:26.

When we do not know what to pray for, or the exact words to use, the Holy Spirit takes our feeble prayers and transforms them into beautiful petitions to the Lord. See Ephesians 2:18.

7HS: Genesis 1:2.

The Holy Spirit had a part in the work of Creation. And He also has a part in the recreation of our hearts today. See Romans 8:11.

8HS: Acts 2:1–4, 41.

The Holy Spirit brought power to the early believers. They were inspired to share the gospel with the world, and in one day 3,000 people were converted! If we want that power today, then we must receive the Holy Spirit.

9HS: Ephesians 4:30.

By neglecting Christian duties, by putting off making a decision to follow the Lord, by ignoring His entreaties to us, by making choices that we know are wrong, we grieve away the Holy Spirit. Let us search our hearts and see what is keeping us from receiving Him in His power!

Next month we will look at some hindrances to receiving the Holy Spirit, and what we can do about them. ✨

Lost Forever

Ron Spear



It was almost fifty years ago when I began preaching the soon coming of the Lord, serving in several capacities in my beloved Seventh-day Adventist Church. I have been an ordained minister most of that time. In looking back, I can see that the hand of God was over me—protecting, warning, rebuking, and leading me into a greater understanding of His love and His plan for my life. God was bringing me into a greater relationship with my Saviour Jesus Christ so that I would not be lost forever. He desired that I might comprehend His great message of righteousness by faith and yield obedience to it without a compromise.

Through all those years, my soul hung in the balances. Yes, I was a “good” man, a preacher doing a lot of good things—a missionary to Africa, a pastor and evangelist, baptizing many souls, and building churches—yet I was not fit to be saved. What a shocking thought—to be lost forever!

You see, God does not save good people; He saves holy people. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is the only One who can make us holy through obedience to all known truth. Yet, so many of us Seventh-day Adventists are now running the risk of being lost forever.

The standard of righteousness is holiness: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am

holy.” 1 Peter 1:15-16. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. God will not—cannot—accept 99 percent; we must be 100 percent.

How important is it to strive to reach God’s perfect standard? “Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. . . . The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit.”¹

Unless we are daily emptied of every defilement of sin, we will not receive—or even recognize—the latter rain when it will be falling on those all around us who are safe to save.

Again, let us ponder this solemn statement and take it to heart: “We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we prepare ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—the perfection of His character? When the Lord’s people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, ‘It is finished.’ ”²

Now Is the Time

Friends, now is the time to prepare to receive the latter rain by receiving the early rain in great abundance, which enables us to overcome every besetting sin:

“My message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing [the latter rain], having our lamps trimmed and burning.”³

Soon it will be too late, for the latter rain will fall only upon those who have received abundantly of the early rain and have overcome completely. It will then be too late to make up for the lack.

Dear friends, do we realize we are now living in the very last remnant of time? The signs of the times are ominous. Are we not hearing in our beloved church the drums and music that would appear just before probation closes?⁴ We are told that every wind of doctrine will be blowing from our pulpits.⁵ See Ephesians 4:13-14.

Truly, we are now living in the third and final watch: “The first and second watches are past. We are in the third watch, waiting and watching for the Master’s return. . . . I saw that watch after watch was in the past. . . . The passing of the second watch has brought us to the third.”⁷

Are we prepared for the end, which will soon burst upon the world as an overwhelming surprise?

“A storm is arising that will wrench and test the spiritual

foundation of everyone to the utmost. Therefore avoid the sand bed; hunt for the rock. Dig deep; lay your foundation sure. Build, oh, build for eternity! Build with tears, with heartfelt prayers.”⁸

It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with minor matters. We should be getting ready for heaven. We should be cutting loose from the entanglements of

accomplished before that time. . . . No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is *now* that this work is to be accomplished for us.”¹² See Jeremiah 29:13.

Soon an awful surprise is coming upon the inhabitants of the world. Suddenly, with power and great glory, Christ will come. Then there will be no time to prepare to meet Him. Now is the time for us to give the warning message.”¹³

Now is the time. For many, tomorrow will be too late. Probation is soon to close!

An Unwelcome Guest?

The greatest power that God can now provide is available to us for our asking. God has appealed to us through His messenger, urging us to plead for the Holy Spirit, and to live for it. Are we earnestly praying for God’s great Gift, or are we treating the Spirit as an unwelcome Guest?

“If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If all were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension, and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the Divine Power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude.”¹⁴

“Why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit, since this is the means by which we are to receive power? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to us than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the baptism of the Spirit every worker should be pleading with God. Companies should be gathered together to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should men pray that God will baptize His missionaries with the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵

“We are to pray for the impartation of the Spirit as the remedy for sin-sick souls. The church needs to be converted, and

The present, then, is a crucial time for Seventh-day Adventists. It is a time of extreme importance, a time fraught with terrible consequences to God’s people and the cause.

earth, laying all unnecessary possessions on the altar of sacrifice to help in the finishing of the work.

We are to “live and act wholly in reference to the coming of the Son of man.”⁹

The present, then, is a crucial time for Seventh-day Adventists. It is a time of extreme importance, a time fraught with terrible consequences to God’s people and the cause. We can only postpone getting ready at the peril of our own souls. Now is the time!

Are we waiting for the power of the latter rain to give us victory over sin? If so, we will still be waiting when it is too late. The latter rain is not given to enable us to overcome sin—that was the purpose of the early rain. “The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle.”¹⁰

And there will be no character change when Jesus comes. Christians are to reach full maturity of character before the close of the general probation—not after:

“The coming of Christ does not change our characters; it only fixes them forever beyond all change.”¹¹

“When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be

The End Comes Suddenly

Let us remember that the end will come suddenly—unexpectedly! Are we seeking and praying for the Holy Spirit’s power in the latter rain? Do our lives and our sermons reflect an urgent desire to be ready ourselves, and to give the final warning to the world?

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 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. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6.

“My heart is filled with anguish when I think of the tame messages borne by some of our ministers, when they have a message of life and death to bear. The ministers are asleep, the lay members are asleep, and a world is perishing in sin. May God help His people to arouse and walk and work as men and women on the borders of the eternal world.

why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of grace, as representatives of the church, and from a broken heart and contrite

unwelcome Guest, refusing to receive the rich Gift, refusing to acknowledge it, turning from it, and condemning it as fanaticism.”¹⁶

Yes, to be lost forever is a startling, shocking thought, and yet many of us are making no preparation for the final movements in this great controversy.

spirit make earnest supplication that the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high? Let us pray that when it shall be graciously bestowed our cold hearts may be revived, and we may have discernment to understand that it is from God, and receive it with joy. Some have treated the Spirit as an

Yes, to be lost forever is a startling, shocking thought, and yet many of us are making no preparation for the final movements in this great controversy.

Our only hope to be saved eternally is to prepare our characters each day by studying

the Scriptures, praying for the latter rain, and obeying God’s will as it is opened to us.

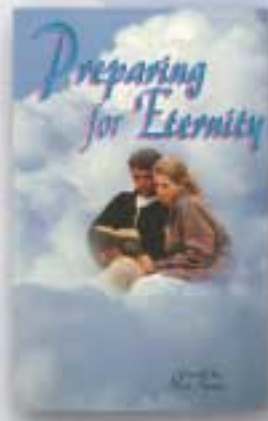
Christ is coming soon! May each reader be ready to receive the words of Christ, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” Matthew 25:21. ❄

References:

- ¹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, 507.
- ² *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1902.
- ³ *Selected Messages*, book 1, 192.
- ⁴ See *Selected Messages*, book 2, 35–37.
- ⁵ See *Testimonies to Ministers*, 409–410.
- ⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 192–194.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 129–130.
- ⁸ *Early Writings*, 58.
- ⁹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, 506.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 466.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 355 (emphasis in original); see also *ibid.*, vol. 8, 298; *The Great Controversy*, 490.
- ¹² *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 37.
- ¹³ *The Acts of the Apostles*, 50.
- ¹⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 22.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies to Ministers*, 64.

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A close-up photograph of several vibrant pink flowers with five petals each, set against a soft, out-of-focus background of green and purple. The flowers are the central visual element of the page.

The Fruits of True Religion

Ellen G. White

It is to be feared that the people of God are not prepared for what is coming upon the earth. Is there not a lack of energy in the church? Are we not upon the enchanted ground, and falling asleep in this important time? We desire to walk too much by sight. We must walk more by faith. We must have more energy, more unwavering faith and confidence in God. Has not pride

about doing others good, and making others happy. Let us search closely and see if we have the fruits of the Spirit.

Just as soon as pride enters the heart, the Spirit of God is shut out. Are there not those among us who indulge in pride and needless expense? They will soon regret it; for trying times are just before us, and they will then need, and desire to have, the misspent means, for they will feel want, and pinching want will be all around them.

Those who profess to be converted to God and take upon themselves the name of Christians (Christ-like) should be the neatest people in the world.

crept into the church? Is there that close watchfulness of self that there should be? Let us each examine our own hearts and look carefully to our own lives and see how they will compare with the true Pattern who wore a plain seamless coat, whose life was a life of sacrifice, who went

While some indulge in pride and needless expense, some are on the opposite extreme, and by their lives and appearance act as though neatness and order are pride and sin. This is not so. They can be neat and orderly, and not have pride in their hearts. The poor can keep tidy

as well as the more wealthy. They should not neglect their houses and persons, but should be neat and cleanly. Their dwellings should be kept neat and in order, and then the servants of God can find pleasure in coming to their houses and kneeling upon their floors to ask the blessing of the holy and pure God to rest upon them. He is a God of order and those who suffer [allow] themselves to be unclean and disorderly deprive themselves of many blessings they might otherwise enjoy. Filthiness among God's professed people is displeasing to Him. Our God is a jealous God, He will have a clean, pure, and holy people: a filthy and unclean person He will not acknowledge as His child. Those who profess to be converted to God and take upon themselves the name of Christians (Christ-like) should be the neatest people in the world. It is a dishonor to God, and a stain upon His cause, to profess to be converted to God and the truth, and yet go with slack, untidy habits uncorrected. Such must have a reformation, and their conversion must be more thorough. The fruits of religion are not disorder and uncleanness. Those who have

had no ambition to appear in a becoming manner before their brethren and sisters, should, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of the truth take hold of the work in earnest, and thoroughly reform. The world is watching for their faults, they despise God's children, and to give them occasion to reproach the religion of Christ is a sin in the sight of God. If these slack habits have grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength, there is greater necessity for decided efforts to correct these habits. Begin in earnest; do not reform in only a few things, but commence the work at once, and continue it until these slack habits are all rooted out and there is a thorough reformation.

God was so particular as to give direction to the children of Israel, after they came out of Egypt, what to do lest the Lord should pass by and see their uncleanness, and would not go up with their armies to battle against their enemies. The Lord is no less particular now, than He was then. If He noticed the sin of uncleanness then, He will notice it now; and those who are in fault, if they want to please God, and shun His frown, must reform lest He should see their untidiness and withhold victory and salvation in their meetings. Those who have indulged in pride should speedily reform, and put away their pride. They have no time to lose. They should separate themselves from the world, and not mingle with worldly company more than is actually necessary. Soon all the proud, and all that do wickedly will be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord. See Isaiah 47:14; Malachi 4:1.

Many among us put off the coming of the Lord too far, and their works correspond with their faith. There is a great responsibility resting upon parents. Their children are watching them, and any encouragement of the parents, by their example or advice to their children, a neglect to live out their faith themselves, and a mingling with the

world is noticed and has its effect upon the children. Parents, do not, by your silence or consent, suffer your children to associate with those who have no love for God or for the truth which is so dear to us—the truth which is to test us, to purify us, and, by our obedience to it, make us finally overcomers. The straight and narrow path does not lay along side of the broad road. The first leads to heaven, the second to death and hell. See Matthew 7:13–14. Parents, do not try to bring these roads any nearer together. Let the contrast between the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus and those whose god is this world, be kept ever before them. Keep up the distinction between the Christian and sinner. Parents whose duty it is to train up their children, should subdue their passions early. This is greatly neglected.

And have not the servants of God and the church a lack of faith? Have we not been too easily discouraged? too willing to believe that our lot was hard, and too ready to think that God had forsaken us? This is not right. God has so loved us as to give His dearly beloved Son to die for us; all heaven is interested in our salvation, and after all this, shall we consider it hard to trust so good a Father? He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. See Luke 11:13. We will not be discouraged, but with faith and confidence ask our Father in heaven for the things we need; and if we do not receive the immediate answer to our prayers, we must not give up our courage and faith, and suffer a murmuring spirit to take possession of us. This only separates us farther from God, for it is displeasing to Him.

Every saint who comes to God with a true heart, and sends earnest petitions to Him in faith will be answered; but we must have *enduring* faith. We must not for a moment let go the promises if we do not see

and realize the immediate answers to our prayers. We must not waver. We must rely upon His sure promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive." John 16:24. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Man is erring, and although his petitions are sent up from an honest heart, he does not always ask the things that are good for himself, or that will glorify God. When this is so, our wise and good Father hears our prayers and will answer them, sometimes immediately, but gives us the things that He knows are for our good and His own glory. The blessing received by us will be that which we need the most. If we could look into the plan of God, we should plainly see His wisdom and that He knows what is for our best good. Our prayers will be answered if they are sent up in faith, but nothing hurtful will be given. If we have, in the honesty of our hearts, asked anything that God sees will not be good for us, He may withhold the thing desired, but in its place give us the blessings we most need. If the answer to our prayers does not come just when we expect it, we must not distrust God, for that will bring darkness. Our confidence in God must be strong.

Secret prayer, which is too much neglected, is the life of the Christian. Let us go to God alone and fix our minds upon Him, have everything else shut out, and then draw by living faith, light and strength from the Sanctuary. Let us not rise from our knees until we can rely upon God's promises with an unwavering faith. Then we shall be benefited by secret prayer.

Children ask their parents for something they desire: the parent knows it will injure them, and gives them the things that will be good and healthy for them in the place of that which they desired. Not a prayer of the true saint is lost, if sent up from an honest heart. ❀

Review and Herald, June 12, 1855, originally entitled "To the Church."



Cultivating Purity

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

The Editors

One of the character traits most neglected in parenting today is purity. It is a virtue that is almost extinct in our society. The change from purity in virtue to vice does not happen in a moment. It is a process that goes on subtly, quietly, hidden in the mind of the child until eventually it finds expression. If we want to cultivate the characteristic of purity we must first guard our children from every avenue that will teach them impure principles and habits. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8. Parents, is it your deepest longing to see your children saved for eternity? Vice is prevalent everywhere, and God is calling us to teach our children the lesson of purity.

I recommend that every parent read the book called *A Solemn Appeal*¹ (adult reading only), written by James and Ellen White. It is a powerful book that teaches the importance of purity and our tremendous need to be awake to the ways in which the devil is successful in bringing impurity, vice, and abuse into the lives of our children. While reading it, I was shocked and sickened, but I was also thankful that God had opened my blind eyes to see the importance of my role as a parent—to protect my children and to keep them pure in heart. In this study we will look

at five specific steps that parents can take to cultivate the precious trait of purity in their children.

Guard Every Association

Do you know that many children are introduced to impurity and abusive habits in less than five minutes of association with other children and even with adults? We cannot trust our children to *anyone* if we are not confident of his character; that even includes people in our churches—elders, deacons, Sabbath school teachers, and so forth. God wants us to associate with our children and not allow them to run unattended, unguided, and unobserved with other children and adults.

Make Home Attractive

Another important thing that we can do to help our children cultivate purity is to keep our homes clean, neat, and attractive. (See the chapter called "Purity" in *Child Guidance*.) If this is done, our children will feel at rest in that environment, and they will desire to spend time there. The Christian home should serve as a natural barricade from inappropriate association. But, if our homes are unhappy or disorderly, our children will not enjoy being there, and they will begin to search out other associations.

During most of my childhood my mother was home with me, except for about six months when I stayed half-days with a baby sitter. I do not remember the lady's name, but I can still picture the house vividly in my mind. It was so stinky and dirty, and the atmosphere was so cold and stressed that I did not even like to go inside. Even in the winter I spent almost the entire time outside. I can

remember having to come in for lunch, and my fingers would be so cold that they hurt. Yet that did not make being in the house any more attractive. Let us make our homes desirable for our children and youth so that they will want to be there.

Do Not Send Children to a Room Alone for Long Periods of Time

Another way that we can keep our children from entering into impure habits is by not sending them to their rooms alone for long periods of time. Today a very popular form of discipline is called a "time-out." Most often it is recommended that you send the child to his or her room to be alone for a long stretch of time to think about what he or she has done. The devil can use that environment to begin to introduce wrong thoughts into the mind of the child, and that is when the barriers to purity can begin to be broken down.

Give Children Useful Occupations

We should help our children find wholesome and helpful activities to fill their time. Outdoor recreation is especially profitable for this. If you do this, you will find that your children will need fewer toys to occupy their time. So often today, the toys that are created promote violence or impurity. For example, I do not believe that children should be given Barbie dolls to play with. I grew up with those dolls, and as a result I had an inferiority complex for many years. I did not understand true self-dignity because the concept of self-esteem had been taught to me through playing with a Barbie doll. Instead of teaching children how to

be parents, as baby dolls do, Barbies begin to destroy the minds of the little girls. As they focus on outward beauty instead of inward beauty and compare themselves to the “ideal” — Barbie—they become dissatisfied with the way God created them. We must evaluate the toys that we are giving our children to play with, to protect them from immorality, and to build the character trait of purity in them.

Provide a Non-Stimulating Diet

Diet is vitally important to maintaining purity. When we give our children stimulating foods—such as heavy amounts of sugar, meat products, spicy foods, and dairy products—or allow them to indulge their appetite in eating whatever and whenever they feel like it, the nervous system becomes irritable and inflames the child’s natural inclinations, making surrender to Christ more difficult. Many children from the ages of 5–15 are marked with depravity, possessing a knowledge of almost every vice.

Once I read a story about a man, who lived some years ago, whose son was out of control. They tried every discipline that they could think of, and finally, in desperation,

they took him to the doctor. After a careful evaluation, this doctor looked at the man and said, “Your child is acting this way because of what you are feeding him. If you want the child to be more subdued and moldable, then you need to change his diet.” He specifically addressed the things I have just shared with you. The father did not go home and say, “Oh, this is too hard. That is not right—we should be able to eat what we want to eat, when we want to eat it.” Instead, the father said, “If changing our diet will help my son to be a better boy, I am willing to do it.” And the story goes on to say that in one month they could not find a better boy his age in the entire neighborhood. Praise God! As we are truly willing to be surrendered, we will look for the cause-and-effect relationships that will give ourselves and our children every advantage possible to be ready to enter the heavenly kingdom. ✠

Next month we will discuss how to cultivate reverence.

References:

² The 1870 edition of *A Solemn Appeal* may be purchased from: Leaves of Autumn, P.O. Box 440, Payson, Arizona, 85541. Telephone: (520) 474-3654.



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The Sabbath: Consecration or Desecration?

Colin Standish

Central to a life of total surrender of our will to God is the faithful keeping of God's holy Sabbath. The Sabbath leads to holy living: "He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law."¹

Tragically, even among those who profess to be earnestly preparing for the Lord's coming, few keep the Sabbath holy according to the Scriptures. "The Sabbath is the great test question. It is the line of demarcation between the loyal and true and the disloyal and transgressor."² This is cause for alarm.

Sabbath observance is part of the everlasting gospel: "Worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14:7. This is a fervent call to return to the worship of the Creator. Unquestionably, this is a call to reestablish sacred worship on God's holy Sabbath day, for this day was the day hallowed and sanctified by the Creator. See Genesis 2:3.

On the other hand, the third angel's message focuses upon the terrible destiny of those whose allegiance is to the Roman church, for it has boldly claimed that the keeping of Sunday is the mark of its

authority. "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Revelation 14:9-10.

The Meaning of the Sabbath

The Sabbath was designed to be a day that leads men and women to focus their lives upon Christ. Entering into the full spirit and meaning of the Sabbath develops a loving connection that permits the created creature to follow in the footsteps of his Creator to whom alone he owes absolute allegiance. The Sabbath is designed to make us more receptive to God's sanctifying power in our lives.

"Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them." Ezekiel 20:12; see also verse 20; Exodus 31:13, 16.

Jesus Himself set a wonderful example in Sabbathkeeping:

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read." Luke 4:16; see also verse 31; Luke 13:10.

The Sabbath was to be not only a time of rest from work, but also a time to worship God. Gathering together in corporate worship becomes more important as we near the end of this earth's history: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:25.

There has been an increasing tendency for some to worship privately on the Sabbath. While there is certainly a time for this, a significant portion of the Sabbath should be set aside, whenever possible, for Christian fellowship with those of like precious faith.

Principles of Sabbathkeeping

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy reveal that Sabbath observance requires thorough preparation. The Jews referred to Sunday as the first day following the Sabbath, Monday as the second day following the Sabbath, and so forth, until the sixth day, which they called the preparation day. Thus on every day of the week the Jews would remember that God's Sabbath was to be kept holy unto the Lord.

True Sabbathkeeping involves a weeklong preparation. "All through

the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life. All who regard the Sabbath as a sign between them and God, showing that He is the God who sanctifies them, will represent the principles of His government. They will bring into daily practice the laws of His kingdom. Daily it will be their prayer that the sanctification of the Sabbath may rest upon them. Every day they will have the companionship of Christ and will exemplify the perfection of His character. Every day their light will shine forth to others in good works.”³

Preparing for the Sabbath mandates that all work that can be accomplished before the Sabbath should be completed before the Sabbath arrives. “No duty pertaining to the six working days will be left for the Sabbath. During the week our energies will not be so exhausted in temporal labor that on the day when the Lord rested and was refreshed we shall be too weary to engage in His service.”⁴

Christ’s teachings and ministry demonstrated that we may assist people and animals in emergencies, but we should not do *regular* work on God’s holy Sabbath day. For example, see Mark 3:1-5; Luke 14:1-5.

The fourth commandment encompasses the whole household—even visitors: “The seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.” Exodus 20:10.

Nehemiah found it necessary to work for reformation among Israel, reminding them that nothing was to be purchased on the Sabbath: “And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy

day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.” Nehemiah 10:31; see also Nehemiah 13:17-18.

In *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 349-368, in the chapter “The Observance of the Sabbath,” we learn many important aspects of preparing for the Sabbath. I am afraid that some of these areas are not taken as seriously today as they once were.

(1) All clothes are washed, ironed, and mended in preparation for the Sabbath.

(2) All cooking and baking is completed. See also Exodus 16:23.

(3) Sabbath shoes are polished.

(4) Bathing is completed.

(5) Worldly pleasures and employment are laid aside.

(6) All secular materials are put out of sight.

All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment.

Before the Sabbath Begins

We are given examples of what must take place before the Sabbath: “See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked and the baths be taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule you can do it. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment. Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight.”⁵

“The violation of the fourth commandment is not confined to the preparation of food. Many carelessly put off blacking their boots, and shaving, until after the beginning of the Sabbath. This should not be. If any neglect to do such work on a working day, they should have respect enough for God’s holy time to let their beards remain unshaven, their boots rough and brown, until the Sabbath is past. This might help their memory, and make them more careful to do their own work on the six working days.”⁶

Are we doing our best to apply the principles of these counsels? The very act of preparation brings a deeper recognition of God’s guidance and leading in our lives.

Notice that prior preparation needs to be made so that:

“On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed.”⁷ All shopping should have been done, and secular programming on the radio or television silenced. Some of these things can be done well before Friday—such as mending clothes, polishing shoes, cooking, and necessary shopping. The more that can be accomplished before the preparation day, the better. This is especially important in winter, when the sun sets early.

No preparation should be left to the last moment. Families often have tense verbal interchange because the Sabbath is nearing and the preparation is not yet complete. I have seen husbands piously upbraid their wives and children for not being ready, while they themselves had made little contribution to the readiness of the family for Sabbath. All members of the family must work together to accomplish this goal. If we have the Sabbath in mind all through the week—if this is part of the joy of our fellowship with the Lord—we will not be caught unprepared.

The servant of the Lord told us to guard the minutes just before and after the Sabbath: “We should jealously guard the edges of the Sabbath. Remember that every moment is consecrated, holy time.”⁸

We should not only complete our secular appointments before the

setting of the sun, we should also have sufficient time to travel home to prepare for the Sabbath.

I remember my grandfather-in-law recounting that when he was converted to the Seventh-day Adventist faith, he approached his manager and requested permission to leave work early during the winter months. The manager graciously agreed. But later it came to his attention that he needed to be home much before the Sabbath to finish his preparation for it. Again he approached management and explained that he had come to understand further light on what is necessary in the preparation for the Sabbath. Once again, he was graciously permitted to extend his workdays during the week so that he could leave early on Friday.

the close of the Sabbath, if this can be managed.”¹⁰

Another area to be considered is Sabbath travel. While necessary travel may be undertaken, we should do everything possible not to travel unnecessarily or for worldly pleasure: “If we desire the blessing promised to the obedient, we must observe the Sabbath more strictly. I fear that we often travel on this day when it might be avoided. In harmony with the light which the Lord has given in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, we should be more careful about traveling on the boats or [railroad] cars on this day. . . . In order to reach the churches that need our help, and to give them the message that God desires them to hear, it may be necessary for us to travel on the

We are not to indulge the appetite on the Sabbath: “We should not provide for the Sabbath a more liberal supply or a greater variety of food than for other days. Instead of this the food should be more simple, and less should be eaten, in order that the mind may be clear and vigorous to comprehend spiritual things.”¹⁴

While all the preparations for cooking should be done before the Sabbath, God allows us to warm up the food already prepared. This is especially important during the winter months: “While cooking upon the Sabbath should be avoided, it is not necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather let the food prepared the day before be heated. And let the meals, though simple, be palatable and attractive. Provide something that will be regarded as a treat, something the family do not have every day.”¹⁵

God is particular in regard to how we are to dress for the Sabbath: “Many need instruction as to how they should appear in the assembly for worship on the Sabbath. They are not to enter the presence of God in the common clothing worn during the week. All should have a special Sabbath suit, to be worn when attending service in God’s house. While we should not conform to worldly fashions, we are not to be indifferent in regard to our outward appearance. We are to be neat and trim, though without adornment. The children of God should be pure within and without.”¹⁶

Our Sabbath should be so filled with spiritual thoughts, words, and actions that we do not speak of the secular business of life. “We should not talk about matters of business or engage in any common, worldly conversation.”¹⁷ How often we forget this instruction on Sabbath afternoons!

How to Spend the Sabbath

Before the setting of the sun, the family should gather in calm anticipation of the blessing of the Lord, while the father leads out in worship to welcome the Sabbath: “At family worship let the children

Let none come to the place of worship to take a nap.

There should be no sleeping in the house of God.

We should never enter the Sabbath with differences in the family or in the church. Of course, we wish that anger, resentment, and bitterness would never arise. But if they have arisen—even if we did not cause the division—we should follow this counsel: “On this [preparation] day all differences between brethren, whether in the family or in the church, should be put away. Let all bitterness and wrath and malice be expelled from the soul.”⁹

During the Sabbath Hours

Many of us have not paid full attention to the counsel Sister White gives concerning washing dishes during the Sabbath hours: “We would charge all not to wash their dishes on the Sabbath if this can possibly be avoided. God is dishonored by any unnecessary work done on His holy day. It is not inconsistent, but proper, that the dishes should be left unwashed till

Sabbath; but so far as possible we should secure our tickets and make all necessary arrangements on some other day. When starting on a journey we should make every possible effort to plan so as to avoid reaching our destination on the Sabbath.

“When compelled to travel on the Sabbath we should try to avoid the company of those who would draw our attention to worldly things.”¹¹

We are not to use the Sabbath as a day to catch up on sleep: “Let not the precious hours of the Sabbath be wasted in bed. On Sabbath morning the family should be astir early. If they rise late, there is confusion and bustle in preparing for breakfast and Sabbath school.”¹²

By retiring early on Friday evening, we can be alert to receive the message that God wishes us to receive: “Let none come to the place of worship to take a nap. There should be no sleeping in the house of God.”¹³

take a part. Let all bring their Bibles and each read a verse or two. Then let some familiar hymn be sung, followed by prayer.”¹⁸

The Sabbath day is to be a happy day for our children. While all play should be put aside as fellowship with the Lord is undertaken, the Sabbath should not be boring or dull. Special planning should be undertaken for the long Sabbath afternoons of summer.

When my brother and I were younger, Sabbath afternoon activities were well organized. First, those who were younger attended the Junior Missionary Volunteer meeting. Following this meeting, the older youth met for the Missionary Volunteer meeting. Today those activities are rarely held Sabbath afternoon. Surely these need to be reestablished. The Missionary Volunteer Society was an opportunity for youth to recite the Word of God, to hear special, youth-oriented presentations, and to witness on Sabbath afternoon. Surely nothing is more important to the training of our young people than to train them for the service of the Lord.

Sister White has also endorsed the value of communing in nature on Sabbath afternoon: “In pleasant weather let parents walk with their children in the fields and groves. Amid the beautiful things of nature tell them the reason for the institution of the Sabbath.”¹⁹ This is an opportunity to bring out wonderful spiritual lessons and uphold the work of the great Creator of the universe.

Two or three families may meet and study God’s Word together. The

studies should be simplified so that the children can understand them and participate in this fellowship.

At the end of the Sabbath, the father has the privilege to call his family together again, this time to

and Redeemer. The Sabbath is a sign of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is the final test of loyalty to God. When we realize this, we will hasten to reform our lives.

All the blessings gained during the Sabbath can be destroyed by what happens after the Sabbath.

have a service of thankfulness for the blessings that the Lord has given during the Sabbath hours. The family can share Scripture, singing, and praying together. Then they should share the blessings that God has given them, and what they have learned during the Sabbath hours.

After Sundown

One final word about Sabbathkeeping: All the blessings gained during the Sabbath can be destroyed by what happens after the Sabbath. Many believe that once the Sabbath is over, our young people need to be able to “let their hair down.” So we provide the entertainment of the world and drive the Holy Spirit away. We say to the young people, “Now that the Sabbath hours have passed, you can do what you want to do. You can follow the pleasures of the world and the entertainment that it offers.” Thus all the good that might have been gained during the Sabbath is lost.²⁰

Keeping the Sabbath acknowledges Christ as our Creator

and Redeemer. The Sabbath is a sign of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is the final test of loyalty to God. When we realize this, we will hasten to reform our lives.

References:

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 350.
- ² *Selected Messages*, book 3, 423.
- ³ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 353–354.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 354.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 355.
- ⁶ *Signs of the Times*, May 25, 1882. The type of “shaving” here described may not refer to what we typically call shaving today. It may be in reference to the “parlor shave” (a trimming of the beard), put off until after the Sabbath. Whether or not this understanding is correct, we can see that infrequent tasks such as the trimming of the beard should not be left for the Sabbath hours.—The Editors.
- ⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 355.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 356.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 356.
- ¹⁰ *Selected Messages*, book 3, 258.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 359–360.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 357.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 361.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 357.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 355.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 360.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 357.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 358.
- ²⁰ See *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 348–351.

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Bush Proclaims Sunday, January 21, 2001, as a National Day of Prayer

News Item: “Just moments after taking the oath of office as the country’s 43rd president, George W. Bush asked for the nation’s prayers and proclaimed Sunday (Jan. 21) as a national day of prayer and thanksgiving.

“ ‘Knowing that I cannot succeed in this task without the favor of God and the prayers of the people, I ask all Americans to join with me in prayer and thanksgiving,’ Bush said in his proclamation.

“The statement called on the nation to pray on Sunday, a day that Bush will begin with a prayer service at Washington National Cathedral.” *The Christian News*, January 29, 2001, page 15.

The following are the words of Bush’s proclamation:

“Nearly 200 years ago, on March 4, 1801, our young nation celebrated an important milestone in its history, the first transfer of power between political parties, as Thomas Jefferson took the oath of office as president. On this bicentennial of that event, we pause to remember and give thanks to Almighty God for our unbroken heritage of democracy, the peaceful transition of power, and the perseverance of our government through the challenges of war and peace, want and prosperity, discord and harmony.

“President Jefferson also wrote, ‘The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time’ and asked, ‘Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a

conviction that these liberties are of God?’ Indeed, it is appropriate to mark this occasion by remembering the words of President Jefferson and the examples of Americans of the past and today who in times of both joy and need turn to Almighty God in prayer. Times of plenty, like times of crisis, are tests of American character. Today, I seek God’s guidance and His blessings on our land and all our people. Knowing that I cannot succeed in this task without the favor of God and the prayers of the people, I ask all Americans to join with me in prayer and thanksgiving.

“Now, therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 21, 2001, a National Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving and call upon the citizens of our nation to gather together in homes and places of worship to pray alone and together and offer thanksgiving to God for all the blessings of this great and good land. On this day, I call upon Americans to recall all that unites us. Let us become a nation rich not only in material wealth but in ideals, rich in justice and compassion and family love and moral courage. I ask Americans to bow our heads in humility before our Heavenly Father, a God who calls us not to judge our neighbors, but to love them, to ask His guidance upon our nation and its leaders in every level of government.

“In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.” *Ibid.*

Prophetic Perspective: Bush’s statement drew strong reactions from both the left wing and right wing of American politics. Of course, the religious right was

ecstatic over Bush’s proclamation, which comes just a short time after the Pope’s call to Sunday worship. However, Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, said, “Those of us who are religious do not need our secular officials to tell us on which day we should be especially thankful. It is not the business of the president to get into the business of declaring days of prayer. He’s not our preacher, he is our president.”

If our current President is truly moral and religious, we can be thankful. However, if he does not embrace the principle of “separation of church and state,” so eloquently expressed by President Jefferson and others, then we have the definite makings of a National Sunday Law. At this point, we have no reason to believe that President Bush would not be supportive of such legislation. With his views on vouchers for Christian schools and federal tax dollars for Christian social services, he has a mindset that definitely meshes church and state together. And if that is not worrisome enough, his ideal Supreme Court justice is Justice Scalia, who is definitely against separation of church and state.



Seventh-day Adventist Church Argues for “Fundamental Fairness”

News Item: “An organization should not be denied the use of public facilities simply because it is a religious group, say lawyers arguing on behalf of the Good News



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Club in a case currently pending in the United States Supreme Court. . . .

“ ‘These religious groups have as much right as other taxpayers to use the facilities,’ says Adventist attorney Nicholas Miller. Miller, who cowrote the amicus brief filed in support of the Good News Club, adds, ‘As long as the religious programs are not sponsored or promoted by the state, and the religious groups do not receive preferred treatment over other groups,’ there is no danger that the government is ‘establishing’ religion, thus contravening the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.” *Adventist Review*, February 2001, 27.

Prophetic Perspective: While the state and state-supported institutions should not endorse religious activities, they equally should not express hostility toward them. In this land of liberty, there are but few cases of expressed hostility. Overwhelmingly, men and women of all religious persuasions are able to print, record, and proclaim their religious beliefs. However, now the pendulum has swung in the direction for the state to endorse religious activities. Not so long from now, the National Sunday Law will be an act of “Fundamental Unfairness.”

False Prophets

News Item: The world is inundated with false prophets, including Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce, midnight psychics, and their false prophecies. Edgar Cayce predicted, “There will be a major financial crash in January of 2000. Vicious ice and electrical storms will rake the United States and Western Europe killing a million or more senior citizens and other innocent people who lost their homes or incomes in the January crash.” Mark A. Finley, *Revelation’s Predictions for a New Millennium*, 7.

Futurist Janice Seymour predicted, “Terrorists will attack New York City with Sarin, the deadliest

nerve gas known to man. So many citizens are already dead (from April 2000) from violence and disease that a death toll is never established.” *Ibid.*

The authors of the best-selling series *Left Behind* have predicted the building of a third temple in Jerusalem. The authors teach that Christians will be secretly raptured out of the world just before antichrist—some singular diabolical person—rules the world.

Then, of course, there are hundreds of apparitions of Mary, with their accompanying future predictions. We must guard the portals to our souls—our eyes and ears—that these ideas do not find entrance into our minds and hearts.



Prophetic Perspective: Yet there is a true prophetic picture. We have the privilege to know the true God who declares “the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.” Isaiah 46:10. This only true God “revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7. For “we have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:19.

As members of God’s remnant church, we would do well to again familiarize ourselves with the true prophetic picture as depicted in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Before times become much more trying and difficult, I would encourage each one of us to read, or reread, *The Great Controversy*. It

indeed is a book for our time. The truths it reveals will guard us against the many false messages that are sweeping our world today.



Mad Cow Fears

News Item: “The United States on Friday followed Canada’s lead in temporarily suspending imports of Brazilian beef gravy, corned beef, gelatins and other processed beef products as a precaution against mad cow disease and its deadly human variation.

“The U.S. ban came less than a week after the Food and Drug Administration quarantined a small Texas feedlot for violating strict rules that forbid using animal feed that contains ground-up bits of cattle.” Reuters, February 2, 2001.

Prophetic Perspective: In our interdependent, global economy it is impossible to know for sure the feeding practices of all meat processing products imported from other nations. As a result, people all around the world are becoming more conscious of the potential health risks from using animal-based products. With the discovery of mad cow diseases, genetically modified foods, and the recent resurgence of foot-and-mouth disease, our world is certainly on the verge of major health complications. While we slaughter hundreds of thousands to millions of infected animals, we anxiously and fearfully await an outbreak that will take its toll on thousands and millions of people. Our only safeguard in the area of health is to follow God’s health laws. ❀

The Judgment

James White

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter 4:17-18.

This text we must regard as prophetic. That it applies to the last period of the church of Christ, seems evident from verses 5-7, 12-13. In the judgment of the race of man, but two great classes are recognized—the righteous and the sinner, or ungodly. Each class has its time of judgment; and, according to the text, the judgment of the house, or church, of God comes first in order.

Both classes will be judged before they are raised from the dead. The investigative judgment of the house, or church, of God will take place before the first resurrection; so will the judgment of the wicked take place during the 1,000 years of Revelation 20, and they will be raised at the close of that period.

It is said of all the just, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" (Revelation 20:6), therefore all their cases are decided before Jesus comes to raise them

from the dead. The judgment of the righteous is while Jesus offers His blood for the blotting out of sins. Immortal saints will reign with Christ 1,000 years in the judgment of the wicked. See Revelation 20:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3. The saints will not only participate in the judgment of the world, but in judging fallen angels. See Jude 1:6.

"Some men's sins [the righteous] are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men [the wicked] they follow after."

1 Timothy 5:24. That is, some men lay open, or confess their sins, and they go to judgment while Jesus' blood can blot them out, and the sins be remembered no more; while sins unconfessed and unrepented of will follow, and will stand against the sinner in that great day of judgment of 1,000 years.

That the investigative judgment of the saints, dead and living, takes place prior to the second coming of Christ seems evident from the testimony of Peter: "Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick [living] and the dead. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according [in like manner] to men in the flesh,

but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Peter 4:5-7.

It appears that the saints are judged while some are living, and others are dead. To place the investigative judgment of the saints after the resurrection of the just, supposes the possibility of a mistake in the resurrection; hence the necessity of an investigation to see if all who were raised were really worthy of the first resurrection. But the fact that *all* who have part in that resurrection are "blessed and holy," shows that decision is passed on all the saints before the second coming of Christ.

The judgment of the house of God is evidently shadowed forth by the events of the tenth-day atonement of the house of Israel. See Leviticus 23:27. That, in a certain sense, was a day of judgment. The high priest wore the breastplate of judgment on which was represented the tribes of Israel. See Exodus 39:8-21. "For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." Leviticus 23:29.

The 2,300 days (see Daniel 8:14) reached to the cleansing of the

Sanctuary, or to the great Day of Atonement in which the sins of all who shall have part in the first resurrection will be blotted out. Those days terminated in 1844. We think the evidence clear, that since that time the judgment of those who died subjects of the grace of God has been going on, while Jesus has been offering His blood for the blotting out of their sins.

The Blotting-Out Time

When are sins blotted out? Is it at the time when they are forgiven?— We think not. We must look to the great [Antitypical] Day of Atonement as the time when Jesus offers His blood for the blotting out of sins. It is at the time of the cleansing of the Sanctuary. Said Peter to the wondering multitude who witnessed the lame man healed, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:19–21.

Here the time for blotting out of sins is placed forward, just prior to the second appearing of Jesus. It is evidently the last great work in the ministry of Christ in the heavenly Sanctuary.

Are Sins Written in Heaven?

We think the Scriptures fully warrant the view that a record of the acts of all accountable men are written in heaven. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and 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; see also Daniel 7:10. “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the

LORD, and that thought upon his name.” Malachi 3:16.

The book of life contains the names of all who become the special subjects of divine favor. See Daniel 12:1; Revelation 3:5; Philippians 4:3. In the other books are recorded sins, also the pardon of sins repented of

transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” Hebrews 9:13–15.

In the great Day of Atonement for the blotting out of the sins of all of every age, the cases of patriarchs and prophets, and sleeping saints of

When are sins blotted out? . . . It is at the time of the cleansing of the Sanctuary.

and forgiven, with those good works necessary to secure the favor of God. This whole account stands, as written during the probation of every subject of special divine favor since the fall of man, till the time of the judgment of the house of God; till Jesus enters the Most Holy [Place] to offer His blood for the blotting out of the forgiven sins of all the just.

Christ Atones for the Whole Israel of God

Christ is the only Saviour offered to the race of man. All who are saved will be saved through Him. All, of every age, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, who shall be redeemed, will be redeemed to God by the blood of Jesus Christ. His blood was shed for all. At the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, He is ready to plead the cause of every repenting sinner, and through Him sinners may find pardon. He also offers His blood in the Most Holy [Place] for the blotting out of the sins of all the just of every age.

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the

all past ages will come up in judgment; the books will be opened, and they will be judged according to the things written in the books. It is thus, at the end of the 1,335 days, (see Daniel 12:13) that

Daniel Stands in His Lot.

The first and second definitions of the word lot, as given by Webster, are, “1. That which in human speech, is called chance, hazard, fortune, but, in strictness of language, is the determination of Providence; as, the land shall be divided by lot. 2. That by which the fate or portion of one is determined; that by which an event is committed to chance, that is, to the determination of Providence; as, to cast lots; to draw lots.”

By reference to the Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance, we find that the Hebrew word from which lot in Daniel 12:13 is translated, is “*goh-rakl*.” This word occurs, and is translated *lot*, seventy-seven times in the Old Testament, besides Daniel 12:13. That the reader may be able to determine the signification of the word, we will give the seventy-seven instances of its use:

Leviticus 16:8. Aaron shall cast *lots* . . .

one *lot* for the LORD, and the other *lot* for the scapegoat. . . .

9. upon which the LORD’s *lot* fell. . . .

10. on which the *lot* fell. . . .

Numbers 26:55. the land shall be divided by *lot*. . . .

56. according to the *lot* shall the. . .

See also Numbers 33:54; 34:13; 36:2-3; Joshua 14:2; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1, 14, 17; 18:6, 8, 10-11; 19:1, 10, 17, 24, 32, 40, 51; 21:4-6, 8, 10, 20, 40; Judges 1:3; 20:9; 1 Chronicles 6:54, 61, 63, 65; 24:5, 7, 31; 25:8-9; 26:13-14; Nehemiah 10:34; 11:1; Esther 3:7; 9:24; Psalms 16:5; 22:18; 125:3; Proverbs 1:14; 16:33; 18:18; Isaiah 17:14; 34:17; 57:6; Jeremiah 12:25; Ezekiel 24:6; Daniel 12:13; Joel 3:3; Obadiah 11; Jonah 1:7; Micah 2:5; Nahum 3:10.

There is another word (*gheh-vel*) which is translated "region," "country," "lot of his inheritance," as in Deuteronomy 3:4, 13-14; 32:9; Joshua 17:5, 14; 19:9, 29.

It will now be seen that Daniel does not stand in the "lot of his inheritance," as it has been expressed, at the end of the 1,335 days, but he stands in his lot in the

[of] the candid and most solemn consideration of all who have a case pending in the court of Heaven, and hope to overcome. In the order of Heaven, we must look for their judgment to follow that of the dead, and to occur near the close of their probation.

It is most reasonable to conclude that there is a special call to the remnant, and a special work to be performed by them, and for them, preparatory to the decisions of the judgment in regard to them, and that their salvation depends upon fully obeying the calls and counsel to them. And we most solemnly believe that this preparatory call and work is brought to view in the testimony to the Laodiceans, and parallel portions of the Word of God.

The judgment call and counsel to the Laodiceans finds them lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot. It finds them in a state where it is

while those who remain careless, disobedient, and lukewarm, will have their names blotted out of the book of life. Life and death are in this judgment call of the dear Saviour. It is life to fully receive it; death to be careless and neglect it. Now is the time to fully understand what it is to

Overcome.

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

The white raiment in this text is the same as that offered by the True Witness. Hence we conclude that the overcoming, which is necessary in order to have the names of the people of God retained in, and not blotted out of, the book of life, consists in obeying the testimony to the Laodiceans.

Dear brethren, perfect [your] faith by works, be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and get the anointing of the Holy Ghost, which will enable you to see sin in its sinfulness, holiness in its beauty, and the path to life as straight and as narrow as it really is, and retain those priceless treasures, for in this you overcome. And your names will be retained in the book of life, and Jesus, in the judgment of the living just, will confess your names before the Father, and your sins will be blotted out.

We feel confident that but very few realize the consecration necessary to stand the judgment. Behold that dying saint. He first gives up the world and all its hopes. How carefully he reviews his past life, and confesses from the heart every wrong act and feeling. He then commits his family to the Lord, and himself he throws upon the mercy of God. O what a struggle! But when this work is done, Jesus smiles; and leaning upon the bosom of his Saviour, the saint breathes his life out sweetly there. His probation is closed, and his case rests till the record of his life is opened, and his case passes in review in the

Those who are zealous and repent of all their sins . . . will have their sins blotted out, while those who remain careless, disobedient, and lukewarm, will have their names blotted out of the book of life.

decisions of the judgment of the righteous dead.

When did those days end? Evidences are conclusive that the 1,335 days ended with the 2,300 [years], with the Midnight Cry in 1844. Then the Angel (see Revelation 10:1-6) swore that time should be no longer. Time here cannot mean duration, as measured in months and years, for 1,000 years are measured after this; but it must refer to prophetic time, which was the burden of the angel's message. As Daniel was to stand in his lot at the end of the days, we must conclude that the judgment of the righteous dead commenced at that time, and has been progressing more than twelve years.¹

When will the cases of the living saints pass in review in the investigative judgment of the house of God? This is a question worthy

necessary for them to be zealous in the work of repentance, that they may find pardon, and obtain that preparation necessary to stand in the judgment. Those who do not fully receive and obey this testimony, but remain lukewarm, Christ will spue out of His mouth, or cast them from His favor and blot their names out of the book of life. The decisive hour is at hand. In this awful hour either sins or names will be blotted out. Those who are zealous and repent of all their sins, buy the gold tried in the fire (true faith), the white raiment (the same as the wedding garment, or white linen, which is the righteousness of Jesus Christ that saints will be clothed with—but one place to buy it—Jesus says, buy of Me), and have their eyes anointed with eyesalve (the anointing of the Holy Ghost), will have their sins blotted out,

judgment. His sins were all repented of, therefore, in the great Day of Atonement, the blood of Jesus Christ can blot them out.

A consecration every way as complete as this will be necessary in order for the names of the living saints to be retained in the book of life, and their sins blotted out. What a struggle to die to this world while in full strength! We feel confident that many will go with the people of God who will fail in their feeble efforts to overcome. But very few realize what a real Bible death to this world is. O church of Christ awake! Arise! The judgment is passing! Very soon will your names either be confessed by Jesus Christ before His Father, or they will be blotted out of the book of life. Consecrate all to God, then you will be prepared to act your part in saving others from ruin. The great work of consecration now required is set forth in the following scriptures:

“Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’s anger.” Zephaniah 2:3.

and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter

Very soon will your names either be confessed by Jesus Christ before His Father, or they will be blotted out of the book of life. Consecrate all to God, then you will be prepared to act your part in saving others from ruin.

“Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God.” Joel 2:12-13.

“Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil,

be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” James 4:6-10.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Revelation 3:19. ✠

References:

¹ This tract was originally published in 1856.



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A Vital Connection

Those who are truly children of God are believers, not doubters and chronic grumblers. They believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. They believe that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. They believe that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Verse 36.

Through all ages and in every nation those that believe that Jesus can and will save them personally from sin, are the elect and chosen of God; they are His peculiar treasure. They obey His call, and come out of the world and separate themselves from every unclean thought and unholy practice. The Lord has graciously opened out to our understanding by the Holy Spirit rich truth, and we should respond to this by corresponding works of piety and devotion, in harmony with the superior privileges and advantages that have been bestowed upon us. The Lord is waiting to be gracious to His people, to give them an increased knowledge of His paternal character, of His goodness, mercy, and love. He waits to show them His glory; and if they follow on to know the Lord, they shall know that His goings forth are prepared as the morning.

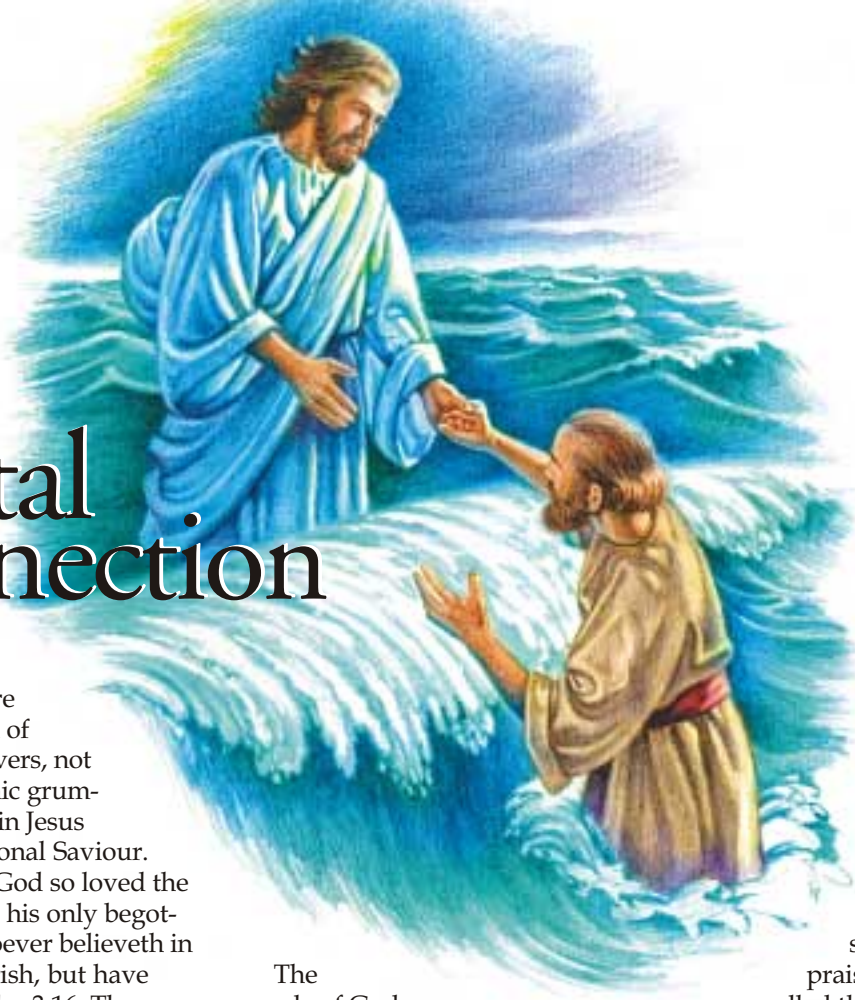
The people of God are not to stand upon common ground, but upon the holy ground of gospel truth. They are to keep step with their Leader, looking continually to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith, marching onward and upward, and having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. It is impossible to tell what might have been the character and condition of the church today, had its members been doing the works of Christ. It is a sad fact that the great proportion of God's professed people have not had faith in Christ as their personal Saviour. If they had believed the promises of God on record for them, they would have been daily receivers of the grace of God, and would have overcome through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. It is the privilege of the children of God to be delivered from the control of the lusts of the flesh, and to preserve their peculiar, heavenly character, which distinguishes them from the lovers of the world. In their moral taste, in their habits and customs, they are separate from the world. Who are the

*Ellen
G. White*

children of God?— They are members of the royal family, and a royal nation, a peculiar people, showing forth the

praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. See 1 Peter 2:9. They do not worship idols, they love God with all the heart, and their neighbors as themselves.

The people of God might be far in advance of what they are now, if they would sincerely and perseveringly connect daily with Christ. They do not press forward, and attain unto the things that are before, because they permit themselves to be attracted and held back through the influence of common, sensual things. The devotion and experience of the professed people of God are not in harmony with the light and privileges that God has given them. They are to be children of the light, children of the day, and yet many who have had exalted privileges fail to manifest corresponding faith and works. Jesus says to them as He said to the city wherein He had done mighty works, and where they failed to appreciate the light and to conform their life to it, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and



Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Matthew 11:21. Many who claim to believe the truth, who have been blessed with great light, who have had great opportunities set before them, have yet come far short of reaching the high and holy standard that they would have reached if they had been doers of the words of Christ; and they have failed to set the example that they should have set before those who have had less experience than themselves in the Christian life, and before those who know not God, or Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

Among the professed children of God, how little patience has been manifested, how many bitter words have been spoken, how much denunciation has been uttered against those not of our faith. Many have looked upon those belonging to other churches as great sinners, when the Lord does not thus regard them. Those who look thus upon the members of other churches, have need to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. Those whom they condemn may have had but little light, few opportunities and privileges. If they had had the light that many of the members of our churches have had, they might have advanced at a far greater rate, and have better represented their faith to the world. Of those who boast of their light, and yet fail to walk in it, Christ says, "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum [Seventh-day Adventists, who have had great light], which art exalted unto heaven [in point of privilege], shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent [in their own estimation], and hast

revealed them unto babes." Matthew 11:22-25.¹

"And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim." Jeremiah 7:13-15.

withholden good things from you. . . . They judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Jeremiah 5:21-25, 28-29.

Shall the Lord be compelled to say, "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me for I will not hear thee?" Jeremiah 7:16. "Therefore the showers have been withholden, and

To the people of God the Testimonies of the Spirit have come, and yet many have not taken heed to reproofs, warnings, and counsels.

The Lord has established among us institutions of great importance, and they are to be managed, not as worldly institutions are managed, but after God's order. They are to be managed with an eye single to His glory, that by all means, perishing souls may be saved. To the people of God the Testimonies of the Spirit have come, and yet many have not taken heed to reproofs, warnings, and counsels.

"Here now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not: fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have

there hath been no latter rain. . . . Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Jeremiah 3:3-4.

Will not those to whom have been committed the treasures of truth, consider the superior advantages of light and privilege that have been purchased for us by the sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary's cross? We are to be judged by the light that has been given us, and we can find no excuse by which to extenuate our course. The Way, the Truth, and the Life has been set before us. Many seek to excuse themselves by saying, "You must not judge me by some weak trait of character, but consider my character as a whole." We always feel deep pain at heart when the sinner seeks to apologize for his sin, to smooth it over, and fails to realize the danger of cherishing one un-Christlike attribute of character. We are to place our will on the side of the Lord's will, and firmly determine that by His grace we will be free from sin. Sin is the transgression of the law, and it is not the magnitude of the action in iniquity that stamps it as sin. Adam and Eve were prohibited from eating of the tree of

good and evil. The test was a slight one, but the act of disobedience to God was the transgression of His law.

The little sins that men think are of so trivial a character that on their account they will not be brought into condemnation, are very offensive in the sight of God. Says one, "You are too severe, a man must be allowed these little defects of character." Let us hear the words of

6:14. Sin is sin, and it is the delusion of Satan to look upon it in any other light than that it is grievous.

We may flatter ourselves that we are free from many things of which others are guilty; but if we have some strong points of character, and but one weak point, there is yet a communion between sin and the soul. The heart is divided in its service, and says, "Some of self and

fault or that, but then I just despise such and such meanness as is manifested by a certain person of my acquaintance." The Lord has not given us a list of graded sins, so that we may reckon some as of little consequence, and say that they will do but little harm, while others are of greater magnitude and will do much harm. A chain is no stronger than is its weakest link. We might pronounce such a chain good on the whole, but if one link is weak, the chain cannot be depended on. The work of overcoming is to be the study of every soul who enters the kingdom of God. That impatient word quivering on your lips must be left unspoken. That thought that your character is not rightly estimated must be put from you; for it weakens your influence, and works out the sure result, making you of light estimation in the minds of others. You should overcome the idea that you are a martyr, and lay claim to the promise of Christ, who says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12:9. ❀

Review and Herald, August 1, 1893.

Note:
¹ Brackets in original.

We may flatter ourselves that we are free from many things of which others are guilty; but if we have some strong points of character, and but one weak point, there is yet a communion between sin and the soul.

Christ. He says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10. People venture to commit sins that are grievous in the sight of God, and think that they are not to be called to task for them, because they say they are due to nervousness, to a peculiar temperament; but this is simply soothing the conscience, and crying, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Jeremiah

some of thee." The child of God must search out the sin which he has petted and indulged himself in, and permit God to cut it out of his heart. He must overcome that one sin; for it is not a trifling matter in the sight of God.

One says, "I am not the least jealous, but then I do get provoked and say mean things, although I am always sorry after giving way to temper." Another says, "I have this

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RS, California

I found a copy of *Our Firm Foundation*, entitled "The Three Angels' Messages" [the special issue published in 2000] at the post office. I read it. It was wonderful! Unfortunately the magazine got lost in the holiday mess. So I searched the Web, remembering that it came from Eatonville, Washington. Well, I found you, and probably violated some copyright laws printing the January 2001 edition on my home printer. The magazine is refreshing and actually gives information regarding relevant issues that spoke to my heart.

Who is Ellen G. White? That article was truly inspired!

I thank whoever left the magazine—they really missed out, though.

Thank you again for your timely message of hope and love.

LR, California

From Overseas

I have received several issues of the magazine *Our Firm Foundation* from my fellow brother and I really enjoyed the spiritual literature from the books. They are an eye-opener and a very good spiritual upliftment, knowing there are also true worshipers somewhere in this universe that are dedicated to finishing the work of the gospel.

I am requesting if I could become a subscriber. If you have any literature also, please could you send me, as I am also ready and willing to spread the gospel, as this is my commission as a child of God.

Keep up the good work and may God continue to bless you.

CR, Zimbabwe

Thank you for sending me some literature. May the Lord bless you and lead you in all your doings. I am highly appreciative and grateful for your gift. It is my prayer that the good Lord will replace all you have spent on me. Thank you, thank you very much, thank you in Jesus name. In fact, your books are very good and they are also useful to my ministry.

Please, I am writing this letter to request for more books for our evangelistic crusades, which are going to be held early next year in our locality.

We hope by the grace of the Lord you are going to send some to us. Thank you for accepting to send some to us.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

AM, Ghana

Greetings in the beloved name of the Lord. I wish you all a happy publication year and good health.

I received your parcel last month and all the tracts were rightly distributed.

May the rich God guide and bless you. Indeed, we have nothing to fear for the future, except we forget how the Lord has led us in the past.

We are wishing you all at Hope God's continued guidance and protection. We know our enemies are by our side to hinder the work, but Jesus has promised to be with us to the end.

EK, Zambia

Warm greetings from Sudan. I'm a soul-winner in Sudan. And I would like to be assisted with some books from your wonderful organization if you have books that will nurture fellow believers, to be a witness for our Lord to others, and keep alive and alight the flame (hope) of the second coming of Jesus. It would be a great help to spread the gospel in this part of the world. We need to equip our young people with materials that will put them on fire for the gospel.

May the Lord bless you as you enrich others with your services.

JT, Sudan

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and also the Amen, the most wonderful and gracious Saviour.

Dear brethren, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you as well as the Hope International staff, for providing me with Spirit of Prophecy books and booklets. Thank you very, very much, dear brethren, for supplying such valuable items. It is a matter of importance for church members to study thoroughly the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books, so as to be acquainted with the basic doctrines and foundation of God's remnant church—especially when strange doctrines were and are being incorporated into the doctrines of Christ.

I know, because I spent three years in the local Adventist college studying theology. After a while I came to the realization (with the Comforter's prompting) that specific subjects taught in our colleges were accepted (or invited) from apostate Christianity. I had a troubled conscience for such a long time, although I was preaching the message to others, I found that I lacked the quality of the life of Christ that we as believers should put on.

I worked for a while in God's church, but soon left because of that bothered conscience. I really had a wilderness experience because of my reckless troubled heart. Just lately, I started to have a clean view on what constitutes God's spirituality according to the gospel of Christ.

Brethren, thank you for your beautiful magazine, *Our Firm Foundation*. Thanks for standing for the truth, because it's absolutely right and makes sense. Keep up the good work, lift up Jesus where He really belongs because most fellow brethren in God's remnant church are being overwhelmed by the Laodicean spirit and are still groping blindly within the four walls of our local churches.

The third angel's message is the last message for the beginning of the end. It is so profound in its simplicity and powerful in its approach that it requires instruments with simple lifestyles and tons of moral courage. Yes, what God really needs among His chosen people are those who have the spiritual quality to fight manfully the spiritual battle in these last days. So let's put aside our so-called "know it all without the power thereof" attitude and do the job right! Let's just do it!

OV, Fiji Island



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