



Our Firm Foundation

The Power of the Truth

Volume 18, Number 9

September 2003

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary



In God's Hands

You are in God's hands. How wonderful to know that if you have surrendered your will to God each day, you are then in His hands. In the Scriptures, there is manifold evidence of God's protection and love for His saints. "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." Deuteronomy 33:3.

David—King Saul and the many enemies of God imperiled David's life, but he trusted in God. He wrote, "My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me." Psalm 31:10–15.

Job—The illustration of Job is a story of God's protection and love. Satan had to get permission from God to attack Job. The world is full of things that can hurt and harm God's people, but nothing can harm God's people without God's permission. Satan complained that Job was sheltered by the hand of the Almighty God: "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and

about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" Job 1:10.

The Lord responded, "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." Job 2:6. God had limited what Satan could do. Let us remember, "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand."

Joseph—Let us look at the history of this seventeen-year-old young man. His dreams angered his brothers. Read carefully his dynamic story recorded in Genesis, chapters 37–50. The favored son of a great man of God, Joseph is cast into a pit and sold into slavery in the house of Potiphar for ten years and spends three years in Pharaoh's prison. Joseph then responds to the king's crisis, and by God's grace, interprets the king's dream. Face-to-face with Pharaoh, he becomes the governor of Egypt.

Then comes the emotional moment of his ten brothers bowing before him. Yes, he is governor—the second in command of the mightiest nation in the world. Yet, even as governor, he would not venture to go home to his father's house unless God, the great Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, would give His permission. What a lesson we have in the life of Joseph! It is one of the great dramas of the great controversy.

David, Job, Joseph, and many others were surrounded by a hedge—a divinely erected barrier. Satan cannot force the conscience. The law of God, the Ten Commandments, is the hedge, but we must be like David, Job, and Joseph, willing to be made willing to obey—never running ahead of God, and never lagging behind, al-

ways in step with the great Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

God speaks to us through Inspiration:

"In obedience to God's law, man is surrounded as with a hedge and kept from the evil. He who breaks down this divinely erected barrier at one point has destroyed its power to protect him; for he has opened a way by which the enemy can enter to waste and ruin.

"By venturing to disregard the will of God upon one point, our first parents opened the floodgates of woe upon the world. And every individual who follows their example will reap a similar result. The love of God underlies every precept of His law, and he who departs from the commandment is working his own unhappiness and ruin." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 52.

I hope you will read the outstanding article in this issue entitled "A Life in Which Nothing Goes Wrong." It is taken from one of Carlyle B. Haynes' books on the life of Joseph. Truly, if we stay within the hedge, we can claim by faith that nothing will go wrong in our life, for "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28.

Only those who live by the power of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of God offering loving obedience to the sacred law, can have the protection of the law of God—His mighty hedge. They are in the hands of the living God. Anything that happens in their daily walk, then, is God's will. It is my prayer that this will be your experience and mine. ✽



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

—Editors

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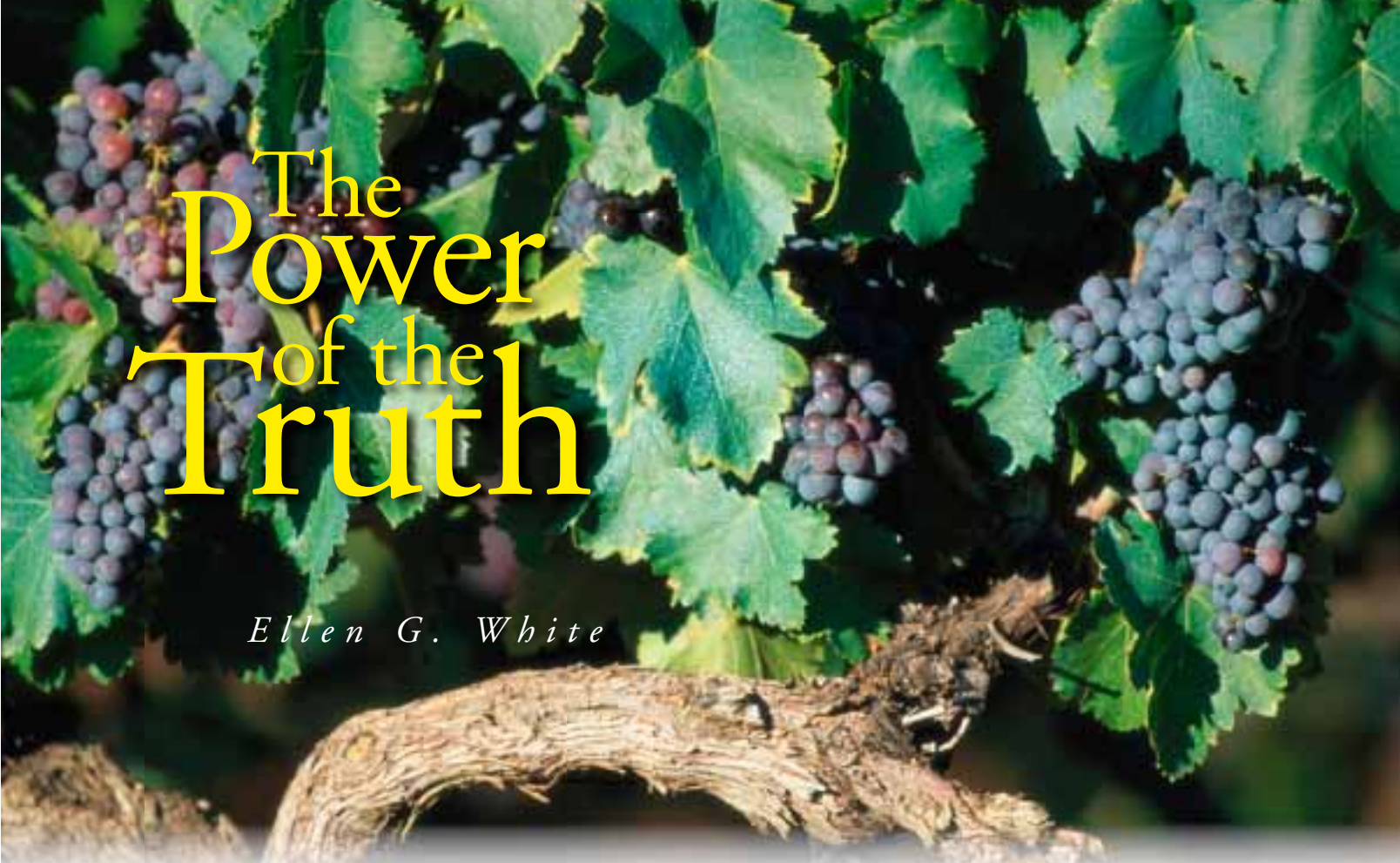
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The Power of the Truth

Ellen G. White

“**S**anctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” John 17:17–19.

This prayer of the world’s Redeemer comprehends much more than has been thought, and I wish that the truths here taught might be impressed upon all our hearts. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” Every one of us who professes to believe in Christ is embraced in this prayer, and has a responsibility which it is impossible to throw off. We are required to be sanctified, not simply that we may be benefited personally, but that we may help others.

In these days it is difficult for the truth to find access to the human heart. You know that on one occa-

sion when Jesus entered into the temple, He found there “those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting.” John 2:14. Thus, the sacred courts of the Lord’s house were converted into a place of merchandise, where greed and avarice flourished. As the eye of Jesus swept over the scene of busy traffic, divinity flashed through His humanity. He “cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” Matthew 21:12–13. The traffic suddenly stopped, and the throng of buyers and sellers fled as though a company of armed men were pursuing them. With bated breath the priests and rulers looked upon Him who was clothed with such majesty and power; and, as though a flash of light from Heaven had revealed the truth to their

beclouded minds, the conviction forced itself upon them that this was no common man.

As Christ found it difficult to obtain access to the temple courts because they were lumbered with things that should never have been there, so is the human heart closed against the truth because it is lumbered with the cares and burdens of this world. It has received the worldly mold. The prince of the powers of darkness is playing the game of life for the soul. He is working with every device that he can invent, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, to separate man from God. The lust of the flesh, the pride of life, the vanities of the world, have taken possession of the soul-temple, and no room is left for Jesus. But when the heart is once brought under the power of the truth, even its secret recesses feel the renewing and transforming influence. To those who have lumbered the soul-temple with worldly cares, and desecrated it

with buyers and sellers, we would say, Take these things hence, and let the truth have possession of the soul. Jesus stands knocking at your heart, pleading, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:20. Will we let the Lord of glory enter? Will we make room for the truth of heavenly origin?

Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6. If you will make room for Jesus, and cleanse the soul from the defilement of sin, you may enjoy perfect peace with God. But some will ask, How am I to do this?—By an entire surrender of your will and your way to God. The peace of God will not rule in your hearts while you retain your worldly ambitions and indulgences. The passions that have held possession of the soul must be removed. When we profess the truth, it is our privilege and duty to show to the world that it has had a transforming power upon the life and character.

Why is it so hard for many to walk uprightly before God?—It is because they are trying to serve two masters, a thing which the Saviour declares no man can do. If they would give themselves to Jesus, He would take possession of the soul, and every wrong desire, every false ambition, every evil purpose, would be brought into subjection to the will of God. This is the sanctification that Christ meant when He said, "I sanctify myself." This is the sanctification that He desired for His disciples when He prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth." We profess to be sons and daughters of the Lord; the chosen ones of Christ, of whom He says, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, ever as I am not of the world." John 17:14. What right have we to let the things of the world take possession of the heart and engross our ener-

gies? What right have we to make the heart a highway for the world's travel, or to imitate its customs and practices? We cannot serve God and mammon. We must come out from the world, and be separate. Its fashions are not to control us; its principles are not to be our principles.

If the worldly element is allowed to take possession of the heart, things that are not approved of God will seem right, and the religious life will be mixed with error. The perceptions will not be clear and distinct to understand the word and will of the Lord. There is danger of pursuing this course of disobedience until the wrong is gilded over, conscience is blunted, and the self-deceived one believes

this in me because it is so inconvenient, so contrary to the custom of society. And then I do not think it really makes any difference what day I observe, because I am sanctified; you know that makes every difference. But stick to your faith, for you have the right of it." Here is a man who claims to be sanctified while living in disobedience to the Word of God; but what is there that sanctifies outside of the truth?

Said Christ: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that

When the truth commences the work of purifying the soul-temple, the conflict between good and evil begins in earnest.

himself on the highway of holiness when he is on the downward road to perdition.

The work of the overcomer is a close and trying work. We have individually to fight the good fight of faith, and war against the powers of darkness; for when the truth commences the work of purifying the soul-temple, the conflict between good and evil begins in earnest.

A minister who is professedly preaching the gospel, in conversation with a sister learned that she was conscientiously keeping the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. "Well," said he, "you are right so far as the argument is concerned. Saturday is the true day to keep; the Bible is clear on that point. But," he added, "I do not keep it, because it would create confusion. The Lord will overlook

heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:24–27. Two classes are here represented—those who are sanctified through the truth, and the many who profess to be sanctified while knowingly breaking the law of God. The true foundation is the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Men may erect a standard of righteousness of their own aside from that presented in the Word of God; but their hope, like the house built upon the sand, will surely fall.

We are to listen to what God says, and be obedient to His Word. It is not long sermons or prayers, it

is not the things which we say, but it is the things we do, the characters we form, that makes us acceptable to God. The truth should influence our daily life, and then when we associate together the tongue will not run upon unimportant, frivolous things.

“Ye are the light of the world,” says Christ. Matthew 5:14. Therefore, “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Verse 16. In the death of Christ the priceless treasures of Heaven were poured out to humanity. Can we keep such precious riches to ourselves? Oh! We should lift up the risen Saviour before the people, and tell them what a dear

17–18. Says the True Witness, “I know thy works.” Revelation 3:14–15. Then let us be careful that we are not halfway Christians. We can be brought into perfect harmony with God and His truth; but there is much for us to resist. We should search our Bibles, and learn what the Scriptures say in relation to our duty.

Said Christ: “Take ye heed, watch and pray . . . for the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.” Mark 13:33–34. Not one of us is excused from the duties here enjoined. We are to watch every avenue of the soul, lest Satan come in and dese-

discerns every thought of vanity, every attempt to extol and glorify self. If the time that is wasted in vain attempts to make the outward appearance attractive, were devoted to the study of the Bible, to earnest prayer for the grace of Christ, the meek and quiet spirit which is the heavenly adorning of the soul, and will never perish, how easy, how pleasant, would the service of Christ become. The promise would be fulfilled, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Ezekiel 36:26.

There is a constant warring of the flesh against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. The pollutions cherished in the soul war against the pure, sanctifying truth. Some have advanced the idea that if we are once in grace, we are always in grace. But our work is to overcome every day. Temptations press upon every hand; do we resist them, and come off victor in the name of Christ?

When we become children of God, our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life, and they remain there until the time of the investigative judgment. Then the name of every individual will be called, and his record examined by Him who declares, “I know thy works.” If in that day it shall appear that all our wicked deeds have not been fully repented of, our names will be blotted from the book of life, and our sins will stand against us. If the professed believer becomes self-confident, if in word or spirit he breaks the least precept of God’s holy law, he misrepresents Jesus, and in the judgment the awful words will be spoken, “Blot out his name from the book of life; he is a worker of iniquity.” See Revelation 3:5. But the Father pities the self-distrustful, God-fearing soul, harassed though he may be with doubts and temptations. Jesus pleads for him, and confesses his name before the Father and His holy angels.

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The reason why there is not more vitality and power in the church is that we do not work and watch as we should. We should stand as faithful sentinels at the post of duty.

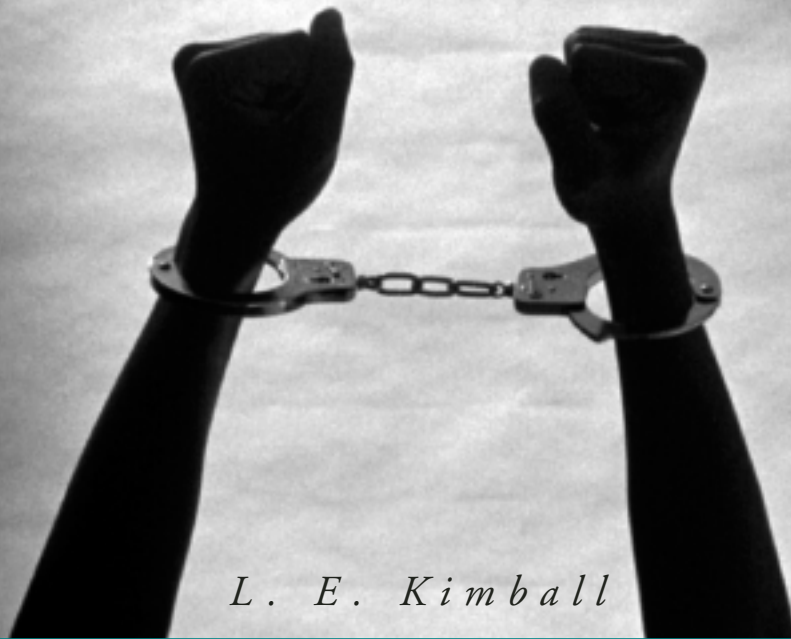
Redeemer we have found. We are His representatives; let us walk worthy of our calling. The reason why we have no greater influence to win souls to Christ is that we are not doers of the Word. When we do the works of Christ, when the truth becomes a living principle in the soul, we shall have power with God and men. Others will take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him, and our very presence will be an influence for good. We shall not dare to sin, lest others follow our example of folly.

“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:

crate the temple of the heart, which should be wholly consecrated to God. We are to watch lest passion take possession of the soul, to watch lest selfish thoughts are cherished. The reason why there is not more vitality and power in the church is that we do not work and watch as we should. We should stand as faithful sentinels at the post of duty. I pray that the grace of Christ may come into our hearts, and that we may be ever watching for opportunities to do good.

One who is truly converted will find no satisfaction in devoting God-given probationary time to the preparation of apparel, the outward adorning of the body. To such, the pride of life, the vanities and follies of the world will be a very inferior matter. They will ever feel, I am in the presence of God; his eye

Conversion



L . E . K i m b a l l

We often speak of the time when we were converted. This is all well and proper; but the fact remains that few understand the nature and real results of conversion.

It is commonly understood to be a turning away from the world and the service of self, to serve God; and we mark the definite time of our conversion, and look back upon it as a bygone crisis of our life. However, who is converted, and who is not? As there is a crucial point in this, which it is vastly important to understand, we must consider the subject with much carefulness.

The truth of God finds us hurried up in self-serving. The world, the flesh, pleasures, honors, wealth, wholly silence the voice of God in the soul. Then, by the power of the Spirit of God and the application of His truth to the conscience, by a revelation of His love toward us, and the salvation He offers, desires come into the soul, and become strong and deep to take hold upon

the exceeding great and precious promises, and enjoy the gift of God. We take the initiatory steps, and begin to run the Christian race. This radical break in our life we call conversion.

of Satan, but simply tells us that His grace is sufficient to save, and we believe. It is quite safe to say that if one realized how much hewing he must undergo, and how radically his life and character must be

If you refuse to walk so far as the light has shone, how much better are you than when you refused to take the first step? — Not a whit, and you need converting over again.

Now, let us note our later experiences. We are far from God. This we should all remember. He tells us that His thoughts and ways are high as the heaven above our ways, but exhorts us henceforth to walk in His ways and after His thoughts.

He does not tell us how sick we are, how utterly perverted and devilish we have become in the service

changed, how much of self-denial he must learn and practice, he would be almost paralyzed at the thought of it. In mercy God hides the view, and begins to lead us step-by-step to Himself. His judgments are “as the light that goeth forth.” Hosea 6:5. His Word is “a lamp to our feet.” See Psalm 119:105. Thus as the light shines, His ways are

made manifest more and more. For whatsoever maketh manifest God's ways, is light; and this is what it is to walk in the light. Thus, step-by-step He draws us on toward the prize of the high calling, and step-by-step He makes the darkness light before us. As His judgments, which are as the light, come to us, step-by-step, from faith-to-faith His righteousness is made known to us.

As line upon line His truth is made manifest to us, and step after step we come nearer to God, radical changes and breaking off from old ways is required at the successive steps as at the first. Why does he who professes to know Christ, sometimes tarry for months and years without additional light or an increase of faith, without any particular joy in the Lord? Is the Lord dilatory in giving light?—Oh, no. What then?—Ah, you have not walked up so far as the light has already shone. You have not

attained the prize nor the end of Christianity; that light reveals sin, and you compromise with it. If you refuse to walk so far as the light has shone, how much better are you than when you refused to take the first step?—Not a whit, and you need converting over again. A refusal to take the twentieth or hundredth step is just as much rebellion as a refusal to take the first.

When no compromise with sin is made, when whatever causes to offend is cut of, and cast from you, though it be so great a sacrifice as your right hand or eye, then your life is a continual triumph in God. The first victory you won when you took the first step, caused rejoicing; the second victory, when you took the second step, caused additional rejoicing; and as you come nearer to the Lord, your light becomes brighter and brighter, your rejoicing more and more. Thus we come to know God aright, and the fullness

of His salvation. Now, as the Lord leads on step-by-step, "here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10), if we step so fast as the Lord reveals, no sin can attach to us for what is yet unrevealed; but when we know to do good and do it not, it is then grievous sin, and he that sinneth needs converting.

How many among Seventh-day Adventists need converting! Our life should be a perpetual round of conversion. Then the joy and peace of the first love will ever thrill and fill the soul. You who loiter and linger with eyes upon houses and lands and the world, come to God once again, and be converted, and get your eyes upon the mark, and ever keep them there; for your lukewarmness is rebellion, and your sin in refusing to follow on to know the Lord, will hold from you all the benefits and joys of Christ. ✠

Review and Herald, May 9, 1893.

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He who is to be our judge knows our works. He understands every temptation and trial, and I am glad of it. He knows the circumstances that surround every soul. He knows our weaknesses, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. "If any man sin," says John, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. Oh, how precious is the name of Jesus, and how precious every name that He confesses before the Father! When our gracious Redeemer says of the poor penitent, "He is mine; I have graven his name on the palms of my hands," the answer comes, "I will not blot his name from the book of life, but his sins shall be remembered against him no more." See Isaiah 49:16; Revelation 3:5.

The promise is, "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." Isaiah 27:

5. There is power in the blood of Christ to remove sin. Poor, trembling sinner, today you are the prisoner of hope. Jesus lives; and because He lives, you may live also.

Said the angel of God to John, as he beheld the multitudes of the redeemed gathered about the throne: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." Revelation 7:14–15. Through the blood of the Lamb, it is the privilege of every one of us to make our life a glorious victory. We shall have trials and difficulties to meet, but if we sanctify ourselves by obedience to the truth, the God of Israel will be our strength. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning." Hosea 6:3. The Lord wants to give power to His people. He wants them to

rejoice in the God of their salvation. He wants them to be conformed to His image, that when He comes, He may receive them to Himself. If we lay hold upon the arm of Infinite Power, it will sustain us through every conflict and discouragement of life, and will finally place a crown of glory upon our heads, and bring us to share the eternal reward of the righteous.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments," says the Saviour, "that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." Revelation 21:24. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth . . . but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Verse 27. ✠

Signs of the Times, August 6, 1885.

The Faith of the Patriarchs

Bill Humeniuk

What lessons can we learn from the lives of the patriarchs today? There is no way we can study all about them in detail in this article, but as we touch on the highlights, their lives are quite a revelation to us in the twenty-first century, particularly to the final generation before the coming of the Lord.

Abraham

Genesis 12 records that God asked Abraham to leave Ur and travel to a land that God promised to show him. Abraham had no idea where he was going, he had never been to this country, nevertheless, he departed “as the Lord had spoken.” Verse 4. There was no delay, no questions—just simple faith in action. After arriving in Canaan, the land of promise, he encountered a grievous famine. Abraham never complained, “Wait a minute Lord! You led me to Canaan, and now this famine?” Notice, there is silence in Scripture. If Abraham had questioned God it would have been recorded, but he

trusted in the Lord who knew the end from the beginning.

Later, in chapter 22, we see Abraham put to the test again. It was a fiery trial that could only be endured with the strength of the Lord. In verse 2 God spoke to him. “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering.” Obediently Abraham arose early in the morning to perform this stupendous task. Again, we see no questions, no delays, no excuses, but implicit, instant *obedience*. After a harrowing three-day journey, Abraham caught a glimpse of Mount Moriah. With burdened steps and a heavy heart, he bade his servants, “Abide ye here,” while we go and worship, “and come again to you.” Verse 5. It was God alone who gave Abraham such amazing faith and strength during this hour of crisis. Abraham believed that *they* would return. He believed that God was able to raise Isaac up from the dead: “By faith Abraham, when

he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.” Hebrews 11:17–19.

Abraham truly lived out the words of Christ: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Luke 9:23. He took up his cross and followed the Lamb of God. Are you willing to do that? Do you love this world more than God? Are there idols in your life? Those idols could be self, family members, possessions, or your job. Whatever they are, they will keep you from making a full commitment to “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” Revelation 14:4.

Abraham loved his son Isaac, but love for his son did not transcend his love for God. When Isaac inquired, “Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” it tore into the depths of Abraham’s heart, but his answer was, “God will provide himself a lamb.” Genesis 22:7–8. Finally, the time came for Abraham to reveal God’s plan to Isaac. With a broken heart, he unfolded to his son that he was the sacrifice. Father and son knew that Isaac’s birth was miraculous. Isaac had heard the story of his long-delayed birth over and over again. He knew it was a complete miracle since his mother, Sarah, was beyond the years of reproduction. See Genesis 18:11–14.

As he gazed at his father standing before him, bent and stricken from his ordeal, it must have struck Isaac how tremendous his father’s faith was. Then and there, Isaac made his decision to willingly submit to the Lord and believe with Abraham that he would be raised from the dead. What a father-son relationship of trust! Isaac was around twenty years of age, and he could have easily overpowered

Abraham and escaped; instead, he yielded to the Spirit of God. What a lesson of trust for the people of God in the twenty-first century!

Turbulent times are ahead of us. How will our faith be when our food and security is cut off, when we are hunted down, thrown into prison, and put to death? Are we building our trust in God today? Are we leaning on Him each day, step by step?

It does not happen overnight. It did not happen overnight with Abraham either. Isaac followed in

God never leaves one stone unturned to save His people from destruction! Heaven reaches down to earth to assist and to strengthen the wayward, discouraged, and fallen children of God. As Jacob grasped God's precious promises, he became a new creature in Christ. In verse 15 God states, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places." Jacob's experience with God was renewed at that moment.

Laban's twenty-year trickery of servitude only helped to strengthen Jacob's faith in God all the more.

Each man was faithful and endured his trials. They each knew their God experientially, and God knew them. He was their God, and they were His people.

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34; see also Hebrews 8:10-12.

What an experience to know the Lord! "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3.

We, the final generation *must know* our God.

Our experience and walk with God must be so deep and profound that His glory will be revealed in our character. Awe and reverence—the fear of the Lord—will grip our hearts to such a degree that we will experience what it really means to *worship* the eternal God. The Father's name will be written on our foreheads. See Revelation 14:1. Then, our names will be forever changed to new names. See Revelation 2:17. We will be in Christ, and Christ will be in us, the hope of glory. See Colossians 1:27. Then we will experience true worship. "For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods."

Yes, we will come up against trials and persecutions unlimited, but like Jacob, we must resolve to never let go until God blesses us.

his father's footsteps at an early age, because he *saw* that experience in his father.

Jacob

Then came Jacob. As he listened to the stories of his father Isaac, and his grandfather Abraham, he too decided to follow the faith of his fathers. However, one day he let his guard down, and permitted self to rise, and deceitfully wrested Esau's blessing and birthright. See Genesis 27:21-29. Jacob then made a hasty retreat because of Esau's extreme anger.

Then came the dream where Jacob saw shining angels ascending and descending upon a ladder connected between heaven and earth. This overwhelming dream had such an impact on Jacob that he named the place, "the gate of heaven." See Genesis 28:17. Even after what Jacob had done, God gave him this dream to assure him that He was still with him. His supreme compassion, graciousness, goodness, and mercy encompassed the fallen race—including Jacob.

His nightlong struggle with the Angel (Christ) in the wilderness changed his character, and he was given a new name—Israel—because he *endured to the end*.

What a marvelous God we serve! He is waiting for His people to have that encounter with Him. Heaven bends down today with its ladder of angels to assist us step-by-step to climb up to a higher and holier state in our religious life. See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 717. If we do not experience it now, we will *never* make it during Jacob's time of trouble when we, too, will experience that midnight encounter. Yes, we will come up against trials and persecutions unlimited, but like Jacob, we must resolve to never let go until God blesses us. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:13.

When Jesus was on earth, He stated, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Matthew 22:32; see also Exodus 3:6, 15. Why did God use these names throughout Scripture?

Psalm 95:3. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker." Verse 6. "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." Psalm 96:9. "Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy." Psalm 99:3. "Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy." Verse 5. "Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy." Verse 9. This was the experience of the patriarchs, and it must be ours.

Joseph

We come now to the life of Joseph. As he heard the stories of his great-grandfather Abraham, grandfather Isaac, and his father Jacob, what an impression it made upon his mind and character! This young man, chosen by God, clung to Him throughout his life of trials. Joseph had a special bond with his father Jacob. He listened to his experiences, and he observed his life. When cast into the pit, when sold as a slave, and then re-sold as a slave to Potiphar, he remained as true as the needle to the pole. He was faithful, unswerving, and trusting in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He could have escaped, as thoughts of home raced through his mind. He remembered those dreams that he had, and which he had related to his family. He realized that there must be a plan in the heart of God, and therefore decided to wait upon the Lord. Though friendless and alone, he felt *God's presence*. Read Genesis, chapters 37 and 39.

When tempted by Potiphar's wife "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," Joseph refused. See Hebrews 11:25. He said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Genesis 39:9. He was imprisoned for about three years because of his loyalty to God and for something he did not do. Even here, the Holy Spirit in that still, small voice reminded him of the experiences of Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob, and of their loyalty to God even amidst adversity and trials. As he thought of his forefathers, he resolved to put aside thoughts of self-pity and complaint, despite the fact that he was being unjustly treated. He could have murmured, "Why me, Lord? What did I do? How can you do this to me? I have been loyal to you." Oh, how Satan rejoices in self-pity!

How about us as youth, middle-aged, or senior? Do you complain of your difficulties, or do you wait on the Lord, trusting in His leading that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28.

As Joseph contemplated all his experiences and trials as a teenager

God is our rock, our salvation, our defense, and we shall *not be moved*. Then, as we *trust Him*, and our minds contemplate God's presence and assurance, we have perfect peace, and then *everlasting strength* is ours. See Psalm 62:1-2; Isaiah 26:3-4. Joseph and his forefathers experienced it; so can we. May we train our minds to stay single to God, as we too, will approach crises in our lives, especially during the time of trouble.

Joseph's life was such a witness of perfect peace and trust in the Lord, that it impressed the heart of the prison-keeper, and he committed to Joseph the keeping of all the prisoners. Genesis 39:21-23.

To what do our lives witness? Do we witness to complaining,

What will God provide? — He will provide the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world . . . the Lamb who gives power and victory over sin; the Lamb who strengthens to endure unto the end.

and young adult, he remembered the dreams that God had given him, and the destiny that God had for him. He remembered the experiences of his forefathers, and their victories over the flesh, the world, and sin. He determined in his heart to do God's will. He waited on the Lord "for the Lord will provide."

What will God provide?—He will provide the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world; the Lamb who saves; the Lamb who gives power and victory over sin; the Lamb who strengthens to endure unto the end. Dear friends, "the Lord will provide." "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." Psalm 27:14. (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

depression, discouragement, fault-finding, and accusations, or do we, like Joseph, rise above it all, trusting and waiting and abiding fully in the Lord? Joseph's life depicted what it means to "trust in the LORD, and do good." Psalm 37:3. He knew what it meant to "rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him." Verse 7.

Sin is a deception. It destroys, and break's lives—our own, our families, those around us, and whole nations. Joseph cleansed his way by taking heed to God's Word, and hiding it in his heart that he might not sin against God. See Psalm 119:9-11. Joseph, for his integrity, trust, loyalty, and faithfulness, was elevated from the obscurity of the dungeon, to the highest position in Egypt at 30 years of age.

[continued on page 16...](#)

A Life In Which Nothing Goes Wrong

Carlyle B. Haynes

It took 13 years of Joseph's life, from the age of 17 to that of 30, to prepare him for the great place which God was shaping him for. They were hard years. They must have been filled with much searching of soul. The years from the time Joseph was sold as a slave to the time when Pharaoh sent for him were years of the most intense trial and testing.

However, they did not hurt him. While everything seemed to go wrong and every manifestation of integrity and faithfulness on his part was followed immediately by what appeared to be another setback, nevertheless through it all his character was being shaped and molded and his life was being prepared for a position of enormous responsibility that God had in mind for him.

A writer tells the story of the rose of Jericho, how it flourishes in a lack of all things wherein other plants delight. It grows even in the hot desert in rocky crevices by the dusty wayside. It grows in rubbish heaps. When the fierce sirocco¹ carries it away from its place and flings it far out upon the ocean, even there, driven as it is by storms and tossed by salt waves, it continues to live and grow.

So, it is the purpose of God that His children should grow in any and all circumstances wherever they may be cast, whether in

sorrow or hardship, misfortune or suffering. There is a deathless life in the Christian which makes him unconquerable as he walks in God's way. Christ is with him. Christ's life is in him. Nothing need ever crush him as he holds his confidence "that all things work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28.

This conviction of a life plan in which "our times are in God's hand" (see Psalm 31:15), that He is going before, and that everything which touches us is allowed by Him for some specific purpose, will enable the Christian to live near the heart of Christ. Then the world's power cannot hurt him, and the world's darkness will not dim the soul's light.

The Disciplines of Life

No, those 13 years did not hurt Joseph because he believed that God in His guidance and providence was leading. Otherwise, those years would have crushed him utterly.

There are little flowers that grow under the snow in the coldest winter, keeping sweet and beautiful beneath the deepest drifts. They come out in the spring days when the snows melt, unhurt and as lovely and fragrant as if they had been sheltered in a hothouse.

So the life of Joseph remained gentle, beautiful, calm, and sweet

under the terrible trials of those 13 years of wrong, cruelty, and inhumanity, all of which came to him because of his brothers.

Turning our eyes upon our own experience for a moment, consider how difficult it seems for us to keep sweet under little imaginary slights, common frictions, microscopic hurts, and injustices of fairly easy conditions. We grow morbid, moody, and sour if some friend omits some trifling courtesy. Many of us take offense easily. One of the things which curse many Christian's lives is sensitiveness. Someone has defined sensitiveness as "selfishness set on a hair trigger."

What feeble, futile, childish lives we Christians often live when we allow circumstances to control. We are affected by every change of social temperatures, by every variation of experience. Our spirits run up and down like the mercury in a thermometer with every fluctuation of the atmosphere. That is not living!

The Sustaining Grace of God

Christ has made it possible for His followers to have His life every day. This will make them superior to all circumstances and all conditions, as well as to all unkind and unjust treatment. Morbidity is sickly living. Moodiness is sour living. Sensitiveness is miserable

living. Discouragement is a denial of God and of His providential care. Christians can be strong in the grace of Christ. They can be unconquerable through Him that loved them. They can put misfortune, adversities, personal injuries, disappointment, sufferings, and trials underfoot and triumph over them. Joseph did this by the sustaining grace of God.

What was the end of those 13 years of training and discipline?

Something went wrong one day in the big world above Joseph's prison. There was trouble in Pharaoh's palace. Two important officials had been careless. They were hurried off to jail and there Joseph interpreted their dreams. One was executed; the other was restored to his place, promising to remember Joseph.

However, he did not remember him, and Joseph remained in prison. But as a direct result of that trouble in Pharaoh's palace, Joseph's time did come.

The account of it reads like a romance. In the morning Joseph was in prison, having been there three years. He knew of nothing which gave him any hope of release. In the evening he was wearing the king's ring and was arrayed in royal garments. There was a gold chain about his neck, and he was honored next to the king himself.

The Chief Glory of Life

So in the case of His followers, God is getting them ready, preparing them for some task, some service, which it will be the chief glory of their lives to have accomplished. But they often defeat His purpose by whining, complaining, rebelling, and grumbling. The lines of Sarah K. Bolton are worth remembering:

"I like the man who faces
what he must
With step triumphant
and a heart of cheer;
Who fights the daily battle
without fear;

Sees his hopes fail,
yet keeps unfaltering trust
That God is God;
that, somehow, true and just,
His plans work out for mortals;
not a tear
Is shed when fortune,
which the world hold dear,
Falls from his grasp.
Better, with love, a crust,
Than living in dishonor;
envies not
Nor loses faith in man;
but does his best,
Nor even murmurs
at his humble lot,

ing brought about are manifested most strikingly in his attitude of forgiveness toward his brothers. These brothers were sent by their father into Egypt to obtain grain. They came before Joseph, who knew them but whom they did not recognize. When they came to him, Joseph recalled his dreams. He wanted to make sure that these brothers of his were not the same men they had been years before when they treated him so cruelly.

He charged them with being spies, and declared that it was not for grain that they came but to spy

*In the morning Joseph was in prison, having
been there three years. . . . In the evening
he was wearing the king's ring
and was arrayed in royal garments.*

But with a smile
and words of hope, gives zest
To every toiler.
He alone is great
Who, by a life heroic, conquers
fate."²

The process of hewing, squaring, and chiseling; the pain that comes from chipping off a sharp point on one side, then on the other, followed by the burnishing and polishing, is not an easy process. It is painful to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the Lord is preparing the stone for its appointed place in His building. It is designed to emit light as a living, polished stone. The trial, however sharp and disagreeable, will impart a bright luster.

The Master does no such careful and thorough work on useless material; only His jewels are polished after the similitude of a palace.

The loftiness of character and the nobility of heart which Joseph's 13 years of testing and disciplin-

out the nakedness of the land. They assured him of their integrity and of their sincerity. In doing so, they explained that they were all one man's sons and were true men and not spies.

A Test Proposed

He again charged them as being subversive agents. In their reply they went into their family relationships, told of their father and said that the youngest son was still with the father and that there was one of the twelve who was no longer alive.

Joseph proposed a test to determine their honesty. It was that they were not to be free until and unless their youngest brother was produced. One of them was to be sent to get Benjamin, while the others remained in prison, and he actually put them in prison for three days.

Then he came to them and said that his conscience troubled him and he would let the nine go, but one must remain as a hostage until they returned with the younger

brother; otherwise he was fearful that the grain the nine could carry would not reach its destination in time.

Yet, he declared with vigor that if their younger brother were not produced, thus verifying their words, the hostage would be punished.

As these brothers got by themselves and considered all this, it was then that they experienced the

away, and that all these things were against him.

It was then, too, that Reuben spoke to Jacob and declared that he would be responsible for Benjamin's safety and his returning again to his father.

The Return to Egypt

So, they returned to Egypt and to the great lord of Egypt, not knowing he was their brother.

Mark the test of character here. If they had been the same men they were twenty years before, they would have made short work of Benjamin.

movings of conscience and guilt and said to one another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Genesis 42: 21.

Joseph then commanded his steward to fill their sacks with grain and to restore every man's money in his sack and send them on their way.

When they came to their first resting place, with Simeon left behind them in jail, and opened their sacks to give their beasts provender, they saw their money, and it brought them a sense of terror.

They came to their home and to their father, Jacob, and the grain lasted for a little while. Jacob, however, proposed that they go again. It was then that they made it plain they could not go without Benjamin. This Jacob was reluctant to grant. It was then, too, that Jacob made his mournful complaint that they had bereaved him of his children, that Joseph was dead, and Simeon was dead, and now they were going to take Benjamin

Joseph received them kindly and treated them well. He was glad to see his full brother Benjamin.

Once again they were sent away, Genesis 44 relates, and this time Joseph's silver cup was hidden in Benjamin's sack. When they had gone some distance out of the city Joseph sent his steward after them.

When the steward came up with them, he denounced them as robbers for stealing the silver cup. It appalled them, and they strongly repudiated any such crime. "God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing." Verse 7. Then they declared that "with whomsoever of thy servants it [the cup] be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen." Verse 9.

The steward would not have that. He said, No, "he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless." Verse 10. They hurried then to take down every man's sack to the ground and opened them for the steward's inspection. He began at the eldest and went down to the youngest, and there in the sack of Benjamin the cup was found.

They all rent their clothes and hurried back to face the governor. They came to his house and fell before him on the ground. Joseph denounced them as untrue men and Judah replied: "What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." Verse 16. Joseph would not take that as a settlement. He did not want them all to be punished, but only the man in whose sack the cup was found. He was to remain and be Joseph's slave.

As this story unfolds, the brothers were not only dismayed at the discovery of the silver cup in Benjamin's sack, but they actually thought him guilty; they did not know that it had been hidden there by order of Joseph. They thought he had brought disgrace on them all, this younger brother of whom they were so fond. Mark the test of character here. If they had been the same men they were twenty years before, they would have made short work of Benjamin. They would have quickly given him up.

All Stand Together

When they stand before Joseph, they do not denounce Benjamin or propose to give him up; they all stand together and declare that they will be equally punished.

This Joseph refuses. Now, for the supreme test. Would they go away and leave Benjamin alone to suffer for the offense they supposed him to have committed? Twenty years before they would have, but not now. Instead, here is one of the finest scenes in human history. They will not desert Benjamin. The speech of Judah is one of the noblest pieces of natural eloquence in any literature, sacred or profane. It should be recalled that Judah was the one who had advised Joseph's sale to the Ishmaelites.

“Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man’s face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad’s life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my

lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.” Verses 18–34.

Changed Men

From this noble utterance it is obvious that these men had changed. Special notice should be given to the tender regard for their father. They cannot now endure to cause him a single pang. Their tender love for Benjamin should be noted, too. No matter what he has done, they want him released, and Judah declares he will bear his punishment.

This all satisfied Joseph. He discloses himself to them. “I am

“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.” Verses 5–8.

Joseph bids them to hurry to Jacob, tell him the news, and bring all the families of Israel back to

What a character Joseph had developed as a consequence of these years of suffering, hardship, and disappointment! What an example he sets of the duty to forgive those who have done wrong!

Joseph.” Genesis 45:3. Imagine their feelings, their terror, their amazement. Pressing in upon them is the remembrance of their sin against him, and now he is lord of all Egypt and has them in his power. What would he do?

They had terribly wronged him. He bade them come near to him, and one can almost see the hesitancy with which they respond. For fear that they had not yet comprehended, he repeated: “I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.” Verse 4.

Here it is. He is reminding them that they sold him. He is reminding them of the wrongs which they had done to him. How could they expect mercy at his hands?

But mercy and forgiveness are prompt. Joseph said:

Egypt. And the wonderful scene closes with the record:

“And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.” Verses 14–15.

After this the barriers are all broken down, the old sins are forgiven, and the long-scattered family is brought together again; the estrangement lasting over such a period of years is healed by love and peace.

The Forgiving Spirit

What a character Joseph had developed as a consequence of these years of suffering, hardship, and disappointment! What an example

he sets of the duty to forgive those who have done wrong! How petty Christians become when they cherish enmity because of a wrong!

Is it possible to conceive of any sorer wrong that could be done than that which his brothers had done to Joseph? But cruel wrong as it was, and causeless, how freely and beautifully it was forgiven!

Joseph does not appear ever to have indulged in any revengeful feelings. He kept his heart free from all trace of bitterness and resentment; he kept it full of sweet, gentle love through the years. When he saw his brothers in Egypt, his old affection for them revived. He forgave them completely and took them to the old place in his love and confessed them as brothers before the king. He had them come to live close beside him.

Have we as Christians learned this lesson of forgiveness? Are there any wrongs done to us which we are cherishing and turning over in our hearts? Have we been ill used by brothers? Are we keeping our hearts sweet and loving under ill usage? Or have we allowed bitterness to creep in, or a

feeling of resentment, or desire for revenge?

The day is coming when all must stand before Him whom by our sins we are grieving and wronging these passing days. The brothers never expected to meet again the lad whom they had sold away as a slave. But one day in Egypt they found themselves face to face with him and heard from his lips the startling words, "I am Joseph."

Pilate had Jesus, pale and despised, before him. He sent Him to the cross. In a day that is coming Pilate will lift up his eyes to that same Jesus and hear the words, "I am Jesus."

Are you wronging Christ? Are you grieving Him, rejecting Him, refusing to follow Him? Are you harming any of his little ones? The day will come when you shall stand before a great white throne and hear from the lips of Him who sits there, "I am Jesus."

Let us learn now to so treat Christ, and so endure the discipline that comes through His hand, that when He reveals Himself to us in the judgment it may not terrify but give us joy to hear the pre-

vious words pronounced by His lips, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matthew 25:21. ✠

Notes:

¹ A hot humid south or southeast wind blowing over the Mediterranean from North Africa to southern Europe.

² *Youth's Companion*, July 31, 1890.

Correction

In the August 2003 issue of *Our Firm Foundation*, page 6, the question was asked, "Are we selling our Lord by shunning life's burdens, preferring to accept Social Security while as able-bodied individuals we could do an honest days work?"

For our readers in the United States we should have said "welfare" instead of "Social Security." We intended to refer particularly to those who are able to work and be self-sufficient but who choose instead to make themselves a burden to society.

We apologize if we offended or confused any of our readers who are rightfully receiving a portion of what they have paid into the Social Security system.—*The Editors*

...continued from page 11

See Genesis 41:14–46. God does lead in toil, and in affliction, (see verses 50–51), and He shall soon exalt all who wait on Him. See Psalm 37:34.

"There are few who realize the influence of the little things of life upon the development of character. Nothing with which we have to do is really small. The varied circumstances that we meet day by day are designed to test our faithfulness and to qualify us for greater trusts. . . . An upright character is of greater worth than the gold of Ophir. Without it none can rise to an honorable eminence. . . . The formation of a noble character is the work of a lifetime and must be the result of diligent and persever-

ing effort. God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 222–223.

Jesus Christ

Now, consider the experience of our precious Lord and Savior. Think of His trial at Gethsemane. Matthew 26:36–44 and Luke 22:40–46. Think of the cross He bore—all for us—that we might be saved. Both Joseph and Christ were accused as criminals. Both endured to the end. Both left us an example of self-sacrifice. Jesus, through suffering, trials, and pain has made salvation available to the whole world.

Some of us have been severely dealt with in our local churches. Maybe we have been removed

from church offices, falsely accused, persecuted by fellow church members, spouses, family, and friends. However, why fret, worry, complain, and carry our burdens? Trust in the heavenly Father as Jesus, Joseph, and the patriarchs did.

It is almost over! Just a few more steps until the Sunday laws come into effect. God is assuring us that victory is nigh. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Corinthians 12:9. Then, rest in the Lord, and move forward in Him, for we have a mission to fulfill. ✠



The Sin of Licentiousness

Ellen G. White

“**F**or this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” Hebrews 8:10.

When the law of God is written in the heart, it will be exhibited in a pure and holy life. The commandments of God are no dead letter. They are spirit and life, bringing the imaginations and even the thoughts into subjection to the will of Christ. The heart in which they are written will be kept with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. All who love Jesus and keep the commandments will seek to avoid the very appearance of evil; not because they are constrained thus to do, but because they are copying a pure model, and feel averse to everything contrary to the law written in their hearts. They will not feel self-sufficient, but their trust will be in God, who alone is able to keep them from sin and impurity. The atmosphere surrounding them is pure; they will not corrupt their

own souls or the souls of others. It is their pleasure to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God.

The danger that lies before those living in these last days is the absence of pure religion, the absence of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming their characters. They profess to believe sacred truths as did the Jewish nation; but in their failing to practice the truth, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and the power of God. The power and influence of God’s law are around about, but not within the soul, renewing it in true holiness. Therefore, the Lord sends His appeals to them to urge upon them the practice of what is right. The appeals of His Spirit are neglected and rejected. The barriers are broken down, and the soul is weak, and for want of moral force to overcome, is polluted and debased. They are binding themselves in bundles as fagots, ready to be consumed at the last day.

The Jewish priests were required to be in person all that was symmet-

rical and well proportioned, that they might reflect a great truth. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the LORD.” Isaiah 52:11. The Lord required not only a well-proportioned mind and symmetrical body of the Jews’ ministry in holy office, but He required also pure and uncorrupted minds. And He requires no less of us, in this dispensation, in the ministry of the gospel. His called and chosen are to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. The same Bible that contains the privileges of God’s people, and His promises to them, contains also the sacred duties and the solemn obligations He requires of the shepherd who has charge of the flock of God, so that the people can see by comparing the living preacher with the divine picture whether he has credentials from heaven in likeness of character to Him who is the Chief Shepherd. God designs that the teacher of the Bible should in his character and home life be a specimen of the principles of the truth which he is teaching to his fellow men.

What a man is has a greater influence than what he says. The quiet, consistent, godly life is a living epistle, known and read of all men. A man may speak and write like an angel, but his practices may resemble a fallen fiend. God will have the believers of the truth zealous to maintain good works. As they occupy high positions, they will be tested by a higher standard. They will be sifted—defects and vices will be searched out—for if such exist, they will be developed in words and deportment. True character is not something shaped from without, or put on, but it is something radiating from within. If true goodness, purity, meekness, lowliness, and equity are dwelling

temptations as long as we are in this world. But instead of injuring us, they will only be turned to our advantage, if resisted. The bounds are placed where Satan cannot pass. He may prepare the furnace that consumes the dross, but instead of injury, it can only bring forth the gold of the character, purer, upon higher vantage ground than before the trial.

Licentiousness In Israel

The crime that brought the judgments of God upon Israel was that of licentiousness. The forwardness of women to entrap souls did not end at Baal-peor. Notwithstanding the punishment that followed the sinners in Israel, the same crime

barricade their souls to resist temptation to indulge their basest passions. Idolatry and licentiousness went together. They first defiled their conscience by lewdness, and then departed from God still farther by idolatry, thus showing contempt for the God of Israel.

Near the close of this earth's history Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before their entering the land of promise. He will lay snares for those who claim to keep the commandments of God, and who are almost on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. He will use his powers to their utmost in order to entrap souls, and to take God's professed people upon their weakest points. Those who have not brought the lower passions into subjection to the higher powers of their being, those who have allowed their minds to flow in a channel of carnal indulgence of the baser passions, Satan is determined to destroy with his temptations—to pollute their souls with licentiousness.

He is not aiming especially at the lower and less important marks, but he makes use of his snares through those whom he can enlist as his agents to allure or attract men to take liberties which are condemned in the law of God. And men in responsible positions, teaching the claims of God's law, whose mouths are filled with arguments in vindication of His law, against which Satan has made such a raid—over such he sets his hellish powers and his agencies at work, and overthrows them upon the weak points in their character, knowing that he who offends on one point is guilty of all, thus obtaining complete mastery over the entire man. Mind, soul, body, and conscience are involved in the ruin. If he be a messenger of righteousness, and has had great light, or if the Lord has used him as his special worker in the cause of truth, then how great

Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before their entering the land of promise.

in the heart, that fact will be reflected in the character; and such a character is full of power.

The officers who were sent to take Jesus reported that never man spake like this Man. But the reason of this was, that never man lived like this Man; for if He had not so lived, He could not so have spoken. His words bore with them a convincing power, because they came from a heart pure, holy, burdened with love and sympathy, beneficence, and truth. How rejoiced are those who hate God's law, to find spot and stain of character in one who stands in defense of that law! They are only too glad to cast a reproach upon all the loyal and true, because of the faults and impure practices of a few. There is eloquence in the quiet and consistent life of a pure, true, unadulterated Christian. We shall have

was repeated many times. Satan was most active in seeking to make Israel's overthrow complete. Balak by the advice of Balaam laid the snare. Israel would have bravely met their enemies in battle, and resisted them, and come off conquerors; but when women invited their attention and sought their company and beguiled them by their charms, they did not resist temptations. They were invited to idolatrous feasts, and their indulgence in wine further beclouded their dazed minds. The power of self-control, their allegiance to God's law, was not preserved. Their senses were so beclouded with wine, and their unholy passions had such full sway, overpowering every barrier, that they invited temptation even to the attending of these idolatrous feasts. Those who had never flinched in battle, who were brave men, did not

is the triumph of Satan! How he exults! How God is dishonored!

The licentious practice of the Hebrews accomplished for them that which all the warfare of nations and the enchantments of Balaam could not do. They became separated from their God. Their covering and protection were removed from them. God turned to be their enemy. So many of the princes and people were guilty of licentiousness, that it became a national sin; for God was wroth with the whole congregation.

Demoralizing the Church

The very same Satan is now working to the very same end, to weaken and destroy the people who claim to be keeping the commandments of God, as they are just on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. Satan knows it is his time. He has but little time left now in which to work, and he will work with tremendous power to ensnare the people of God upon their weak points of character.

Women As Tempters

There will be women who will become tempters, and who will do their best to attract and win the attention of men to themselves. First, they will seek to win their sympathy, next their affection, and then to induce them to break God's holy law. Those who have dishonored their minds and affections by placing them where God's Word forbids will not scruple to dishonor God by various species of idolatry. God will leave them to their vile affections.

It is necessary to guard the thoughts; to fence the soul about with the injunctions of God's Word; and to be very careful in every thought, word, and action not to be betrayed into sin. It is necessary to guard against the cultivation of the indulgence of the lower passions. This is not the fruit of sanctified thoughts or hearts.

It is now the duty of God's commandment-keeping people to watch

and pray, to search the Scriptures diligently, to hide the Word of God in the heart, lest they sin against Him in idolatrous thoughts and debasing practices, and thus the church of God become demoralized like the fallen churches whom prophecy represents as being filled with every unclean and hateful bird.

Open Defiance Requires Decisive Punishment

With the Hebrews, God's judgment fell upon them at once. A plague immediately broke out. The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and the plague visited those who were most guilty.

hung up in sight of all Israel for a terror to the congregation of Israel, that they seeing their leaders and their princes so severely punished for their licentiousness and idolatry, without regard to wealth, or station, or what they had been, might have a deep sense of the abhorrence of God for sin, and a terror of God's wrath against them. And the men who have great light, and to whom one would look for an example, are in the sight of God very great sinners, if they transgress His law or deliberately lower the standard of His law to minister unto lust.

Never was vice more bold, stubborn, or daring than it was in Zimri, a prince of the chief house

It was the greatest mercy that Phinehas could do to Israel, to deal promptly and decidedly with the guilty, and thus be instrumental in turning the wrath of God from the congregation of Israel.

But "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and for their hidden licentious indulgences God poured upon them His wrath. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." 1 Corinthians 3:17. The ringleaders in this demoralizing work, which was so debasing, so corrupting to Israel, so insulting to God, were ordered to be put to death by the hand of public justice, which was the only way to turn the wrath of God from the congregation of Israel. The command came from the Lord, to take the heads of the people who went out of the camp to associate with Moab, and "hang them up before the LORD against the sun" (Numbers 25:4), as sacrifices to God's justice, and as a terror to the rest of the people. The command was executed. They were first slain, then their bodies were

in the tribe of Simeon. Such an exhibition of effrontery toward God was almost too great for belief. He publicly appeared before the people leading a Midianitish harlot, one of high standing, a daughter of a chief house in Midian, in the sight of Moses and the congregation. He thus showed open contempt of God. He gloried in his shame; for wine had perverted his senses. He openly declared his sin as that of Sodom. The position he had occupied had been one of influence. Moses and the people, who had taken no part in this great departure from God's law, were weeping and lamenting at the door of the tabernacle for the sins of the people, and the plague that had begun. But amid all this demonstration of sorrow, this prince defied the judges to molest him if they dared. The

priests were weeping between the porch and the altar, crying, "Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach." Joel 2: 17. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, and rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin, and went after the man of Israel into the tent, and killed them both. This staid the plague.

With this history before the peculiar people of God in these last days, there is no excuse for any one who will follow the example of ancient Israel in sin. But Satan will work in this special temptation to make void the law of God, and make light of God's special injunctions and warnings. The point to be marked is, that Moses' prayers were not heard, neither his weeping nor the sorrow and prayers of those who had maintained their integrity, until justice was executed upon that demoralized, God-defying prince. God says of Phinehas, He "hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel." Numbers 25: 11. It was the greatest mercy that Phinehas could do to Israel, to deal promptly and decidedly with the guilty, and thus be instrumental in turning the wrath of God from the congregation of Israel. Something besides prayers and tears are needed in a time when reproach and peril are hanging over God's people. The wicked works must be brought to an end. The very work of justice done by Phinehas was an atonement for Israel.

Fitted for Translation

There is to be a people fitted up for translation to heaven, whom Enoch represents. They are looking and waiting for the coming of the Lord. The work will go on with all those who will cooperate with Jesus in the work of redemption. He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. God has made every provision that they

should be intelligent Christians, filled with a knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. A theoretical knowledge of the truth is essential. But the knowledge of the greatest truth will not save us; our knowledge must be practical. God's people must not only know His will, but they must practice it. Many will be purged out from the numbers of those who know the truth, because they are not sanctified by it. The truth must be brought into their hearts, sanctifying and cleansing them from all earthliness and sensuality in the most private life. The soul temple must be cleansed. Every secret act is as if we were in the presence of God and holy angels, as all things are open before God, and from Him nothing can be hid.

In this age of our world the marriage vows are often disregarded. God never designed that marriage should cover the multitude of sins that are practiced. Sensuality and base practices in a marriage relation are educating the mind and moral taste for demoralizing practices outside the marriage relation. God is purifying a people to have clean hands and pure hearts to stand before Him in the judgment. The standard must be elevated, the imagination purified; the infatuation clustering around debasing practices must be given up, and the soul uplifted to pure thoughts, holy practices. All who will stand the test and trial just before us, will be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped, not participated in, the corruptions that are in the world through lust.

Like Christ In Character

The works of Satan are not half discerned, because purity and holiness do not mark the life and character of those who claim to be ministers of Christ. Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, we are thus fortified against the temptations of Satan. Christ and His purity and

His matchless charms should be the soul's contemplation. There is spiritual power for all, which they may have if they will, that they may resist temptation, that duty may be done and the soul hold fast its integrity. Those who feel their need of being strengthened by might by God's Spirit in the inner man will not lose their integrity. Earnest prayer and watching thereunto will carry them through temptations. We must be united to Christ by living faith.

We are now amid the perils of the last days. Satan has come down with great power to work his deceptions. He fastens the mind or imaginations upon impure, unlawful things. Christians become like Christ in character by dwelling upon the divine Model. That with which they come in contact has a molding influence upon life and character. I have read of a painter who would never look upon an imperfect painting for a single moment, lest it should have a deteriorating influence upon his own eye and conceptions. That which we allow ourselves to look upon oftenest, and think of most, transfers itself in a measure to us. The imagination trained to dwell upon God and His loveliness will not find delight in dwelling upon scenes that are created by the imagination that is excited by lust.

"But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and

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The Power of Forgiveness



E. J. Waggoner

“**A**nd, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.” Matthew 9:2-8.

One of the most common expressions to be heard among professed Christians when speaking of religious things is this: “I can understand and believe that God will forgive sin, but it is hard for me to believe that He can keep me

from sin.” Such a person has yet to learn very much of what is meant by God’s forgiving sins. It is true that persons who talk that way do often have a measure of peace in believing that God has forgiven, or does forgive, their sins; but through failure to grasp the power of forgiveness, they deprive themselves of much blessing that they might enjoy.

Bearing in mind the statement concerning the miracles of Christ, that “these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31), let us study the miracle before us. The scribes did not believe that Jesus could forgive sin. In order to show that He had power to forgive sins, He healed the palsied man. This miracle was wrought for the express purpose of illustrating the work of forgiving sin, and demonstrating its power. Jesus said to the palsied man, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house,” that they, and we, might know His

power to forgive sin. Therefore, the power exhibited in the healing of that man is the power bestowed in the forgiveness of sin.

Note particularly that the effect of the words of Jesus continued after they were spoken. They made a change in the man, and that change was permanent. Even so, it must be in the forgiveness of sin. The common idea is that when God forgives sin the change is in Himself, and not in the man. It is thought that God simply ceases to hold anything against the one who has sinned. But this is to imply that God had a hardness against the man, which is not the case. God is not a man; He does not cherish enmity, nor harbor a feeling of revenge. It is not because God has an angry feeling in His heart against a sinner that changes when he asks forgiveness, but because the sinner has something in his heart. God is all right, the man is all wrong; therefore, God forgives the man that he also may be all right.

When Jesus, illustrating the forgiveness of sin, said to the man,

“Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house,” the man arose and went to his house. The power that was in the words of Jesus raised him up, and made him walk. That power remained in him, and it was in the strength that was given him on removing the palsy that he walked in all time to come, provided, of course, that he kept the faith. This is illustrated by the psalmist when he says, “I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.” Psalm 40:1–2.

There is life in the words of God. Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and

life that was given to his body, and which enabled him to walk, was but an illustration, both to him and to the scribes, of the unseen life of God which he had received in the words, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” and which had made him a new creature in Christ.

With this simple and clear illustration before us, we may understand some of the words of the apostle Paul, which otherwise are “hard to be understood.” See 2 Peter 3:16.

Let us first read Colossians 1: 12–14. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the

blood, He pours out His life. But in giving up His life, He gives it to us. That life is righteousness, even the perfect righteousness of God, so that when we receive it, we are “made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21. It is the receiving of Christ’s life, as we are baptized into His death, that reconciles us to God. It is thus that we “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24), “after the image of him that created him (Colossians 3:10).”

Now we may read Romans 3: 23–25, and find that it is not so very difficult: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified [that is, made righteous, or doers of the law] freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission [sending away] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

All have sinned. The whole life has been sin. Even the thoughts have been evil. See Mark 7:21. And to be carnally minded is death. Therefore, the life of sin is a living death. If the soul is not freed from this, it will end in eternal death. There is no power in man to get righteousness out of the holy law of God; therefore, God in His mercy puts His own righteousness upon all that believe. He makes us righteous as a free gift out of the riches of His grace. He does this by His words, for He declares—speaks—His righteousness into and upon all who have faith in the blood of Christ, in whom is God’s righteousness; “for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Colossians 2:9. And this declaring or speaking the righteousness of God upon us is the remission or taking away of sin. Thus, God takes away the sinful life by putting His own righteous life in its place. And this is the power of the forgiveness

God forgives sin by taking it away. He justifies the ungodly by making him godly.

they are life.” John 6:63. The Word received in faith brings the Spirit and the life of God into the soul. So, when the penitent soul hears the words, “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matthew 9: 2), and receives those words as the living words of the living God, he is a different man, because a new life has begun in him. It is the power of God’s forgiveness, and that alone, that keeps him from sin. If he continues in sin after receiving pardon, it is because he has not grasped the fullness of the blessing that was given him in the forgiveness of his sins.

In the case before us, the man received new life, His palsied condition was simply the wasting away of his natural life. He was partially dead. The words of Christ gave him fresh life. But this new

kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” See the same statement concerning redemption through Christ’s blood in 1 Peter 1:18–19; Revelation 5:9.

Mark two points—we have redemption through Christ’s blood, and this redemption is the forgiveness of sins. But the blood is the life. See Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17: 13–14. Therefore Colossians 1:14 really tells us that we have redemption through Christ’s life. But does not the Scripture say that we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son?—It does, and that is just what is here taught. Christ “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” Titus 2: 14. He “gave himself for our sins.” Galatians 1:4. In giving Himself, He gives His life. In shedding His

of sin. It is "the power of an endless life." Hebrews 7:16.

This is the beginning of the Christian life. It is receiving the life of God by faith. How is it continued?—Just as it is begun. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." Colossians 2:6. For "the just shall live by faith." Hebrews 10:38. The secret of living the Christian life is simply that of holding fast the life which, received at the beginning, forgives the sin.

God forgives sin by taking it away. He justifies the ungodly by

making him godly. He reconciles the rebel sinner to Himself, by taking away his rebellion, and making him a loyal and law-abiding subject.

It is sometimes said, "But it is difficult to understand how we can have the life of God as an actual fact; it cannot be real, for it is by faith that we have it." So, it was by faith that the poor palsied man received new life and strength; but was his strength any the less real? Was it not an actual fact that he received strength? "Cannot understand it"? Of course not, for it is a manifestation of "the love of Christ, which

passeth knowledge." Ephesians 3:19. But we may believe it and realize the fact, and then we shall have an eternal life in which to study the wonder of it. Read again and again the story of the healing of the palsied man, and meditate upon it until it is a living reality to you, and then remember that "these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20:31. ✠

Apples of Gold Library, No. 12 (May, 1894).

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were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:5-12.

God Sees All

Satan is at work now as he worked in Eden, as he has worked through all successive generations. The archfiend knows well with what material he has to deal. He knows the weak points in every character; and if these weak points are not strengthened, he will display his infernal wisdom in his devices to overthrow the very strongest men, princes in the army of Israel. All along through successive generations are wrecks of character which have been destroyed, because the soul was not garrisoned. And now as we near the close of time, Satan will work with masterly activity to undermine principle, and corrupt moral character.

Sin is committed by many who think their crime is effectually concealed. But there is One who says, "I know thy works" (Revelation 2:2); "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" (Matthew 10:

26). When the mind is infatuated with the idea of sin, there will be deception practiced; lies will be told; for those who commit such sins will not be slow to lie as well. But all sin shall be revealed.

make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me. . . . Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but

When the mind is infatuated with the idea of sin, there will be deception practiced; lies will be told; for those who commit such sins will not be slow to lie as well. But all sin shall be revealed.

God sees the sinner. The eye which never slumbers knows everything that is done. It is written in His book. One may conceal his sin from father, mother, wife, and friends, and yet all lies open before God, and is placed in His book of record. Darkness, secrecy, deception, and crime added to crime have not obliterated the record. David was a repentant man, and although he confessed and hated his sin, he could not forget it.

He exclaimed, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I

the night shineth as the day." Psalm 139:7-12.

God is everywhere. He sees, He knows all things, and understands the intents and purposes of the heart. It is in vain that an attempt should be made to conceal sin from His notice. He saw our first parents in Eden. He saw Cain when he raised his hand to kill Abel. He saw the sins of the inhabitants of the old world, and numbered their days and punished them with a flood. He saw the sins of His own covenant people, the Jews, when they plotted against the life of the Son of God.

As surely does He mark every transgression, and every secret thing will be brought into judgment. They may be hid from mortal man; they may be hid from the good, the pure, and the holy, from friends and from foes, yet God sees them. All sins will be revealed in the day of judgment, and unless they have been repented of beforehand, they will receive punishment according to their magnitude: for a record of all the deeds of men is kept in the book of God's remembrance. All the good actions, all the evil actions of life are recorded.

will know for the first time the deception and falsehood that have been practiced by the wife whom he thought innocent and pure. The wife for the first time will know the case of her husband, and the relatives and friends will see how error and falsehood and corruption have been clustering about them; for the secrets of all hearts will stand revealed.

The hour of judgment is almost here—long delayed by the goodness and mercy of God. But the trump of God will sound to the consternation of the unprepared

defective, the soul culture has not been carried forward from one advance to another, inborn tendencies have not been restrained, but have degraded the soul. For all the natural weaknesses, Jesus has made ample provision, that they may be overcome through His grace. If not overcome, the weakness will become a tyrant, a conqueror, to overcome them, and the heavenly light will become beclouded and extinguished.

I feel compelled to write most earnestly on this point because I feel the peril that is upon us. We have in past history the example of most painful characters showing the danger of men in high places being corrupted. Men of masterly minds, who possessed large talents of influence, yet did not put their trust wholly in God, but allowed themselves to be praised and petted and lauded by the world's great men, lost their balance, and thought that great men's sins were not vices. The heavenly Guide left them, and their course was rapidly downward to corruption and perdition. They completely lost the just standard of honor, lost all distinction between right and wrong, between sin and righteousness. There are lights and shades in character, and one or the other certainly triumphs.

But God in heaven is weighing moral worth. He will judge righteously. The wicked will not always remain unchecked. Nothing but grace and truth brought into the inner life, inwrought in the character, is sufficient to keep the greatest, the most talented men morally erect. If intellectual greatness could have been sufficient, their characters would have been firm as a rock. But they needed virtuous characters. Paul says, I am what I am by the grace of God that is in me. God's people must arise, and gird themselves with the whole armor of righteousness. ✽

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For all the natural weaknesses, Jesus has made ample provision, that they may be overcome through His grace. If not overcome, the weakness will become a tyrant, a conqueror, to overcome them.

The fact that the accumulated sins are treasured up and at last exposed is a terrible fact. And why those professing to be sons and daughters of God venture in the face of light, in the face of knowledge, to sin against their own conscience and by their sin involve others in the same ruin, is a mystery. Have they ever tasted of the powers of the world to come? Have they ever enjoyed sweet communion with God? Then how can they turn to sensual, condemning, soul-degrading practices?

Satan Is Playing the Game of Life

The last great day is right upon us. Let all consider that Satan is now striving for the mastery over souls. He is playing the game of life for your souls. Will there be sins committed by you on the very borders of the heavenly Canaan? Oh, what revealings! The husband

who are living, and awaken the pale nations of the dead. The great white throne will appear, and all the righteous dead will come forth to immortality.

Whatever have been the little sins indulged will ruin the soul, unless they are overcome. The small sins will swell into the greater sins. Impure thoughts, private, impure actions, unrefined, low, and sensual thoughts and actions in the marriage life, the giving loose reins to the baser passions under the marriage vow will lead to every other sin, the transgression of all the commandments of God.

Men that God has entrusted with noble talents will be, unless closely connected with God, guilty of great weakness, and not having the grace of Christ in the soul will become connected with greater crimes. This is because they do not make the truth of God a part of them. Their discipline has been



“Thou Speakest Falsely”

Patricia Temple

In this study, we are going to look at an unusual and little-known story found in the book of Jeremiah the prophet. First, however, I would like to begin with an inspired statement:

“The prophets of God spoke less for their own time than for the ages to come, and especially for the generation that would live amid the last scenes of this earth’s history. ‘Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.’ 1 Peter 1: 12. ‘All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.’ 1 Corinthians 10:11.” *The Signs of the Times*, January 13, 1898.

All the stories, counsels, and prophecies are *more* for us than for them, and in these stories are lessons and parallels to our own day.

Warnings Rejected

It was the year of captivity, when the people of Judah were taken captive into Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. However, there were still a few people left in the land, mostly the poor, to till the soil and care for the trees and vineyards. King Nebuchadnezzar had made Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam,

governor over this feeble and scattered group.

When Jeremiah was rescued from prison by the captain of the King’s Guard, he was at liberty to go where he wished. He decided to cast in his lot with the remnant left in the land and seek to benefit them. It is interesting that the Babylonians recognized that Jeremiah was a true prophet of God, but most of the Jews refused to recognize it in spite of the clearest evidence. Now, shortly after, the leaders of the land received a message of threat.

“Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, and said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not.” Jeremiah 40: 13–14.

Gedaliah did not want to believe anything bad, so he rejected the counsel of his best men and loyal servants. But Johanan did not give up on the matter, for he knew it was true, and it was so serious he was willing to take action to stop it:

“Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know it: wherefore should he

slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?” Verse 15.

You can be sure, that if he was willing to kill this man to protect the governor, he had some very good reasons to know the threat was real. But again, Gedaliah would not listen to him: “But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.” Verse 16.

Now, it was not long before Ishmael and ten princes came riding into town, and rather than being alarmed about this, Gedaliah invited them home for dinner. He truly believed that Ishmael was a good man.

But *was* Ishmael a good man? Did Gedaliah’s trust in him make any impression on him? Did Gedaliah’s courtesy and kindness cause Ishmael to respond in like manner?—It most certainly did not! “Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.” Jeremiah 41:2.

So perished a man who was too “nice” to take a warning. It would have been bad enough if that were all that came of it, but many suf-

ferred because Gedaliah had rejected the warning and allowed a wolf in among the sheep.

“Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, even with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, and the men of war. And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew it.” Verses 3–4.

Soon after this, there came a group of men to worship at the house of the Lord. As soon as Ishmael saw them, he went to meet them, weeping all along as he went. “And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, and cast them into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that were with him.” Verse 7.

thing: for thou speakest falsely of this person.”

Today the theories and claims of many are held up against inspired counsel and are clearly shown to be darkness. When we refuse to take warning from the Word of the Lord and faithful watchmen, we allow wolves to remain in the flock, and many sheep can be slain just as in the case of Gedaliah. We ourselves can be slain and led into the pit of error because of our unwise influence.

“Thou Speakest Falsely”

Let us look at more lessons in the second half of this story:

“But when Johanan . . . heard of all the evil that Ishmael . . . had done, then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael . . .

will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.” Jeremiah 42:4.

After ten days, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. Calling the captains, he told them that the Lord wanted them to remain in the land and not go to Egypt. He promised they would be blessed and did not need to be afraid of the king of Babylon. He promised to bless them and protect them if they would obey Him. He also warned them that if they disobeyed and went to Egypt for protection, all the trouble they were afraid of was just what they would get!

Now, as the men were arguing among themselves regarding what to do, God spoke to Jeremiah again giving him another revelation. “These men are lying,” God said. They had already made up their minds to do what they wanted to, and no counsel from the Lord would change their plans.

“For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it. And now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you. Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn.” Verses 20–22.

Here was their response: “Then spake Azariah . . . and Johanan . . . and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there: but Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.” Jeremiah 43:2–3.

Therefore, disbelieving the words of the Lord they went away

When we refuse to take warning from the Word of the Lord and faithful watchmen, we allow wolves to remain in the flock, and many sheep can be slain just as in the case of Gedaliah.

Thus another group of men were slaughtered—all because of a rejected warning. However, there were ten men among them who bribed Ishmael with treasures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey, in order that they might not be slain by Ishmael. These men were released, but the rest of the people were taken captive to the land of the Ammonites.

Friends, today we are seeing the foolishness of Gedaliah enacted over and over again. Messages are sent out from earnest watchmen, warning of deeply laid plots to undermine God’s platform of truth and weaken the confidence of the church in the words of His prophet. Yet, the majority receive these warnings and cast them aside saying, “Thou shalt not do this

and found him by the great waters that are in Gibeon. Now it came to pass, that when all the people which were with Ishmael saw Johanan . . . and all the captains of the forces that were with him, then they were glad. So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan. . . . But Ishmael . . . escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.” Verses 11–15.

Shortly after, Johanan and his captains went to Jeremiah for counsel, and the prophet answered them:

“I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I

to do what they intended to do all along. When the message did not agree with their ideas, they rejected it, and accused Jeremiah of falsehood. Everything Jeremiah had prophesied previously had come true. Even the Babylonians recognized his truthfulness. So, how could these men disbelieve him?

Here is another parallel drawn for us. Just as these men disbelieved God and rejected the warnings of God's prophet, so we can today. If we reject any piece of truth just because it is not what we want to believe, we will soon think that our own ideas are the will of God, and no proof or evidence will be able to show us differently.

Now coming back to the story, we see that the men soon left for Egypt, taking Jeremiah along with them. However, no sooner had they arrived at Tahpanhes than Jeremiah received a message from the Lord:

"Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brickkiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; and say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them." Verses 8–10.

You would think that this startling revelation from the Lord would have put some fear into the hearts of those men, but no! They had not one ounce of fear or repentance. Instead, they started taking part in heathen celebrations. As Jeremiah stood there watching them burn incense to other gods and pour out drink offerings to the queen of heaven, God gave him yet another message:

"Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to

cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain; in that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?" Jeremiah 44:7–8.

Jeremiah pointed out to them that their idolatry and heathen practices were the reasons why Jerusalem was now in ruins. He pled with them to turn away from these things, which offend the Lord. He warned that they would all be wiped out if they kept on with the

emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

What twisted reasoning! Friends, once we refuse the truth of God or the message of His prophet because it tells us something we do not want to hear, we start on a downward path to spiritual blindness that nothing but total repentance and surrender to the Lord can ever turn back.

We can come to the place where no evidence, no matter how clear and strong will be accepted. We can be like ancient Israel after the rebellion of Korah. The very earth had opened up and swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram with their families, and the 250 princes with

Once we refuse the truth of God or the message of His prophet because it tells us something we do not want to hear, we start on a downward path to spiritual blindness.

sins that the Lord had sent Judah into captivity for.

What did they reply to his earnest appeal?—"Then all the men . . . answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine." Verses 15–18. (All

their censers had perished in the fire of God's wrath, and yet Israel confronted Moses the next day with, "Ye have killed the people of the LORD!" Numbers 16:41. They would have killed Moses had not God intervened.

We, too, are in danger of turning our back on the least bit of a "thus saith the Lord" because it means a change in our life that we are unwilling to make. Nothing is so dense as the spiritual darkness of those who reject God's Word because it crosses their inclinations. The sad decree goes forth, "They are joined to their idols—leave them alone" (see Hosea 4:17), and the Holy Spirit departs forever. Oh, may we all plead for the eyesalve of spiritual discernment and apply it diligently that we never have that pronouncement made against any one of us is my prayer! ✠



The POWER of Music

Part IV

H. Lloyd Leno

As we study the discussions of music in the writings of Ellen White, we must conclude that music was intended to be more than an incidental part of a person's life. The use of music by Christ Himself, as well as by the angels of heaven, as recorded in the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, shows that even among sinless beings music, as a means of expression and communication, goes beyond the range of power of speech. Furthermore, the instructions as to how human beings were to employ this gift indicate that they could not be complete, fulfilled beings without expressing themselves through music.

Music is an expression of the struggle-fulfillment rhythm of life experience. In the life of every human being we can observe tension-relaxation, anticipation-satisfaction. If kept in proper balance, these feelings and experiences provide continuity, change, security, challenge, repose, and excitement that are vital to sound mental health and the development of the full potential of any person.

It is significant that many philosophers recognize that in some way

music is *symbolic* of human experience. Suzanne Langer states that in all cultures people have sought to *symbolize* their experiences through the arts.¹ Doris Soibelman concluded that "human behavior is related to the *symbol* inherent in musical sounds."² Sidney Finkelstein calls this "the imagery of music." He explains that "key to the expressiveness of all music, including instrumental, is that permanently imbedded, are inflections, patterns of body movement and human imagery manifest in almost every activity of life."

Through "patterns of sound and silence" we can say that music embodies ideas. These are commentaries on a society, showing what it means to live in it. It is a response of the inner person to the outer world.³

In his perfect state, man would have expressed only the most lofty thoughts and emotions, but since man became a fallen being his expressions could at times represent his sinful nature. It is the symbolic musical representation of the *sinful* nature of man that we must recognize as having immoral content or negative influence.

In our efforts to understand the influence of music, we cannot expect to find the obvious cause-effect relationship that we observe, for example, in the action of chemical poisons on the body ("listening to rock doesn't make *me* want to smoke pot or remove my clothes"). Unable to observe this kind of result either in themselves or in others, many conclude that music has no influence at all. If, indeed, response to music were completely unpredictable, if it had no influence whatsoever, then some logical explanation must be offered for the widespread use of it in situations where it is obviously supposed to have some effect.

The author of *Music in Hospitals* puts it this way: "The dynamic influence of music is recognized in many familiar practices of our civilization. Why is there so much music used in churches, political meetings, motion pictures, and theaters? Because these varied uses of music increase people's receptivity to other stimuli and thus may indirectly strengthen the effect of the message, whatever it may be."⁴

Is the meaning of music due to the natural characteristics of sound, or is it culturally or socially derived?

We must conclude that it derives from both. No one can deny that the patterns of music for a given activity vary from one culture to another. Songs of worship and those of courtship are to a great extent socially evolved. However, "the fact that sounds are produced by different tensions of the body, of chest, throat, lips and fingers, indicates that there must be a relation between these body tensions and the affecting tone quality of the tones they produce. Certainly, the music that one people uses for a war cry cannot become a lullaby for others."⁵

Basic Qualities Affect Similarly

Cultural conditioning to the contrary notwithstanding, human beings still have much in common; and the basic qualities of music, pitch, rhythm, volume, tone color, and to some extent melody and harmony, affect the physical and mental processes of all peoples in a remarkably similar manner.

It should be noted that the more abstract the music, the more education is required to make that music meaningful to a person. For example, much of the meaning of absolute music (such as concertos and symphonies) would tend to elude the inexperienced listener until he acquires more information. However, even though the *musical* meaning of so-called classical music may not be understood by the musically untrained, it has been demonstrated that *mood* response is quite universal and that theoretical knowledge is not a prerequisite to enjoyment.

Apparently, the more functional the music, the more universal and consistent the behavioral response will be. Because the human body is rhythmic by nature, the rhythmic element in music is the most influential.

It has been demonstrated that constantly repetitive, rhythmic material is hypnotic. In extreme cases, trance or destructive activity

results. A more subtle influence is produced by the lower volume soft rock and swing beat. These have a milder but no less real effect. The listener is mildly sedated, lulled into a dreamy state of mindless enjoyment where the conscience is relaxed or completely dormant.

Since music can affect a person's moods, it follows that it can affect our attitudes. When the mood of the music and the association are combined, thoughts are suggested. However, even when there is no specific association, the mood of the music can engender general feeling states. Positive or desirable moods would include solemnity, joy, and animation (controlled excitement). Undesirable counterparts to those could be sentimentalism, frivolity, and violence (uncontrolled excitement).

Sensation-oriented music has immediate appeal for the listener and requires nothing of him — not even his attention.

In these emotionally unhealthy states the person is subject to other specific stimuli (as Van de Wall stated), either verbal or nonverbal suggestions for undesirable thought and action. This could be compared to a state of mild intoxication; the intoxicant does not *cause* the user to do anything in the sense that he is *driven* to an act, but it lowers his resistance to temptation. Ellen White's statement, quoted in part 2 of this series, certainly describes this type of situation: "It prepares the participants for unholy thought and action." *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 339.

Reacting Intelligently

In addition to the moral implications, there is another important

consideration—the emotional maturity of the person. In order for a person to develop emotionally, it is essential to have opportunities to react intelligently to the influences about him. If a person's reaction to music is limited to "I like it" or "It makes me feel good" he cannot claim to have reacted or responded on a level any higher than many animals, or mentally retarded or injured persons. Thus, if a person's musical diet consists largely of material requiring nothing higher than a purely sensuous response, he is certain to remain in this emotional rut at least so far as his musical experience is concerned.

Music that has little more than sensuous appeal must rely heavily on sensational effects or "gimmicks" for interest. These are created by a sensational treatment

of (or overemphasis on) one or more of these elements of music: rhythm, harmony, melody, or tone color. This sensation-oriented music affects a person differently from music that has lasting worth.

Sensation-oriented music has immediate appeal for the listener and requires nothing of him—not even his attention. Repeated experiences with this material do not add to a person's knowledge, expertise, or awareness of beauty. It retards emotional maturity because it merely provides one emotional "binge" after another, a series of sensations that are private and incommunicable. In contrast to music of *sensation*, there is music that provides an *experience*, aesthetically. In this music there is an appeal to the intellect, as

well as to the senses, and its repetition adds to a person's musical sensitivity and awareness. This type of experience can be shared and thus can be used to improve human relationships.

About 75 years ago Ellen White warned: "We have no time now to spend in seeking those things that only please the senses." *Review and Herald*, November 14, 1899. Science has revealed that unless we use the higher powers of the mind we will respond to music merely as a pleasant or an unpleasant sensation, and that even without paying attention to the music we will respond emotionally to it. Even when we become aware of music we cannot turn our ears away from the source as we can turn our eyes away from

salvation! This sobering thought should cause all who can and do influence others, to take their responsibility seriously, making certain that as mature Christians "their perceptions are trained by long use to discriminate between good and evil." Hebrews 5:14, NEB. The ability to evaluate, therefore, becomes even more critical in the field of music, than in certain areas where one has more opportunities for self-defense.

Commenting on Peter's admonition, "Gird up the loins of your mind" (1 Peter 1:13), Ellen White says, "Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 518. Unless we heed this warning by choosing a

years—the points most easily assailed in every character." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 457.

Music, having been a successful tool of Satan down through the ages, most certainly will be a part of Satan's deceptive arsenal until the end of time. In one of her visions describing God's people just before final deliverance, Ellen White heard the sounds of music and revelry coming from those who had rejected salvation: "We heard the profane oath, the vulgar jest, and low, vile songs. We heard the war song and the dance song. We heard instrumental music and loud laughter, mingled with cursing and cries of anguish and bitter wailing." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 595.

I have endeavored to provide some useful information in the hope that it will aid some in making wise decisions about the music in their lives. But, as important as it is, information is not enough. Basically, the problem of choosing music is a spiritual one, and the question we need to ask is "How can we know God's will so that we can tell what is 'pure, true, and lovely'?" See Philippians 4:8. I believe the answer can be found in Romans 12:2, NEB: "Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God, and to know what is good, acceptable, and perfect." ❖

Basically, the problem of choosing music is a spiritual one, and the question we need to ask is "How can we know God's will so that we can tell what is 'pure, true, and lovely'?"

a sight. This means that the "back door" of the mind is always open to the intrusion of music. For many, therefore, listening habits and tastes are determined before they realize it; this is particularly true of children.

When we consider these facts, serious ethical and moral questions should be rather obvious. Teachers of music, live performers, and those who prepare recorded music help to shape the tastes and attitudes of thousands of children, youth, and adults. What motivates those in these categories in their selection of music? Is it the desire to uplift or the desire for popularity? Is it commercialism with no consideration for Christian ideals? Conditioning the mind of a person can retard a person's spiritual growth or even cause him to reject

course of action to prevent falling prey to it, we are most certainly doomed to manipulation by the pop-music industry, "a vast apparatus devoted to the manufacturing of public taste and through the conditioning of that taste through constant reiteration (the disc jockey and the juke box) which creates a mass demand for mediocrity and worse."⁶

Part of Satan's Arsenal

Unless the Christian fortifies his mind with truth, feeding upon divinely inspired counsel, he will find it difficult to make decisions in this area. We must remember that even as a fallen being, "Satan well knows the material with which he has to deal in the human heart. He knows—for he has studied with fiendish intensity for thousands of

Notes:

- ¹ Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: New American Library, 1945), 26–31.
- ² Doris Soibelman, *Therapeutic and Industrial Uses of Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 21.
- ³ Sidney Finkelstein, *How Music Expresses Ideas* (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 18.
- ⁴ Willem Van de Wall, *Music in Hospitals* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1946), 11.
- ⁵ Finkelstein, 17–18.
- ⁶ William Robert Miller, *The World of Pop Music and Jazz* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 66.



We appreciate your kindness to us in sending us back issues and also in “carrying” us with Subscription Assistance for 2 years! We wish we could support you on a regular basis financially, but with one income and homeschooling, finances are tight.

We are truly blessed with the articles in *Our Firm Foundation*. May God continue to guide your selection of articles monthly. Enclosed is a check to renew our subscription and also a donation for Subscription Assistance. We hope someone else can benefit as we did! Thank you so much!

LB, California

Thanks for your message on tape and in print. May God continue to give you a message and insight. I want to know the *truth*. 2 Thessalonians 2: God will let men believe a lie because they would not believe the truth. Could the bottom of page 468 in *The Great Controversy* be the SDA Church today? With all this believe only, and false teaching on the nature of Christ (1 John 4:1-4), may God give us wisdom (John 16:12-13).

WK, Alabama

Since I have been studying about Sabbathkeeping and the signs and the mark of the beast, I have taken a great, long look at myself, the world, and things around me. It is really scary. The world and everything is a mess—so much violence and evil and negative stuff. I never realized that before. I see that all the things I used to watch on the TV are evil and satanic. In my rock and roll music, I hear the devil’s message. No won-

der we are all in the mess we are in. I used to enjoy all these things and never saw anything wrong with them, now the Holy Spirit tells me differently.

I think of all those other lost souls out there that are like I was. I need to try to reach them, but most of them really do not want to be reached. Thank you so much for these studies and helping me with them. You are a blessing and a gift from God.

DR, Indiana

Thank you for these lessons once again. They are easy to follow but yet thought provoking and thorough. I really enjoy them!

GW, Wisconsin

Just a note to thank you dear folks for praying for our SDA church. God is working in the heart of our pastor. We can see it and praise God for His leading! There are many that feel the drum music and loud band music is great in our worship service. Many others are praying God will take care of everything and saying that we must love those that want to turn our church into a celebration church. God is helping our pastor to have second thoughts as he seemed “happy” with the drums and such at first. Please continue to pray for our pastor and our church, as we are also.

GS, California

Since I have so many *Our Firm Foundation* from the past year unread, I have decided to give my subscription dollars toward assistance for someone who may not be able to subscribe. However, I do want to order the audio tapes of the magazine. The articles are wonderful. I look forward to the truth as it is be-

ing presented. They just seem to get better and better.

AN, Idaho

Thank you for *Our Firm Foundation*. It is heartbreaking to realize the “Omega of Apostasy” is full-blown these days, and Seventh-day Adventists by the millions are deceived, deluded, and lost eternally if they do not turn back to God!

As I see it right here in my home and our local church, not very many people spend time with the Lord, in Bible study, the other inspired writings, and secret prayer, etc. I weep for God’s church!

Our church lost our pastor recently, which is a great blessing to us! Please pray for us. We have managed to keep “celebration” style worship out of this church by determined effort and prayer.

Jesus must come very soon! The signs are shouting the wonderful news of His soon return! I yearn and long for the salvation of many souls. Thank you, and may God keep you faithful is my prayer for you all at Hope International.

AF, California

From Overseas

I am a prison officer with the rank of Sergeant. In Ghana Prison Service, our main duty is the reformation of the prisoners. I observe that we cannot reform a criminal without the Word of God; therefore, I have opened Bible studies and the church service in the prison yard for the prisoners and the prison officers. Now I am appealing to you in Jesus’ name to send me some Bibles (either new or used) to help the prisoners.

I hope you understand. I am a member in the SDA Church. I have some books, but need Bibles.

CH, Ghana

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- Judgment Sleepers
- The Final Call

Danny & Linda Shelton

- Musical Concert
- I Know the Plans

John Skeete

- The Ultimate Intent of Sin
- The Cure for Sinful Independence
- The Perfecting of the Saints

Ron Spear

- Strive to Enter In
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