

Volume 23, Number 10 • October 2008

Our Firm Foundation

Adventists and Voting

Being Punctual: Is It Really That Important?
Part 1

The Gospel According To Christ - Part 3

The Enigma of Temporal Prosperity

Sulfur, Methylsulfonylmethane, and You

How Can We Be Connected to Christ?

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

Editorial



Clark Floyd

Clark Floyd, editor of *Our Firm Foundation* magazine, has been co-host of the radio program *Bible Answers with Clark and Lee*, is a licensed attorney and an ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor. He has spoken internationally and makes his home in the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina.

“Whatever the opinions you may entertain in regard to casting your vote in political questions, you are not to proclaim it by pen or voice. Our people need to be silent upon questions which have no relation to the third angel’s message.” 2SM 336.

What a time to live in! Many things seem to be happening in the world that would indicate that all things could soon come to an end. The dollar has continually been losing ground against other currencies. Many people are losing their homes through mortgage foreclosures. Gas prices have continued to rise, as also do the prices at the supermarkets.

As we look at these things happening through a worldly vision, we begin to think that the answer to these problems could lie with one of the presidential candidates. We feel almost impelled in many instances to enter right into the political fray and make our opinions known as to which of the candidates can save us from the economic trouble at hand. But is this truly an option for Seventh-day Adventist Christians?

As I reminisce in regard to my life before Christianity, I remember how very important politics were. The law firm I belonged to was very political in many ways. One of our members became the United States congressman from Colorado. Some of our work related to whether the party we supported was in office. We represented the sheriff’s office for a period of time while

our candidate was sheriff. I served as county planning attorney and attorney for the County Board of Adjustment. The county attorney that was responsible for placing me in these positions was politically appointed.

Some of the income of our law firm was therefore related to the outcome of political elections and, of course, how we voted was connected to what kind of economic advantage we gained by our vote. In many instances people look to the economic advantage they will gain from any particular candidate.

In today’s society there are various considerations that can come up in regard to various candidates. Will they support the homosexual agenda? Who will be more likely to bring in a Sunday law? What about abortion? What about the Catholic vote? As Christians do we get pulled into these various issues? And many more could be named.

I recently read a book that spoke somewhat openly about the manipulations that go on behind the scenes in regard to candidates running for office, such as we have in this current political election. The book used the term “makeovers” to refer to professionals that are hired to change the image of candidates in order to make them more acceptable to a greater number of the voters. The candidates are counseled and programs are instigated to make the political candidate seem closer to center. They may be moved either from the right or the left. Apparently

more voters are at the center.

In our lead article this month, Jean Handwerk has attempted to pull together all the counsel we have from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to enable each of you, our readers, to better understand the relation Adventists should take in regard to political elections and voting. One of the inspired quotes that she included I repeat here: “God’s people have been called out of the world, that they may be separated from the world. It is not safe for them to take sides in politics, whatever preference they may have.” 3MR 40.

As we watch the signs of the times around us, we can see that we are very close to Sunday legislation. The papacy has often spoken of it, and others have also favored it.

We, as the remnant people of God, need to favor all that is moral and upright, but can we truly find that in any one political candidate or political party? Shouldn’t our concentration be more focused on getting out more information concerning end-time deceptions that are facing this world in regard to the antichrist, the state of the dead and modern spiritualism; the truth about literal and spiritual Israel; and the close relationship that each person must have to Jesus, and the three angels’ messages?

Please read this lead article with a prayerful heart, seeking from a spiritual standpoint to know what the Lord would have you to do.

Table of Contents

Volume 23
Number 10
October 2008

Our Mission - 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. —*Editor*

Executive Director: Joe Olson

executivedirector@hopeint.org

Editor: Clark Floyd

editorial@hopeint.org

Director of Hope For Health: Heather Olson, N.D., R.N., C.H.

hopeforhealth@hopeint.org

Bookstore Manager: Kaye Olson

shipping@hopeint.org

Layout & Design: Sherrie Steele

sherrie9950@yahoo.com

Our Firm Foundation is published monthly by:



Hope International

P.O. Box 220

Knoxville, Illinois 61448 USA

Phone: 309.343.1844

Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Central Time
Friday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Central Time

Fax: 309.343.3721

Email: office@hopeint.org

Web: www.hopeint.org

About Hope International - We are a lay ministry founded, supported, and operated by Seventh-day Adventists to assist God's Church in the proclamation of the Everlasting Gospel in every way that is consistent with the principles of God as revealed in Inspiration.

Invitation to Writers - We are accepting article-length manuscripts (1700 to 4000 words) for possible publication in *Our Firm Foundation*. We prefer that submissions be submitted in Word .doc format as a computer file. Include a digital picture and a short bio. Please address all correspondence to Editor, *Our Firm Foundation*, P.O. Box 220, Knoxville, IL 61448, or by email to editorial@hopeint.org.

Subscription Information: See page 30 • Shipping & Sales Tax: See page 30

Content credited in this publication is the property of its respective owner(s) and is licensed or used with permission. Other items are the property of Hope International.

Cover Photo: Shutterstock.com All Photos unless otherwise noted: Shutterstock.com

Volume 23, Number 10

Adventists and Voting
Page 4

Jean Handwerk

Christ the True Vine
Page 12

Ellen G. White

The Gospel According to
Christ - Part 3 - Page 14

A compilation and commentary
Paul F. Clark

**Being Punctual: Is It Really
That Important? Part 1**
Page 18

John Klump

The Enigma of Temporal
Prosperity - Page 22

Clark Floyd

News Watch
Page 24

Sulfur,

Methylsulfonylmethane,
and You - Page 26

Heather Olson, N.D.

Historical Footnotes
Page 29

Letters to the Editor
Page 31

Adventists and Voting

Jean Handwerk

The entire world will be affected by the person next voted to occupy the oval office in Washington, DC. What role might the newly-elected president play in prophetic fulfillment? Citizens are enjoined to exercise their Constitutional right and privilege to have a say in matters that directly affect them. We're told it's the "duty" of a free citizenry.

We also recognize that the principles governing Christian lives are radically different from those operating in secular lives. Nevertheless, Christians are to have an influence for good in the world, too. From Seventh-day Adventists determined to act only in accord with heavenly principles on this matter as on any other, the question arises, "What is heaven's counsel regarding voting?"

Some say individuals should follow their own consciences on the matter. God's counsel is clear on that course, however: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" So who dares follow

that?

True to His loving nature, God has not left His people without guidance. What follows stems from an effort to understand the voting issue more fully from a spiritual perspective and to answer the question about Adventists and voting. The emphasis throughout is supplied.

Early Adventists Abstained

Very early in Seventh-day Adventist history, the public was aware that Seventh-day Adventists did not vote in political campaigns. "Men of intemperance have been in the office today in a flattering manner expressing their approbation of the course of the Sabbathkeepers not voting and expressed hopes that they will stick to their course and like the Quakers, not cast their vote. . . ." E. G. White diary, Sunday, March 6, 1859; *Temperance*, 256.

We read in Inspiration, "As the year 1861 dawned, the United States was in somewhat of a turmoil. The recent Presidential

election [Lincoln] had polarized the Northern States and the Southern States, where slaves were held. Sabbathkeeping Adventists had no sympathy with slavery and were aware, of course, of the tensions and excitement that attended the Presidential campaign of 1860, which led to the election of Abraham Lincoln, but they had kept quite aloof from matters relating to the political situation. . . ." 1BIO 462.

Adventists did not use the sacred desk and hour for political arguments, as did other churches. This was done, despite questions that arose: "As we do not engage in the war and pray for union and preach in regard to union, suspicions are aroused." 5MR 60. Suspicion was soon allayed by other Adventist activity, though.

Prohibition Activism

Adventist abstention from the ballot box did not apply in all situations. Alcohol was one of the most prevalent social problems of 18th and 19th century America.

A study of Adventist history and inspired counsel related to voting.

Adventist church leadership encouraged voting in support of temperance. “In the early summer of 1881 at the Des Moines, Iowa, camp meeting, a resolution was placed before the delegates which read: ‘Resolved, that we express our deep interest in the temperance movement now going forward in this state; and that we instruct all our ministers to use their influence among our churches and with the people at large to induce them to put forth every consistent effort, by personal labor, and *at the ballot box*, in favor of the prohibitory amendment of the constitution, which the Friends of Temperance are seeking to secure.’” RH, July 5, 1881.

Some delegates “objected to the clause which called for action at ‘the ballot box,’ and urged its deletion. Mrs. White, who was attending this camp meeting, had retired, but she was summoned to give her counsel. Writing of it at the time, she says: ‘I dressed and found I was to speak to the point of whether our people should vote for

prohibition. I told them “Yes,” and spoke twenty minutes.’--Letter 6, 1881.” *Temperance*, 255.

Voting was to be done on Sabbath, if necessary: “. . . Perhaps I shall shock some of you if I say, If necessary, vote on the Sabbath day for prohibition if you cannot at any other time.” 3BIO 160.

Ellen White was a popular, ardent speaker on the temperance topic. “How can Christian men and women tolerate this evil? . . . There is a cause for the moral paralysis upon society. Our laws sustain an evil which is sapping their very foundations. Many deplore the wrongs which they know exist, but consider themselves free from all responsibility in the matter. This cannot be. Every individual exerts an influence in society. In our favored land, every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation. Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side of temperance and virtue?” RH, October 15, 1914.

The voting she referred to, of course, was the desired, anticipated, single-issue state referendum on a Constitutional amendment for prohibition. But what about voting for particular *candidates* during local, state and national elections, when far more than a single issue would be faced by the elected official during his or her term?

Voting in Local Elections

In fact, the evils of intemperance were so pervasive in society and in individual lives that advocacy of the single issue of temperance was considered sufficient ground to vote for a man for *local* office. “After it was time to close [the meeting], the subject of voting was considered and dwelt upon. James first talked, then Brother [J. N.] Andrews talked, and it was thought by them best to give their influence in favor of right and against wrong. They think it right

to vote in favor of temperance men being in office in our city instead of by their silence running the risk of having intemperate men put in office. Brother [David] Hewitt tells his experience of a few days [since] and is settled that [it] is right to cast his vote. Brother [Josiah] Hart talks well. Brother [Henry] Lyon opposes. No others object to voting, but Brother [J. P.] Kellogg begins to feel that it is right. Pleasant feelings exist among all the brethren. O that they may all act in the fear of God.” 2SM 2 (brackets original). Men known to be intemperate “should not by vote of the people be placed in positions of trust.” *Signs of the Times*, July 8, 1880.

Voting for Lincoln

That excerpt was in reference to local elections. We still need to know about voting for candidates in state and national elections. We know that in 1860 some Adventists voted for Lincoln, a strong advocate of preserving the union and opponent of expanding slavery into more states.” The work of the young church “had expanded steadily from east to west, [but] it had not, prior to the Civil War, penetrated the Southern slave-holding states. Those who had accepted the message were united in their opposition to the principles of human slavery. They were patriotically in sympathy with the Northern States, and with the government of the Union at Washington.”¹

While James White did not condemn those who voted, he expressly wrote that they “voted for Abraham Lincoln” because “not one man among Seventh-day Adventists . . . has the least sympathy for secession,” perhaps to make the point that they did not necessarily vote for the man himself, but for the principle he advocated. RH, August 21, 1860.²

Biblical Counsel Not Found

Indeed, as the 1860 presidential election vote neared, the political issues of secession and slavery so dominated the nation's conscience that the believer's proclamation of the three angels' messages might have been sidetracked, or the public distracted from hearing the messages. Just months before the election, James White warned against this, but he took no position on voting, stating instead, "We are not prepared to prove from the Bible that it would be wrong for a believer in the third message to go in a manner becoming his profession, and cast his vote. We do not recommend this, neither do we oppose. . . ." He then went on to express certain strong reservations: "But we do believe that he who enters into the spirit of the coming contest, loses the spirit of the present truth and endangers his own soul."³ Ibid.

“...We are in no wise to become involved in political questions...”

In 1860, early church leaders could not prove conclusively from the Bible that voting would violate Christian principles. Indeed, such a study would yield little historical precedent in ancient Israel's experience. There was no voting, per se, during the theocracy. The service attendant upon the sanctuary was divinely decreed. God Himself selected the first three kings. After Solomon, leadership was either inherited or seized. Northern Israel was scattered forever; southern Judah

became subject to four successive kingdoms. Finally, claiming "no king but Caesar," God's chosen people ended their history. God then raised up *spiritual* Israel, but by the time John, the last surviving apostle, completed his gospel about AD 95, God's people still had no say in governmental matters, being still subject to Rome. Thus it is not surprising that James White would say "we are not prepared to prove from the Bible" any position regarding voting.

Partaking of Their Sins

However, Seventh-day Adventists are not left without spiritual guidance. Almost two millennia after the Biblical canon closed, we read a warning principle from the Spirit of Prophecy regarding typical state or national politics and voting for candidates. "The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes silence is eloquence. Christ calls upon His followers to come into unity on the pure gospel principles which are plainly revealed in the word of God. *We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for* [individuals]. We cannot with safety take part in any political schemes. We cannot labor to please men who will use their influence to repress religious liberty, and to set in operation oppressive measures to lead or compel their fellow men to keep Sunday as the Sabbath. The first day of the week is not a day to be revered. It is a spurious sabbath, and *the members of the Lord's family cannot participate with the men who exalt this day, and violate the law of God by trampling upon His Sabbath. The people of God are not to vote to place such men in office; for when they do this, they are partakers with them of the sins which they commit while in office.*" FE 475.



(Consider current moral and religious liberty issues such as faith-based initiatives; the solicitation of religious leaders' input in political affairs and politicians' attendance at Catholic masses, laws regarding same-sex marriages, abortions, tobacco and liquor sales; "hate speech"; school prayer, to name but a few. How many voters truly know candidates' positions on each of these issues and others, and whether they can be trusted to fulfill campaign promises, if elected? This demonstrates the truth that "we do not know whom we are voting for.")

Avoiding Election Controversy

Especially were those who intended to vote to keep silent on political issues, lest they draw



Should not that influence and that vote be cast on the side of temperance and virtue?" RH, Oct. 15, 1914.

Some regard those words as a general principle favorable to voting. However, those sentences cannot honestly be generalized to all laws enacted. Unlike referendums, few laws are subject to public vote. Nor can it be generalized to voting in all elections. Over and over again, the principle that appears most clearly is that when a moral issue is presented for a vote, as the temperance amendment was, SDAs would be remiss if they fail to avail themselves of the opportunity. However, missing is a clear go-ahead to vote in general elections at any level. For example, it was not even safe to vote for Prohibition Party candidates, because that party eventually supported the Sunday-law goals of the National Reform Association.

Pen and Voice and Vote

We are not to be silent or inactive, however. By pen and voice and vote, we are to act on moral principle. "The advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty unless they exert their influence by precept and example—by voice and pen and vote. . . ." RH, November 8, 1881. "While we are *in no wise to become involved in political questions*, yet it is our privilege to take our stand decidedly on all questions relating to temperance reform. . . ." *Temperance*, 253.

Being Single-Minded

In direct contrast to the single issue of temperance reform, though, "political questions" just referred to did and do *not* involve single, straightforward issues and consequences. Therefore, we read that we may not "with safety" vote for political parties or individual candidates. We are not to unite with unbelievers in political

campaigning. Our time and energy is to be single-minded to the glory of God and advancement of His kingdom, free of any unnecessary earthly draws. It is no small thing that we should share in the sins committed in office by those who are elected by our votes!

“Our citizenship is in heaven.”

A correlative warning applied to those who, by their votes or failure to vote, supported liquor sales. "And those who by their votes sanction the liquor traffic will be held accountable for the wickedness that is done by those who are under the influence of strong drink.--Letter 243a, 1905." *Ibid.*, 255.

Regardless of what we've done in the past before joining the Advent movement, "we are not to compromise principle by yielding to the opinions and prejudices which we may have encouraged before we united with God's commandment-keeping people. We have enlisted in the army of the Lord, and we are not to fight on the enemy's side, but on the side of Christ, where we can be a united whole, in sentiment, in action, in spirit, in fellowship. Those who are Christians indeed will be branches of the true vine, and will bear the same fruit as the vine. They will act in harmony, in Christian fellowship. They will not wear political badges, but the badge of Christ.

"What are we to do, then?—Let political questions alone. . . . Christians have come out of darkness into the light. They have put on Christ, and they wear the badge of truth and obedience. They are governed by the elevated and holy principles which Christ

others into the discussions and distract from our work at hand. "We are not as a people to become mixed up with political questions. All would do well to take heed to the Word of God, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers in political strife, nor bind with them in their attachments. There is no safe ground in which they can stand and work together. The loyal and the disloyal have no equal ground on which to meet.

". . . Keep your voting to yourself. Do not feel it your duty to urge everyone to do as you do." --Letter 4, 1898. 2SM 336-7.

Voting for Virtue

In 1914, Ellen White wrote, "In our favored land, every voter has some voice in determining what laws shall control the nation.

expressed in His life. But the world is governed by principles of dishonesty and injustice.” Ibid., 475–6.

Political discussions and debates are inappropriate for the Christian. In the context of politics, God’s prophet wrote: “Christ is our teacher, our ruler, our strength, our righteousness; and in Him we are pledged to shun any course of action that will cause schism. *The questions at issue in the world are not to be the theme of our conversation.* . . . Let there be no shade of strife among Seventh-day Adventists. . . .” Ibid., 478.

Accounting for Our Time

An additional point to consider is this: “Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.” COL 342. One must weigh the time spent gathering enough information to vote intelligently versus the time spent in mining the Word for promises and power to sustain us and equip us for the days ahead, and/or the time spent preparing others who have not yet heard the messages of truth.

During the battle for prohibition, agitation for women voting had arisen, in hopes that those additional votes could assure the amendment’s success. Mrs. White commented on a woman who “had been thinking and dwelling upon these things and her mind was ripe upon them, while my work was of another character.” 10MR 69.

“We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for.”

Mrs. White further wrote, “There are speculations as to woman’s rights, and her duty in regard to voting; but many women have had no discipline which would qualify them to understand the bearing of important questions. They have lived a life of fashion and self-gratification. . . . They lack breadth of thought and intellectual culture. . . . They are not prepared to act wisely in political matters. . . .” CTBH 159. Thus is made plain the general principle that unless one is inclined and disciplined to search out the matters at hand, one is “not prepared to act wisely.”

That Higher Standard

Also, a strong point is made about the “contaminating influence” of dwelling unnecessarily on earthly matters. “The condition of being received into the Lord’s family is coming out from the world, separating from all its contaminating influences. The people of God are to have no connection with idolatry in any of its forms. They are to reach a higher standard. We are to be distinguished from the world, and then God says, ‘I will receive you as members of My royal family, children of the heavenly King.’ As believers in the truth we are to be distinct in practice from sin and sinners. Our citizenship is in heaven.” FE 481.

Earthly matters encompass much, but one matter on earth which has to do with spiritual things is religious liberty—freedom of conscience. We are enjoined in Scripture to pray for the land in which we live, as its prosperity has a direct bearing on our own. “And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” Jer 29:7. Nevertheless, “true Christian influence, exerted for the accomplishment of the



work God has appointed, is a precious agency, and it must not be united with politics, or bound up in a confederacy with unbelievers. God is to be the center of attraction. Every mind that is worked by the Holy Spirit will be satisfied with Him.” MS, June 16, 1899.

We should be aware that, as it was in 1888, “. . . efforts are being made to restrict our religious liberties. The Sunday question is now assuming large proportions. An amendment to our Constitution is being urged in Congress, and when it is obtained, oppression must follow.” RH, Dec. 18, 1888. On such matters affecting religious liberty, we are to use “pen and voice and vote” to promote and protect it.



Helping to Enact National Laws

In response to inquiries made while researching this article's topic, one respondent wrote, "There is an interesting statement Mrs. White made that seems to suggest that running for such offices is not outside the Christian's legitimate sphere. Here it is: 'Dear youth, what is the aim and purpose of your life? Are you ambitious for education that you may have a name and position in the world? Have you thoughts that you dare not express, that you may one day stand upon the summit of intellectual greatness; that you may sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in these aspirations. You may every one of you make your mark. You

should be content with no mean attainments. Aim high, and spare no pains to reach the standard.' FE 82; also found in RH, Aug. 19, 1884; MYP 36; among other places." The respondent reasoned, "If Ellen White wrote so positively about *filling* such positions, can it be against our principles to *vote* for candidates to such positions?"

To "help to enact laws for the nation" indicates activity at the national level and can be interpreted as encouragement to run for political office. Yet how would one square such counsel with all the other inspired counsel throughout this article that describes widespread "political corruption" and "principles of dishonesty and injustice" that prophecy tells us will eventually succumb to pressure to enact a Sunday law, and with all the counsel to avoid political strife and take up the critical work before us of warning the world of the issues soon to close human probation? Clearly, "intellectual greatness" is not exclusive to high political office, nor is it even a requirement. Also, to "help enact laws for the nation" is not necessarily referring to political office-holding. One can mightily serve by testifying before legislative and deliberative bodies, as did A. T. Jones during the 1888 Sunday law hearings.

Acting in the Political Sphere

We have more examples of intelligent action within the political sphere during Prohibition agitation: "Adventists also tried to influence legislators to pass prohibition laws. . . . Several Adventist leaders, along with representatives from other churches and temperance organizations, appeared before the House Judiciary Committee to testify on behalf of the amendment. Although the bill failed to receive the two-thirds majority necessary to send it to the states

for ratification, the antiliqor forces claimed a significant victory because more than half of the legislators voted for the proposal Whenever such bills were pending in Congress, Adventist publications encouraged readers to send petitions and strong letters to their elected officials asking them to support the measures. . . . Adventists' efforts were deliberately calculated to influence voters to support prohibition laws. The push for literature sales was especially strong when elections or votes in Congress were imminent. . . .

A Positive Public Opinion

"Adventists found prohibition activism to be an excellent way to create a more positive public perception of their church. . . . At the same time, Adventists' willingness to work with other groups in this cause showed that they no longer felt such an extreme distinction between themselves and the rest of American society as at some points in their history. . . .

"[And] amid all their activity of persuading voters, writing to elected officials, distributing literature, and holding temperance rallies, Adventists were reminded to draw on another resource: the power of God."⁴

As a point of interest, the amendment passed in 1919 (the 18th Amendment) and remained in effect until 1933, when it was repealed (the 21st Amendment). "When public opinion turned against the ban on alcohol, Adventists fought tirelessly against repeal." Ibid.

Consider this historical precedent, as well: Promised "a free discussion, with competent persons, of the questions in dispute[,] Luther was anxious to appear before the emperor" to speak in defense of religious freedom. GC88 146.

Adventists directly influenced the Women's Christian Temperance Union to disassociate from the political party whose goal was a Sunday law. Editorial and publishing work was especially critical during that period. And Christians today can develop their God-given talents to high degrees to serve as organizational leaders and representatives; and as educators, writers, advisers, and authorities in matters with which the nation and legislators have to do, according to their variable areas of expertise. Especially are capable people needed to defend and uplift religious liberty at this time, arousing the "spirit of true Protestantism." 5T 716.

Aspiring to Political Office

Does this rule out aspiring to political office—and voting for such persons, if somehow one could be assured the candidate would operate only on high moral principles? Indeed, Biblical history gives us many examples of faithful people in high governmental positions, but none endeavored for the positions they occupied. But what about an Adventist running for political office?

Unavoidably, desiring political office means running under the auspices of a supportive political party, with a campaign strategy and fundraising, etc. Wouldn't this be yoking oneself with unbelievers? Might not the same be said regarding voting for men representing a political party? Over and over, the principle is plainly set before us:

"They have weakened their hold on God by uniting in politics with unbelievers. By parading their political belief before the world, just as worldlings do, they have created division, strife, and jealousy among themselves. The influence of this course of action is a great offense to God, and He cannot and will not prosper those

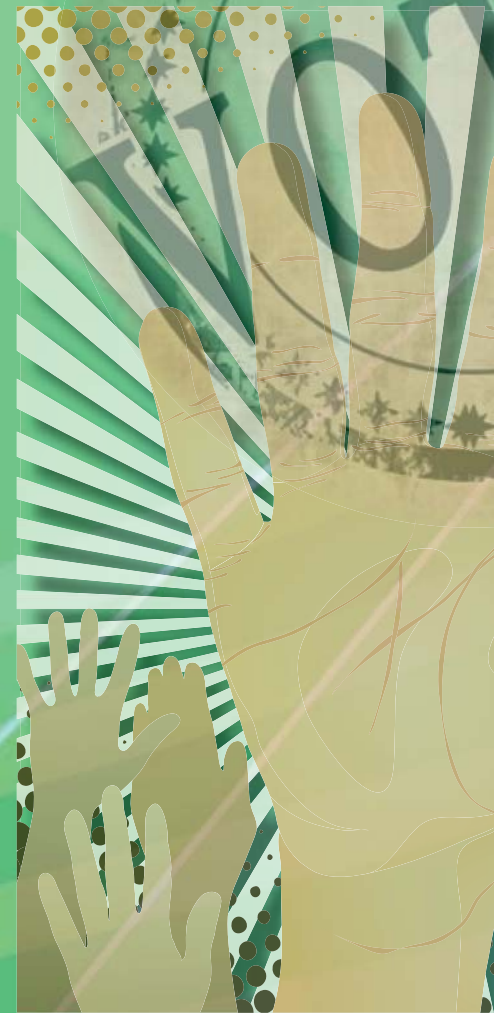
who follow it. . . .

"Those who have distinguished themselves in politics, who have paraded their political differences, were looked upon, not only by human spectators but by the Lord Jesus, who gave His life to save a perishing world. The heavenly universe watched their course with disapproval. . . ." 9MR 130.

Under His Theocracy

"God's people have been called out of the world, that they may be separated from the world. It is *not safe* for them to take sides in politics, whatever preference they may have. They are ever to remember that they are one in Christ. God calls upon them to enter their names as under His theocracy. He cannot approve of those who link up with worldlings. *We are entirely out of our place when we identify ourselves with party interests.* Let us not forget that we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We are soldiers of the cross of Christ, and our work is to advance the interests of His kingdom." MS 67, 1900; 3MR 40.

Especially are capable people needed to defend and uplift religious liberty at this time, arousing the "spirit of the true Protestantism."



Our Lord has shown us "the way wherein we should walk." We dare not rely on our own perceived wisdom, for "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death." "Our work is to watch, and wait, and pray. Search the Scriptures. Christ has given you warning not to mingle with the world. We are to come out from among them and be separate, '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 Cor. 6:17, 18). Whatever the opinions you may entertain in regard to casting your vote in political questions, you are not to proclaim it by pen or voice.



Our people need to be silent upon questions which have no relation to the third angel's message. If ever a people needed to draw nigh to God, it is Seventh-day Adventists. There have been wonderful devices and plans made. A burning desire has taken hold of men or women to proclaim something, or bind up with something; they do not know what. But the silence of Christ upon many subjects was true eloquence. . . ." Letter 4, 1898; 2SM 337.

Heavenly Citizenship

We are to remember whose we are—whose law reigns supreme in our lives: “. . . It is a mistake for you to link your interests with any

political party, to cast your vote with them or for them. Those who stand . . . as laborers together with God in any line, have no battles to fight in the political world. Their citizenship is in heaven. The Lord calls upon them to stand as separate and peculiar people. He would have no schisms in the body of believers. His people are to possess the elements of reconciliation. Is it their work to make enemies in the political world?—No, no. They are to stand as subjects of Christ's kingdom, bearing the banner on which is inscribed, 'The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' They are to carry the burden of a special work, a special message. We have

a personal responsibility, and this is to be revealed before the heavenly universe, before angels, and before men. God does not call upon us to enlarge our influence by mingling with society, by linking up with men on political questions, but by standing as individual parts of His great whole, with Christ as our head. Christ is our Prince, and as His subjects we are to do the work appointed us by God.” FE 478.

In summary, do the inspired counsels approve or condone voting for a particular candidate, if one “keeps his vote to himself” and doesn't cause division anywhere by engaging in political discussions? The answer, based on this research, seems to be that when the vote is for a single-issue amendment pertaining to a moral or religious liberty issue, or for a candidate for local office who takes a firm stand on such issues, that vote is “blameless, and may be at some times highly proper.” (RH, May 23, 1865.⁵) Except for those circumstances, however, we must consider the following statement (quoted in fuller context earlier) as representative and definitive: “We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for. . . . They [We] are partakers with them of the sins which they commit while in office.” FE 475.

Jean Handwerk is a former teacher who writes from Delaware.

1 White, W. C., D. E. Robinson, and A. L. White, *The Views of Seventh-day Adventists Relative to Bearing Arms* (1864), 7. Extracts of the original draft appeared in the *Review and Herald*, November 26, 1936, as part of the series of articles entitled *Sketches and Memories of James and Ellen White*.

2 From Paul A. Gordon, Ellen G. White Estate Research Document “The Right to Vote—Shall I Exercise It?” (introduction).

3 Ibid.

4 Rachel Whitaker, “Drying up the Stream: Adventist Activists Answer the Call,” *Adventist Review*, January 22, 2004.

5 From Gordon, Part 1.

Christ the True Vine

Ellen G. White

*As the graft receives life when united to the vine,
so the sinner partakes of the divine nature when connected
with Christ by repentance and faith.*

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

Our heavenly Father planted on earth a goodly vine, whose fruit should be to eternal life. But this precious plant appeared to human eyes as a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness. When the claim was put forth that it was of heavenly origin, the men of Nazareth became enraged, and cast it from them. The inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem took the vine of God’s own planting, and bruised it, and trampled it under foot, hoping to utterly destroy it forever. But now the Husbandman removed this goodly vine, and planted it in his own garden, beyond the spoiler’s reach. The stock and root were concealed from human sight, but still “the branches run over the wall.” Thus grafts can be united to the vine, and, partaking of its nourishment, become flourishing branches, and bring forth much fruit.

Vine a Perfect Symbol

The figure of the vine is a perfect symbol. God sent his Son from the heavenly courts to a world seared and marred by the curse of sin. In Christ all fullness dwelt; in him was righteousness, peace, life,—everything necessary to man’s happiness and well-being. But the world hated the Son of the most high God. The world saw nothing attractive in him. The best gift of Heaven was slighted and spurned. Christ was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” yet “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” He was hated

by evil men because his character was spotless, his works righteous. He came as the Redeemer of the world; yet he was taken by cruel hands, and shamefully entreated and crucified. God raised him from the dead, and he ascended to Heaven to plead his blood as the propitiation for our sins.

Though invisible to mortal sight, Christ still lives as the Redeemer of the world, the representative of man in the heavenly courts, and the medium through whom all blessings flow to the fallen race. His love is without a parallel. We cannot estimate the value of his life of toil and sacrifice, the precious ransom paid for our redemption. Surely it is not too much to ask the heart’s best and holiest affections in return for such wondrous love.

Said the Saviour to his disciples: “I am the vine, ye are the branches.” “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” In this vine is all spiritual life. From the fullness of Christ alone can we obtain the nourishment that will enable us to bear fruit unto eternal life. The vine stock is unseen; but the branches, the members of his body, are visible. The branch that was apparently dry and leafless, by being connected with the living vine, becomes a part of it,—a partaker of its life and fatness. Fiber by fiber, and vein by vein, it adheres to the vine, till the life-giving sap causes it to bud, and blossom, and bear fruit.

Grafted into Life

The scion becomes a part of the vine by forming a perfect union with it. Thus it is with the sinner. The soul, dead in trespasses and sins, must experience a similar process in order to be reconciled to God, and to become a partaker of Christ’s life and joy. As the graft re-

ceives life when united to the vine, so the sinner partakes of the divine nature when connected with Christ by repentance and faith. This connection joins soul with soul, the finite with the infinite. When thus united, the words of Christ abide in us, and we are not actuated by a spasmodic feeling, but by a living, abiding principle.

Fruit from That Vine

Every branch united to the true vine brings forth fruit, not of its own kind, but that of the vine of which it has become a part. The Spirit of Christ flowing into the hearts of all who are truly united with him, makes them partakers of the divine nature. They will walk in the footsteps of their self-sacrificing, self-denying Redeemer. His purity and love will appear in their characters and their daily lives, while meekness and truth will guide their way.

The branch can maintain its connection with the living vine only on condition that it bear fruit.

“I am the true vine,” says Christ, “and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me [everyone who claims connection with me] that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.” This is the solemn warning that is addressed to each disciple. The careless and indifferent will after a time be overcome of temptation, and at last wholly separated from Christ.

Pruning of the Branches

But “every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Every fruitful branch is pruned; for even fruitful branches may display too much foliage, and appear what they really are not. Husbandmen clip off the surplus foliage of the vines,

and the tendrils that are grasping the rubbish of earth, thus making them more fruitful. And when the Master sees that worldliness, self-indulgence, and pride are cropping out in the lives of his followers, he prunes them. These hindering causes must be removed, and the defective overgrowth cut away, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Said Christ: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." The branch can maintain its connection with the living vine only on condition that it bear fruit. And the fruit borne on the Christian tree is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Rich clusters of this precious fruit will appear on every branch that is subjected to the pruning of the wise Husbandman. The result of union with Christ is purification of heart, a circumspect life, and a faultless character. Yet those who have attained to this degree of Christian perfection are the last to claim that they have any merits of their own. "Accepted in the Beloved," objects of their heavenly Father's constant care and unflinching mercy, they feel unworthy of the divine favor, and have too vivid a sense of utter dependence upon God to boast of their exalted position.

It is the duty of every child of God to store his mind with divine truth; and the more he does this, the more strength and clearness of mind he will have to fathom the deep things of God. And his growth in grace will be more and more vigorous, as the principles of truth are carried out in his daily life.

It is a sad fact that many who profess to be branches of the true vine show by their lives that they have no connection with it. Their words and actions, destitute of grace and meekness, resemble the stinging branches of the noxious thorn-tree, rather than the lovely, fruit-laden boughs of the precious vine. Love to God and love to our neighbor is the sum and substance of true piety. Those who are destitute of this love, and yet claim that they have gained high attainments in spiritual things, may for a time deceive their fellowmen, but they cannot deceive God. Says the true Wit-

ness, "I know thy works." And in the great day of final accounts, God "will render to every man according to his deeds."

Defective Branches

Many misunderstand the object for which they were created. They do not realize that they were placed here to bless humanity and glorify God, rather than to enjoy and glorify self. God is constantly pruning his people, cutting off profuse, spreading branches, that they may bear fruit to his glory, and not produce leaves only. Idols must be given up, the conscience must become more tender, the meditations of the heart must be spiritual, and the entire character must become symmetrical.

Love to God and love to our neighbor is the sum and substance of true piety.

Some who claim to be followers of Christ are withered branches, that must ere long be separated from the living vine. The love of the world has paralyzed their spiritual life, and they are not awake to the precious theme of redemption. The impression made on the world by these professed Christians is unfavorable to the religion of Christ. They manifest ambition and zeal in the business of the world; but they have little interest in things of eternal importance. The voice of God through his messengers is a pleasant song; but its sacred warnings, reproofs, and encouragements are all unheeded. Eternal interests are placed on a level with common things. The Holy Spirit is grieved, and its influence is withdrawn. Fruitful Christians are connected with God, and hence they are able to place a right value on eternal things. They feast upon the words of life; and whenever they listen to the "message of glad tidings," they can say, as did the disciples to whom Christ explained the prophecies on the way to Emmaus, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" It is the duty of every child of God to store his mind with divine truth; and the more he does this, the more strength and clearness of mind he will have to fathom the deep

things of God. And his growth in grace will be more and more vigorous, as the principles of truth are carried out in his daily life.

Taking the Nature of the Vine

He who is in harmony with God will constantly depend on him for strength. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." It should be our life-work to be constantly reaching forward to the perfection of Christian character, ever striving for conformity to the will of God. The efforts begun here will continue through eternity. The advancement made here will be sure when we enter upon the future life.

Those who are partakers of Christ's meekness, purity, and love, will be joyful in God, and will diffuse light and gladness around them. The thought that Christ died to obtain for us the gift of everlasting life is enough to call forth from our hearts the most sincere and fervent gratitude, and from our lips the most enthusiastic praise. God's promises are rich, and full, and free. Whoever will comply with the conditions may claim these promises, with all their wealth of blessing, as his own. And being thus abundantly supplied from the treasure-house of God, he may, in the journey of life, "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," thus blessing his fellow-men, and honoring his Creator. While our Saviour would guard his followers from self-confidence by the reminder, "Without me, ye can do nothing," he has coupled with it for our encouragement the gracious assurance, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

Signs of the Times, March 10, 1887.



Ellen G. White, 1827-1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an incalculable blessing to God's people around the world.



The Gospel According to Christ, Part 3

A Compilation and Commentary by Paul F. Clark

If salvation comes by “only believing,” then why concern ourselves with Jesus’ teachings about repenting, resisting evil, denying ourselves, guarding our words, forgiving others, having childlike humility and trust, and more?

This article completes a series of meditations on the teachings of Christ, which the author collectively terms “the gospel of Christ.”

Oil in Our Lamps

Jesus Christ, our Savior, expects us to do our part so that when He, “the Bridegroom,” comes, we will have enough oil of the Holy Spirit and character development so that our light, or witness for the Lord, shines brightly, and we can go in with Him to the “marriage of the Lamb” before the door is shut. He does not want us to be presumptuous so that we have no oil and are still searching for some in the city when the “midnight cry is made, Behold the bridegroom comes, go out to meet Him.” The five foolish, presumptuous “virgins,” unlike the five wise ones, have so marginalized Christianity in their lives, and have been so habitually late for the things of God, that characteristically they are even late for the Second Coming and find the door shut. Agonized, they hear

the words of doom: I know you not. Mt 25:1–12.



Use Your Talents Wisely

Likewise, Christ expects us to use good judgment in the use of the talents He has entrusted us. He expects us to use the talents of time, ability and money to the advancement of His cause. “He whose mind is enlightened by the opening of God’s word to his understanding will realize his responsibility to God and to the world, and he will feel that his talents must be developed in a way that will produce

the very best results; for he is to ‘show forth the praises’ of Him who has called him ‘out of darkness into His marvelous light.’ (1 Peter 2:9) While growing in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will realize his own imperfections, he will feel his real ignorance, and will seek constantly to preserve and put to the stretch his powers of mind, that he may become an intelligent Christian.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 37.

Health Related to Conscience

We need to recognize health as one of our talents and preserve it through temperate living. “Health is a great treasure. It is the richest possession that mortals can have.” (Ibid., 286.) “Health is an inestimable blessing and one more closely related to conscience and religion than many realize. It has a great deal to do with one’s capability for service and should be as sacredly guarded as the character, for the more perfect the health, the more perfect will be our efforts for the advancement



of God’s cause and for the blessing of humanity.” Ibid., 294.

Regarding Talents Loaned

In the parable, one servant received five talents, another two, and another, one. The first two doubled their talents and were told: “Well done, good and faithful servant. You’ve been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” (Mt 25:23) But the servant with the one talent who hid it was called “wicked” and “slothful” for not improving the talent. “Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which has ten talents. For unto every one that has, shall be given, and he shall have abundance. But from him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has. And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Mt 25:28–30) Why should there be any concern about oil or the development of talents if all it takes is belief to be saved?

Sheep and Goats Divided

“When the Son of man shall come, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come you blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world For I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink.

I was a stranger, and you took me in. Naked, and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.



Christ Does the Judging

“Then shall He say unto them on the left hand: Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Notice He says to the cursed that they didn’t do any of the things the righteous and blessed of the Father did above. “Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not unto Me.” “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” (Mt 25:31–46) Notice now that belief will not be the only factor upon which the King will divide the righteous from the wicked, but rather what good practical works of love were manifested toward Christ in the person of “one of the least of these” during their lifetimes upon earth. Notice that this division doesn’t come until the Second Coming. This points up how presumptuous it is for a person to say he is “saved (past tense) before Christ will come (future tense).

Let Christ do the judging, and let man do the obedient following.

The five foolish, presumptuous “virgins,” unlike the five wise ones, have so marginalized Christianity in their lives, and have been so habitually late for the things of God, that characteristically they are even late for the Second Coming and find the door shut.

Christ also indicated it was commendable to give Him public worship, obeisance and sacrifice as He congratulated Mary Magdalene for doing so, and thus condemned those with an accusing spirit. (Mt 26:10–13) Notice that the accusing spirit is of the devil so characterized as “the accuser of the brethren.” Rev 12:10.

More Than Believing

Jesus said before His crucifixion: “Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation; the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” (Mt 26:41) He modeled for us subordination to the Father: “Oh my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, *your will be done.*” (Mt 26:42) This is a little beyond “only believing.”

Jesus showed that we are not to forcefully defend ourselves or others: “Put up again your sword into its place, for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.” (Mt 26:52) Thus we conscientiously refuse to bear arms. This goes against the flesh and is thus more than “only believe.”

Then Jesus said: “Be not afraid. Go, tell my brethren. . . .” (Mt 28:10) “All power is given me in heaven and in earth. Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Mt 28:18–20) This goes considerably beyond “only believing.”

Exercising Faith

Jesus showed that it is also good to exercise faith when the leper said, "If you want to, you can make me clean." Jesus simply said: "I want to. Be clean." (Mk 1:40-41) When a palsied man was let down through a roof, "Jesus saw their faith" and said, "Son, your sins be forgiven." (Mk 2:4-5) Whether it is Sabbath or not, it is lawful to do good, especially to save life and limb. Thus to the man with the withered hand, He said on the Sabbath, "Stretch forth your hand." (Mk 3:1-5) When healed, the demoniac was to "go home to your friends, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for you, and has had compassion on you." Mk 5:19.

Jesus said, "Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (Mk 8:34) "Whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mk 8:38) Denying self, wearing a cross, and following the example of Christ is considerably more than "only believing."

Priority, Popularity, Power

Jesus indicated that the kingdom was for everyone, regardless of status or stage in life, when He said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mk 10:14) Jesus condemned pride by saying: "Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts, which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers. These shall receive the greater damnation." Mk 12:38-40.

We are not saved in the past, or even in the present, but "shall be saved" if we remain "faithful unto the end."

Jesus indicated that giving is valued in heaven more by proportion than by

the amount, when observing a poor widow that threw in an offering of only two mites. He said: "This poor widow has cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Mk 12:43-44.

We are not to be lulled into a false sense of security, for Jesus says: "Watch

my Father's business?" (Lk 2:49) Thus showing that it is proper to put a priority on the will of God even over that of our earthly parents, and even at a dependent age (in this case, age twelve).

We are not to worry about popularity, for Jesus said, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you. For so did their fathers to the false prophets." Lk 6:26.

"Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Lk 6:38) "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." Lk 6:45.

Death is not the end for the Christian, for when the widow's only son died, Jesus said, "Weep not." Then He touched the bier and said, "Young man, arise." Lk 7:13-14. Thus Jesus showed He had power over death, both now and at His Second Coming.

Jesus taught that he that is forgiven most would love the Lord most for the rich grace bestowed. (Lk 7:41-43) He also taught faith, as when he told Mary Magdalene, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Lk 7:50.

Two Factors in Salvation

Belief and faith are components of salvation, but so are good works, if you read all of the Gospel According to Christ. In a couple of places, Jesus said, "Believe only," but it was only in connection with healing the fleshly body for this life, and not for eternal salvation. Mk 5:36; Lk 8:50.

In addition to belief and faith, He not only taught but bodily demonstrated that baptism, among other things, should occur as part of our progress



... lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." (Mk 13:35-37) "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." (Future tense) (Mk 16:16) We are not saved in the past, or even in the present, but "shall be saved" if we remain "faithful unto the end." Rev 12:10.

Jesus said: "How is it that you sought me? Wist you not that I must be about



toward eternal life. Note that when John the Baptist demurred from baptizing Christ, Jesus said, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.” Mt 3:15.

We need to read all of the Word of God and “rightly divide” it. Too many pulpits preach only “one word” or “one verse” theology, and thus are selfishly selective of the Word of God. It is not

We should use the *whole* Word of God as a sieve to sift out any deception. Notice it wasn’t “only believe” when the lawyer asked Christ what he should “do to inherit eternal life.”

Jesus answered by asking, “What is written in the law? How readest thou?”

The lawyer quoted Leviticus 19:18, and Jesus commended him by saying,



only poor scholarship, but also a trick and deception of Satan. We are not to despise other voices, “for he that is not against us is for us.” (Lk 9:50) But we should “test the spirits whether they be of God,” and only “hold fast that which is good.”

Works do not supplant grace, but rather supplement grace in our relationship to God.

“You have answered correctly. This do and you shall live.” (Lk 10:50) Because of even this one statement of what is necessary to inherit eternal life, should we say that faith or belief is unnecessary? God forbid! We must read and understand the whole Bible, and then we’ll know that we need a balanced gospel showing the divine interaction of both faith and works. If we read all of the writings of the apostle Paul, we’ll find that

balanced gospel. While Paul said, “. . . Not by works, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:9), he also said “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure.” Ph 2:12–13.

We could never work our way to heaven on our own, or Christ wouldn’t have had to die on the cross. Works do not supplant grace, but rather supplement grace in our relationship to God. “Do we make void the law through grace? God forbid! Rather we establish the law.” (Ro 3:31) “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Ro 7:12.

We must recognize that we owe our Saviour a debt of love, so that we cooperate with Him in salvation by being coworkers with Him, “letting our light so shine, that others may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven.” (Mt 5:16) We must assist Christ in the finishing work of God on earth. He has asked us to pray for workers to help Him bring in the great harvest. To partially repay this debt of love, Christ has stated, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” (Jn 14:15) Also, “a new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (Jn 13:34) Also, “all will know you are my disciples if you have love for one another.” (Jn 13:35) And, “greater love has no man than he lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you.” Jn 15:13–14.

I will take the words of Christ above every other contributor to the Bible, including the apostle Paul. Nevertheless, both Christ and Paul balance faith and works, if you read everything they have to say.

Paul F. Clark is a free-lance Seventh-day Adventist writer from Louisiana.

Being Punctual: Is It Really That Important?

John Klump

Loving others as ourselves and esteeming them better than ourselves implies we will not “steal” their time by keeping them waiting.



Part 1





Each of us has probably been kept waiting by a friend or an associate who agreed to meet us at a particular time. And in turn it is likely that each of us has kept others waiting because we were tardy ourselves. We may have even felt very guilty for keeping others waiting and vowed to make the necessary changes to become more considerate. This article is a discussion from a Christian perspective on the subject of being punctual.

Agape Love

In Matthew 22:34–40 the lawyer asks Jesus which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus responds, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

These verses reveal the motivation of the converted heart. The true Christian will love God and love man with all the heart and soul. It is interesting to note the word “love” used in these verses is the agape form of love, which conveys a respect for God and for one’s neighbor. It is not the philial form of the word “love,” which conveys an emotional attachment or fondness. Philial love is not commanded in the Bible.

Esteeming Others More

Closely related, the Bible teaches in Philippians 2:3 that if we are Christians, we will esteem others better than ourselves. We will respect the needs of others instead of simply thinking of our own needs and desires. There are many ways to do this. One simple and often overlooked way is to be punctual when we agree to get together with a friend or arrive at a meeting.

There are myriad traits which can be used to describe the Christian. Among those traits are those found in Galatians 5:22–23, which list the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Although this list is not complete, it paints a mental picture of Jesus and His true followers.

We notice immediately that being punctual is not on this list of Christian traits, so the question must be asked, is being punctual really an important aspect of the Christian character? “Punctual,” as defined in *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, simply means to be on time—for example, to be at a meeting place when the meetings begins. I hope that after you read this article you will contemplate this subject from a Christian perspective.

Recognizing Weaknesses

God made each of us unique. Each of us has a different personal history, personality and temperament, which in turn reflect our strengths and our weaknesses. But as Christians, our weaknesses don’t have to remain as parts of our characters. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that each of us can become a new person. This means we can have new minds or new attitudes with new desires. If we believe that our Lord can give us new minds while here on this earth, we must be ready to believe that He would not have us wallow in our weaknesses, especially if our weaknesses are hurting others or hurting our Lord. Our loving Savior wants us to grow in our relationship with Him and with one another. And one of the most difficult obstacles to personal growth is the failure to recognize our weaknesses.

When we keep others waiting for us, we are stealing time from them, and we are breaking the eighth commandment.

I believe it is a part of human nature to feel as though we can easily discern someone else’s weaknesses a mile away, but when it comes to discerning our own, our spiritual eyesight gets a little blurry. How often do we minimize the weaknesses within our hearts or simply deny them altogether? How many times have we defended our actions by saying, “That’s just the way I am,” or “That’s the way I was raised”? How often have we viewed our own tardiness as being “no big deal”?

To Be Christlike

How does the Lord view such spiritual myopia? The Bible is not simply a collection of facts and stories. It is the inspired Word of God, which is designed to change us from the inside as we come to know the loving character of Christ our Healer. The word “Christian” means “Christlike.” True Christianity is about experiencing the love of Jesus so much that we allow the Holy Spirit to replace our old characters with the character of Christ. Christians often think of themselves as the clay and the Holy Spirit as the potter. In this comparison the vessel is made completely new; it is not a modification of the old. The new vessel represents the new Christlike character. As Christians who believe in God’s Word, we no longer need to live in the prison of our own sinful characters. We can be set free from hurtful habits, cultivated sinful tendencies and egocentric attitudes.

One of the most difficult obstacles to personal growth is the failure to recognize our weaknesses

During the course of our lives as we walk with the Lord, as we study His Word and have personal communion with Jesus, as we accept Jesus as our Savior and our Guide, He will reveal to us the sinful desires and habits that

live deep in our hearts, to which we heretofore have been blind. He will then give us the power to gain victory over these desires and habits which are unChristlike. We will become new creatures when we follow the Master with all of our hearts. We will acquire new values, new motives and new priorities. Our desires will change as we change. That which we once loved, we will hate, and that which we once hated, we will love. Regardless of what weaknesses we now possess, the Lord has promised victory over these weaknesses, even if they are hatred, anxiety, impatience, envy, greed, intemperance, anger, ingratitude or simply habitual tardiness.

Let me now expand upon the idea



of being habitually late. We would all agree there are events in our lives which are of no consequence if we are tardy. An example would be a social occasion such as a church picnic at which we arrive a few minutes late. As long as others are not relying upon us to begin the event, or we are not caus-

ing a hardship upon others, or we are not breaking a commitment to others, there is no harm in arriving after the starting time. There are other events, though, for which late arrival directly or indirectly affects the lives of friends, family or associates in a negative way. Each situation must be examined individually to determine into which category the event falls. A prayer offered in honesty and humility will usually provide much insight regarding which situation requires being punctual.

Being God's People

God has called His people to become a peculiar people. What does this mean—to be a peculiar people? It means God's people will place Him



above all things in this world, and they will place others above themselves, even though they suffer worldly loss. The true followers of Christ have submitted themselves to His ways, even though these ways will seem foreign to the unbeliever. God's people consider the seventh-day Sabbath a bless-

ing, not a restriction. They consider it a privilege to return tithes, not simply a requirement. God's people consider His law a loving reflection of His character, rather than a suffocating yoke designed to restrict happiness. True believers will not have the same values, priorities and goals as nonbelievers. They will sometimes seem out of place in this world of sin and selfishness. The goal of the true believer is to abide in Christ and reveal Christ to others through thoughts, words and action, and their motive is love for Jesus and love for others. Their experience is one of constant spiritual growth. Old habits of sin and selfishness will die out and a new-found respect and concern for others will take place in the changed heart. The believer will see his constant need of a Savior and will allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work in him. This growth process will include a concern for others and a sense of personal responsibility to others. Included in this will be a realization of the importance of being punctual.

Not an Insignificant Issue

Being habitually punctual may seem like an insignificant Christian characteristic. There are so many Christian characteristics that seem more important than simply being on time. Humility, honesty, kindness, helpfulness, faithfulness, patience and love are but a few of them. But, for the Christian, humility is inextricably linked to honesty, faithfulness is joined to patience, and love for others is intimately associated with a personal sense of responsibility to

others. The mature Christian knows the character of Christ and desires to be like Him in every respect. Christianity is a package deal.

If we, as Christians, are ready to love our enemies, then we should be willing to be on time for our friends.

Jesus is longing for the complete transformation of the entire heart in His followers, not just a superficial change of behavior in one or two areas of life. We may profess Christianity with our lips, but if we routinely ignore our commitment to others to be punctual, then we have outwardly revealed an inner attitude which betrays our Christian profession. Our actions speak louder than our words. A true desire to be consistently punctual stems from a sense of responsibility to others because of our agape love or respect for them. It stems from our concern for others. If we, as Christians, are ready to love our enemies, then we should be willing to be on time for our friends.

God is Punctual

The American culture, for the most part, adheres to a rigid time schedule. Our work schedules may require us to begin work at 8:00 a.m. If we consistently arrive at 8:15 or 8:30 a.m., we may soon find ourselves without jobs. Our heavenly Father and Jesus the Son operate on a perfect time schedule. God is the ultimate when we speak of being punctual. The birth of Jesus was foretold in the Old Testament; the event occurred at exactly the right moment in time. The book of Daniel, along with other Old Testament books, reveals a sequence of perfectly-timed prophetic events, such as the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the baptism and crucifixion of Jesus. This should convince any serious student of eschatology that our Lord is a God of perfect order and perfect timing. Given the perfect timing of past prophetic events, we can be assured that when Jesus returns to earth a second time, He will arrive exactly on schedule and not one minute late. Jesus is our example in all things. Doesn't it seem consistent that believers in Christ should entreat the Lord for wisdom and ability to be well-ordered and timely in the everyday affairs of our own lives?

To be continued.

John Klump is an orthodontist practicing in Alamogordo, New Mexico. He and his wife Diana have four daughters.

The Enigma of Temporal Prosperity

Clark Floyd

Although God blesses us with temporal prosperity, He sometimes removes it to draw us closer to Him.

God has truly blessed America. It began as a Protestant nation and, except for a couple of downturns in the economy, it has been blessed with temporal prosperity throughout its years of existence.

Temporal Prosperity's Blessings and Curses

However, temporal prosperity is not always a blessing, as will be shown in the following study. Often as temporal prosperity comes, nearness to God dissipates and much evil is the result.

"In the time of its temporal prosperity Nineveh was a center of crime and wickedness. Inspiration has characterized it as 'bloody city, . . . full of lies and robbery.' In figurative language the prophet Nahum compared the Ninevites to a cruel, ravenous lion. 'Upon whom,' he inquired, 'hath not

thy wickedness passed continually?' Nahum 3:1, 19." *Prophets and Kings*, 265.

We can see negative results of temporal prosperity in America, as well as the positive. Even though the standard of living has been good, crime has increased year by year. Homosexuality has become an enormous force. Abortion has taken many, many lives. Entertainment has become the great pastime with competitive sports, television and the movies occupying a large portion of people's lives. Even true religion has given in to entertainment and abandonment of purpose.

Salvation of Souls Paramount

"The salvation of souls should be our first consideration. I am troubled when I see many rejoicing in temporal prosperity, for those who possess worldly treasure seldom seek earnestly to secure the heavenly. They are in danger of falling into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which

drown man in destruction. . . ." *Upward Look*, 37.

When the Israelites returned from their captivity in Babylon, instead of carrying forward the work of God, they got totally involved in taking care of their own houses and lives.

I am troubled when I see many rejoicing in temporal prosperity, for those who possess worldly treasure seldom seek earnestly to secure the heavenly.

"For over a year the temple was neglected and well-nigh forsaken. The people dwelt in their homes and strove to attain temporal prosperity, but their situation was deplorable. Work as they might they did not prosper. The very elements of nature seemed to conspire against them. Because they had let the temple lie waste, the Lord sent upon their substance a wasting drought. God had bestowed upon them the fruits of field and garden, the corn and the wine and the oil, as a token of His favor; but because they had used these bountiful gifts so selfishly, the blessings were removed." *Prophets and Kings*, 573.

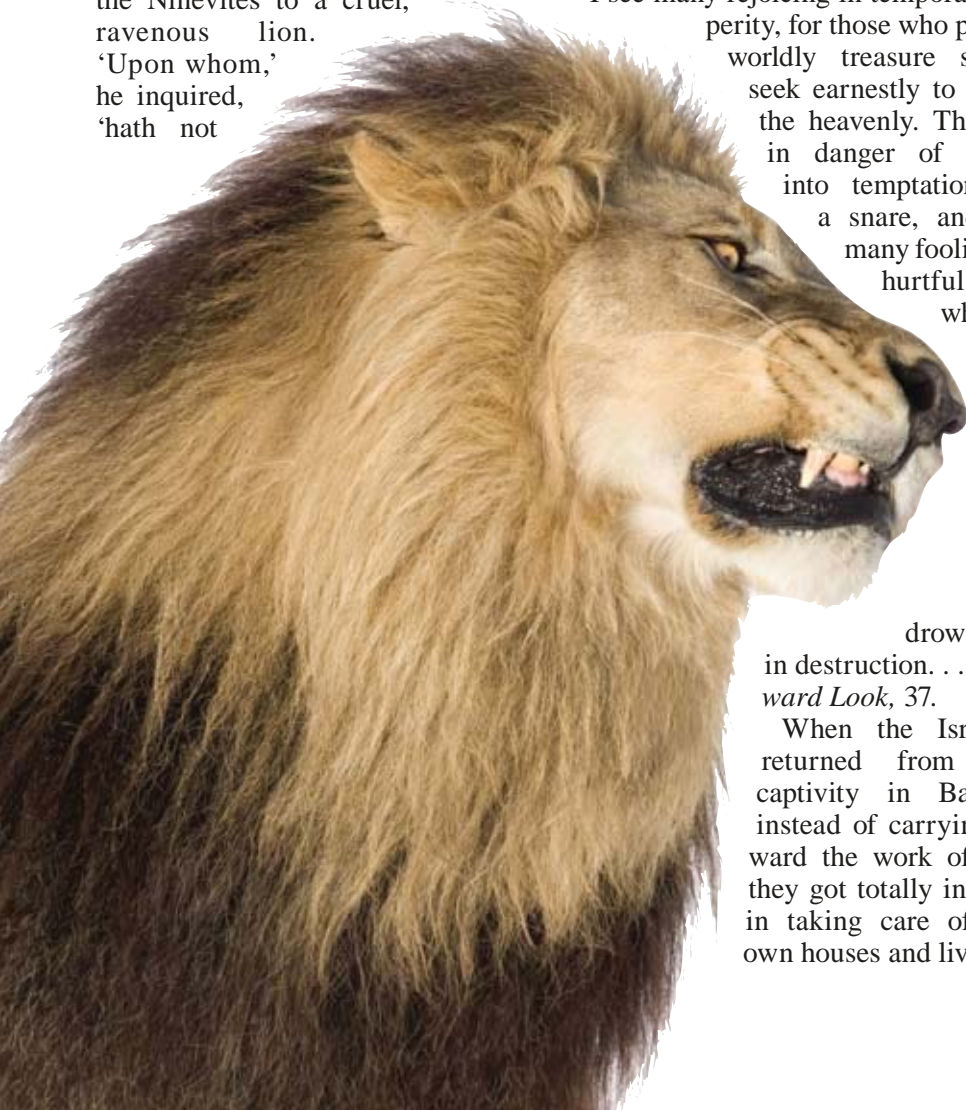
Temporal Prosperity, or Lack Thereof

In our day and age as we assume the role of spiritual Israelites, we find that God is looking for a greater turning to Him before He can really pour out the blessings of His Holy Spirit in the latter rain and the loud cry. Has temporal prosperity been part of our delay? He says to us, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked . . . I will spue thee out of my mouth." Rev. 3:17, 16.

For literal Israel, God raised the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to meet the crisis. They bore testimony that "lack of temporal prosperity was the result of a neglect to put God's interests first." *Prophets and Kings*, 573.

The people repented and had "a willingness to advance by faith. . . . 'From this day,' the Lord declared, 'will I bless you.'" *Prophets and Kings*, 577.

In our day God has provided the writings of Sister White for the spiritual Is-



raelites. These writings have, in many instances, either been totally ignored or made of none effect by those claiming that they are not truly inspired. These writings were given to draw us closer to Jesus, to put His work first, and to prepare us for the things coming upon this earth and His second coming.

Prosperity Often Satan's Tool

Satan has used temporal prosperity in many cases for the benefit of His kingdom. When, in the ages of the persecution of the Christian church by pagan Rome, blood and persecution produced a mass of believers, Satan saw that he was losing his hold.

"The great adversary now endeavored to gain by artifice what he had failed to secure by force. Persecution ceased, and in its stead were substituted the dangerous allurements of temporal prosperity and worldly honor. Idolaters were led to receive a part of the Christian faith, while they rejected other essential truths. They professed to accept Jesus as the Son of God, and to believe in his death and resurrection; but they had no conviction of sin, and felt no need of repentance or of a change of heart. With some concessions of their part, they proposed that Christians should make concessions, that all might unite on the platform of belief in Christ." *Great Controversy 1888*, 42.

Churches Taken in the Snare

In our day we have seen our nation move closer and closer to national apostasy. We have seen the Protestant faith continue to compromise its important truths and move further away from long-understood beliefs regarding the part the Catholic Church plays as antichrist and the importance of the commandments of God.

The church is more willing to depart from the commandments of God than from the customs and friendship of the world.

"The churches of our time are seeking worldly aggrandizement, and are as unwilling to see the light of the prophecies, and receive the evidences of their fulfillment appearing . . . as were the Jews. . . . They were looking

for the temporal and triumphant reign of Messiah in Jerusalem. Professed Christians of our time are expecting the temporal prosperity of the church, in the conversion of the world, and the enjoyment of the temporal millennium." *Maranatha*, 11.

And as we look at the megachurches of today and the ecumenical movement, involving even some from our own beloved church, we see a common trend.

Needing Nothing

"The people are too willing to believe their teachers without careful thought and prayerful investigation of God's Word. They love to have their consciences quieted,—love to be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. In their blind selfishness, they deceive themselves in those things wherein they are willing to be deceived. Our Saviour declared to the Pharisees, 'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.' And in his conversation with Nicodemus, he said, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither search the Scriptures nor listen to the truth, lest her works be reprov'd.' . . . She [the church] is more willing to depart from the commandments of God than from the customs and friendship of the world. And because great men and worldly wise men are in her favor, because numbers and temporal prosperity are hers, she believes herself favored of God,—'rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing.'" *Signs of the Times*, March 6, 1884.

The Lord's servant even had to rebuke one of our leading Seventh-day Adventist churches in her day: "The Church at Battle Creek might have stood free from idolatry, and her faithfulness would have been an example to other churches. But she is more willing to depart from God's commandments than to renounce the friendship of the world. She is joined to the idols which she has chosen; and because temporal prosperity and the favor of a wicked world are hers, she believes herself to be rich toward God. This will prove to many a fatal delusion. Her divine character and spiritual strength have departed from her." *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, 190.

God Sees Our Need

Because of our great need, God is allowing temporal prosperity to depart from our borders. Gas prices will continue to increase. Groceries will go up in price. Jobs will be less plentiful, and calamities will increase. Prayerfully through all this, God's true people will draw closer and closer to Him Who is our Sustenance and Supply.

Because of our great need, God is allowing temporal prosperity to depart from our borders.

But Satan will seek to take advantage of these conditions. "It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday-sabbath, that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced, and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity." *Great Controversy 1888*, 590.

Brothers and sisters, it can be seen that temporal prosperity can be used by God to bless, but often, at the same time, it can draw us away from God. It is sometimes removed by God to draw us closer to Him. It has been used by Satan to forward his purposes in the past, and the promises of it will be used in the future to seek to enhance the need of Sunday legislation and the persecution of Sabbath keepers. Temporal prosperity is truly an enigma, and rather than concentrating on its restoration, fearing its loss, let's turn our lives fully to our Father in heaven in full surrender and faith in Him.



Clark Floyd, editor of Our Firm Foundation magazine, has been co-host of the radio program Bible Answers with Clark and Lee, is a licensed attorney and an ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor. He has spoken internationally and makes his home in the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina.

News Watch



8th Grade Gay Bullying Begets Murder

“The lives of the students at Oxnard, Calif.’s E.O. Green Junior High School were shaken earlier this year when fellow student Brandon McInerney killed openly gay student Larry King. Now the community is working to piece together what went so terribly wrong and McInerney is waiting to be arraigned this week, charged with first-degree murder and a hate crime.” PRNewswire, July 20, 2008,

End-time perspective: “Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their shadows before. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future? Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching

and working for our Lord’s appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win.... The highest excitement prevails, yet probation’s hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day of probation shall be ended, and the door of mercy be forever shut.” DA 636.



Nuclear “Watch and Wait”

“Behind its 25-ton blast doors, the 900-odd residents of Cheyenne Mountain live in a self-contained, 4.5-acre world. It has four man-made lakes holding millions of gallons of water. It has two fitness centers, a basketball court, a canteen, a chapel, a barber shop, a dental clinic, and enough food

to survive for a minimum of 30 days.

“The entire complex is designed to support the 30 NORAD personnel on the grim nuclear-watch detail. They work in crews of five behind a door that reads in gold letters ‘North America’s Command Center of Excellence,’ and their sole mission is to distinguish benign rocket launches from missiles traveling toward North America at 4 miles a second, bearing multiple, independently targeted nuclear warheads, each capable of destroying an entire city. They have a matter of minutes to make the call that could unleash nuclear Armageddon.

“‘It’s a typical military watch,’ explains Captain Steve Thompson, Cheyenne Mountain Division Chief, who oversees the crews. ‘A lot of routine punctuated by moments of sheer terror.’” Eben Harrell, *Time*, August 4, 2008.

End-time perspective: “Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us.

They are watching the strained, restless

relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they realize that something great and decisive is about to take place, that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

“A moment of respite has been graciously given us of God. Every



Guilty—If You'll Feed Me

“A New York man who pleaded guilty to murder in Oregon in exchange for buckets of fried chicken will get calzones and pizza to go with his life sentence.” *Yahoo News*, Aug 7, 2008.

End-time Perspective: “Satan is working with great power to lead men

to indulge appetite, gratify inclination, and spend their days in heedless folly. He presents attractions in a life of selfish enjoyment and of sensual indulgence. Intemperance saps the energies of both mind and body.” *Christian Education*, 175.

power lent us of Heaven is now to be used in working for those perishing in ignorance. There must be no delay. The truth must be proclaimed in the dark places of the earth. . . . A great work is to be done, and to those who know the truth for this time, this work has been entrusted.” *Maranatha*, 174.



Waiting for the Big Event

“The 5.4 magnitude earthquake that struck near Los Angeles yesterday just before noon was felt as far east as Las Vegas and as far south as San Diego. Since the quake, whose epicenter was about 28 miles southeast of Los Angeles near the affluent suburb of Chino Hills and 8.5 miles beneath the Earth’s surface, there have been nearly 50 aftershocks, most of them small, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.”

Seismologists said “it was just a reminder that the big one is indeed still looming.” Jamie Reno, *NEWS.COM*, July 30, 2008.

End-time perspective: “It is on the law of God that the last great struggle of the controversy between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels will come, and it will be decisive for all the world. . . . Men in responsible positions will not only ignore and despise the Sabbath themselves, but from the sacred desk will urge upon the people the observance of the first day of the week, pleading tradition and custom in behalf of this man-made institution. They will point to calamities on land and sea--to the storms of wind, the floods, the earthquakes, the destruction

by fire--as judgments indicating God’s displeasure because Sunday is not sacredly observed. These calamities will increase more and more, one disaster will follow close upon the heels of another; and those who make void the law of God will point to the few who are keeping the Sabbath of the fourth commandment as the ones who are bringing wrath upon the world. This falsehood is Satan’s device that he may ensnare the unwary.” *Southern Watchman*, June 28, 1904.



“Accidental” Drug Deaths

“Accidental death from prescription drugs, even when they are correctly given, is now the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. Before you pop another prescription pill, think carefully. Just because your doctor prescribed it is no guarantee you’ll benefit from it or even emerge unscathed from the experience. That prescription pill could be hazardous to your health— and life.

“Well over 100,000 Americans die every year from adverse reactions to prescription drugs; drug side effects are a leading cause of death in the U.S. The worst thing that can happen to you when you take a legal drug is not that it won’t work, but that you might drop dead. The next worse is that your body is permanently damaged.” *Alternative Medicine*, Issue #25.

End-time perspective: “Workers—gospel medical missionaries—are needed now. You cannot afford to spend years in preparation. Soon doors

now open to the truth will be forever closed. Carry the message now. Do not wait, allowing the enemy to take possession of the fields now open before you. Let little companies go forth to do the work to which Christ appointed His disciples. Let them labor as evangelists, scattering our publications, and talking of the truth to those they meet. Let them pray for the sick, ministering to their necessities, not with drugs, but with nature’s remedies, and teaching them how to regain health and avoid disease.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, 171–2.



Faces Becoming Pale...

“...The government’s effort to keep Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac afloat has a lot in common with the New Deal. Last week Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson told Congress of their latest efforts to rescue the financial sector.” *newsweek.com*, July 28, 2008.

End-time perspective: “Poverty is coming upon this world, and there will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. There will be wars and rumors of wars, and the faces of men will gather paleness. You may have to suffer distress; you may go hungry sometimes; but God will not forsake you in your suffering. He will test your faith. We are not to live to please ourselves. We are here to manifest Christ to the world, to represent Him and His power to mankind.” *Manuscript 37*, 1894; *Evangelism*, 240.

Health Gem



Sulfur has remarkable ability to slow aging, reduce pain, improve digestion, eliminate toxins, and more.

Sulfur, Methylsulfonylmethane, and You

Did you know?

A 160-pound man has approximately 4 pounds of sulfur as body weight!

Dear readers, chances are you've heard of MSM, but even if so, I hope after reading this, you will have a deeper understanding of this powerful nutrient. And if you haven't, I'm very excited to bring you this powerful information!

To understand the importance of MSM, you have to first understand the importance of sulfur. Sulfur is an element so essential to life that it is found in every cell of every plant and every animal. It even makes up 0.25% of human body weight! It is one of the most important raw materials for building healthy new cells. Sulfur is a *vital* building block of joints, cartilage, tendons, ligaments, and muscles. Thus, it is especially important in conditions such as arthritis, muscle pain, bursitis, etc. It is also vital to the health of the skin, hair, and nails; to energy production; and so much more!

Here's the problem: neither plants nor animals can use elemental sulfur directly. It is not easily available to living organisms in its inorganic form. And since sulfur is a component of all cells, it is essential that the body have a plentiful supply of this mineral in its usable form.

Here is where MSM comes in. Methylsulfonylmethane (METH-I-SULFON-IL-METH-ane), or MSM, is an organic form of sulfur that can be easily

absorbed and utilized by the body.

How Does MSM Work?

MSM is an antioxidant that helps to cleanse the blood stream and flush out the toxins trapped in our cells. It does this by making the cell walls more permeable. This allows water and nutrients to freely flow into cells and, just as importantly, causes wastes and toxins to properly flow out. It also works as a foreign protein and free radical scavenger. In addition, the body uses MSM to create new, healthy cells, and it provides the flexible bond between the cells. Without proper levels of MSM, our bodies are unable to build good healthy cells, and this leads to problems such as lost flexibility, scar tissue, wrinkles, varicose veins, hardened arteries, damaged lung tissues, dry cracking skin, digestive disorders, joint problems, and inability to defend against allergic reactions to foods, animals, and plants.

[MSM] blocks undesirable chemical and physical bonding of collagen, which is associated with tough, aging skin.

A body made up of healthy, flexible cells will not only feel better; it will look better, too! The body is continuously at work replacing old, worn-out cells with new ones. The process goes on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without stop. When all the raw materials needed for

cell-building are available, it is a very efficient process. However, when there are deficiencies, the new cells may be weak, rigid or deformed. MSM should be considered an integral part of any health care practice as it helps with such a wide variety of processes in the body. It has been shown to help allergies, asthma, emphysema, lung dysfunction, arthritis, headaches, skin problems, stomach problems, digestive tract problems, circulatory problems, and more.

Relief of Pain and Inflammation

Approximately half of the sulfur in the body is concentrated in the muscles, skin, and bones. One of the most significant uses of MSM as a supplement is its demonstrated ability to relieve pain and inflammation. When rigid fibrous tissue cells swell and become inflamed, pressure and pain result. Since MSM can restore flexibility and permeability to cell walls, fluids can pass through the tissues more easily. This helps equalize pressure and reduce or eliminate the cause of pain. Harmful substances such as lactic acid and toxins are allowed to flow out, while nutrients are permitted to flow in. This prevents the pressure buildup in cells that causes inflammation.

MSM has shown a remarkable ability to reduce or eliminate muscle soreness and cramps. It is so effective

that it's given to racehorses before a race to prevent muscle soreness, and afterward to reduce the risk of cramping. People with arthritis report substantial and long-lasting relief with MSM supplements.

The Beauty Mineral for Hair, Skin, and Nails

Sulfur has been called nature's "beauty mineral" because it is needed to keep the hair glossy and smooth, and keeps the complexion clear and youthful. It is needed for synthesis of collagen and is prevalent in keratin, a tough protein substance necessary for health and maintenance of the skin, nails and hair. If there is insufficient sulfur in the body when new cells are being manufactured, the new cells will be rigid. This rigidity can contribute to cracking, wrinkling, and unsightly scar tissue. When sufficient sulfur is present for new cells, the skin is softer, smoother and more flexible. MSM provides that sulfur. How does it do this?

MSM is responsible for the flexible bonds between cells, including those that make up the skin. It blocks undesirable chemical and physical bonding of collagen, which is associated with tough, aging skin. Consequently, MSM enhances tissue pliability and encourages the repair of damaged skin. Because of this, acne—including severe acne rosacea—responds favorably to MSM supplementation. In addition, since MSM makes the skin more permeable and pliant, it can also help prevent blistering and promote faster healing from sunburn or wind damage. Over time, wrinkles, brown and black spots, and skin tumors go away as new healthy cells replace the bad.

Diabetes

Sulfur is also a component of insulin, the hormone that regulates carbohydrate metabolism. Therefore, insufficient sulfur may result in decreased insulin production. It is also possible that a lack of bioavailable sulfur could make the cells so rigid and impermeable that they become unable to absorb sugar from the blood efficiently, leaving blood sugar levels elevated. Studies indicate that regular MSM supplements, which cause the cells to become permeable, could help balance blood sugar and allow the overworked pancreas to return to normal.



Allergens, Toxins and Parasites

As I mentioned before, flexible, permeable cells are also important in that they allow toxins, allergens, and foreign substances to be flushed out of the body more easily. When skin cells are soft and permeable, many toxins can be eliminated through the sweat glands, which takes some of the load off the liver and kidneys. While MSM may not be a cure for allergies, supplementation may reduce symptoms by allowing allergens to be removed from the body more quickly. Even reactions to insect bites, poison ivy, and poison oak are less severe when the diet is supplemented with MSM. Whole food vitamin C is also synergistic in this application in that it can lower histamine levels.

Flexible, permeable cells are also important in that they allow toxins, allergens, and foreign substances to be flushed out of the body more easily.

MSM has also shown amazing anti-parasitic action against Giardia, Trichomonas, roundworms, nematodes, Enterobius, and other intestinal worms. When parasites attach themselves to the intestinal lining, they can live, reproduce and rob the body of nutrients indefinitely. MSM blocks parasites by competing for receptor sites on the mucous membrane. When parasites cannot attach themselves, they are simply flushed out of the system.

The same is true with food allergens. MSM coats mucosal surfaces and occupies the binding sites that could otherwise be used by challenging food allergens. It can also bind with offending agents to produce harmless substances, which are then excreted from the body. This facilitates normal digestion and assimilation and allows the body to get maximum nutritional value from foods that would otherwise cause a reaction. Individuals who experience an allergic response to certain foods have reported improved or complete tolerance to those foods when they take MSM supplements. Healthy flexible colon tissues, along with improved digestion, can also help relieve constipation.

Do I Need to Supplement?

Since sulfur is present in every cell of every living thing, it might seem that we would get plenty of this essential mineral from dietary sources and should not need supplements, but that is often not the case. Because of its volatile nature, sulfur is quickly lost from food when it is processed, cooked, and/or stored. The second you pick fruit or vegetables from the tree or vine, they begin rapidly losing sulfur (or MSM).

In addition, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy products are the main sources of dietary sulfur. However, we have been advised to restrict or remove many of those foods from our diets, as they cause more harm than good. So vegetarians and vegans are at particular risk for sulfur deficiency.

Not only is sulfur difficult to get from your diet, but also when your body uses the MSM molecule to produce a new cell, it is consumed in the process, and the MSM is lost forever. Therefore you need to continuously replenish the body's needed supply of MSM to produce new, healthy cells. With today's modern diet of cooked and otherwise processed and diluted foods, most—if not all—diets are deficient in this critically important ingredient. And, if all that isn't enough, MSM levels decline noticeably with age, so the older you get, the more important it becomes to maintain adequate sulfur levels in the body.

Safety

MSM ranks in the “extremely low” toxicity category with a toxicity profile similar to that of water. Because of its inert nature, MSM is non-allergenic, non-pyretic (doesn't cause a fever), and has no interfering or undesirable pharmacological effects. When oral supplements are taken, the body will distribute MSM where it is needed. After about 12 hours, any excess amounts will be flushed out of the body. Keep in mind that MSM, a member of the sulfur family, should never be confused with *sulfa* drugs, to which some people are allergic. It is completely safe, odorless, and non-toxic.

Usage

Due to its positive effects, particularly in maintaining healthy cell formation, 2,000 to 6,000 mg. of supplemental MSM daily is recommended. Of course, the optimum daily dosage of

MSM depends largely on body size, age and the nature and severity of any deficiency symptoms you may be experiencing. To maintain good, healthy cells, MSM is best taken in the morning and the evening.

Many Benefits

There is a positive synergistic effect on building healthier cells when MSM is taken in combination with vitamin C. The new cells are more pliable and permeable, allowing fluids to pass through the tissue more easily. Internally this means more efficient elimination of toxins, a reduction in inflammation and pain—so you feel better. On the outside it shows up as a softer, smoother complexion, stronger hair and nails—so you look better. Vitamin C also helps the body to assimilate MSM. Eating fresh fruits or taking a whole-food Vitamin C supplement (such as C-Blast) while taking MSM can be very helpful.

[MSM] facilitates normal digestion and assimilation and allows the body to get maximum nutritional value from foods that would otherwise cause a reaction.

If you're not already experiencing the wonderful benefits of MSM, and would like more information or would like to place an order, please call one of our health consultants at 309-343-5853. If you have any other health questions, as always, we offer free health counseling over the phone and would love to help!

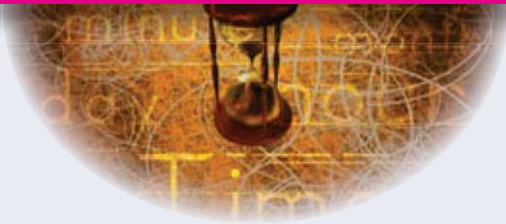
Stay tuned next month for “MSM vs NSAIDs.” If you are currently taking any non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), you don't want to miss this information!



Dr. Olson comes from a long line of health professionals including MDs, naturopaths, and osteopaths. Having early wanted to help people, especially in the area of health, she was a missionary to Belize and Korea. A national speaker, an RN for years, a certified herbologist, and a naturopathic doctor, Dr. Olson is utilizing this experience and wealth of knowledge for the benefit of people all over the world.

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.” E.G. White, *Life Sketches*, 196. Many today have neglected to study the history and people that made up the early days of the Advent movement. To help encourage interest in Adventist history, we have put together questions about people and events of our past. Our goal is to spark faith and further study into “the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”

Historical Footnotes



Source: Excerpted from *A History of SDA Church-State Relations in the United States* (Mt. View, CA: Pacific Press, 1973), by Eric Syme.

1. Debate in Congress on the Breck- enridge Bill came in what initial form?
 - a. Democrats pitted against Republicans.
 - b. Sunday-keeping legislators against only one Sabbath-keeping legislator.
 - c. A Sunday Law Convention.
 - d. B and C.
2. The initial hearing of the bill in the convention occurred on what date so soon after 1888?
 - a. February 1890.
 - b. November 1889.
 - c. March 1903.
 - d. August 1905.
3. One speaker, a Rev. Crafts, regret- ted the liberal provisions of the bill because
 - a. They complicated the debate.
 - b. They allowed too many to avoid Sunday-keeping.
 - c. They did not have bi-partisan support.
 - d. The Adventists were still fighting the entire bill, despite the “generous” exemption clause.
4. Despite his advocacy of the bill, Rev. Crafts had written a book con- taining the testimonies of 200 workers
 8. The first of the ministers to speak who said they had no ill effects from refusing to work on Sunday. That book by Rev. Crafts was called
 - a. *Sunday Rest*.
 - b. *A Day in Eternal Time*
 - c. *The Sabbath for Man*
 - d. *Testimonies about Sunday*.
 5. Another speaker called Adventists “an insignificant sect of narrow-mind- ed bigots” who aligned themselves with
 - a. Atheists.
 - b. Secularists.
 - c. Socialists.
 - d. All of the above.
 6. Yet another speaker made a per- sonal attack on whom, for his efforts to defeat the bill?
 - a. Jerome Hurd.
 - b. Alonzo Jones.
 - c. Bro. Bates.
 - d. W. C. White.
 7. Only one Knights of Labor spokes- person and ___ SDA ministers spoke against the bill.
 - a. 2
 - b. 3
 - c. 5
 - d. 6
 9. He argued that the intent of the bill was clearly religious because
 - a. Of its very topic.
 - b. Speakers on both sides were mostly religious representatives.
 - c. Sunday labor was not compulsive at that time for anyone.
 - d. It was proposed by a religious man.
 10. The second speaker against the bill was Alonzo Jones, who argued that
 - a. Crafts’ book proved no need for the bill’s provisions.
 - b. The topic was inappropriate for the legislature.
 - c. The sponsors were members of religious organizations; conflict of interest was evident.
 - d. It discriminated against Sabbath-keepers.

Answers: 1:c; 2:a; 3:d; 4:c; 5:d; 6:b; 7:b; 8:a; 9:c; 10:a.



Hope for Health

MSM

Vegan Formula

Are you looking for relief from joint pain? If so, look no further! MSM can actually help to repair damaged connective tissue, rather than just suppressing the pain. It can reduce the pain and discomfort that comes from degenerative conditions such as osteoarthritis and from physical causes, including tendonitis, joint sprains, or hyperextension.

Amazing Acerola Facts:

Almost 50% of Americans seek treatment for pain each year; over 150 over-the-counter medications known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs line store shelves, all promising temporary pain relief. These same medications have been associated with the following side effects: stomach pain, heartburn, stomach ulcers, gastrointestinal bleeding, headaches, dizziness, and even liver or kidney problems. Medical authorities continuously caution physicians and patients against their repeated use. Still, each year in the U.S. more than 100,000 deaths and 1.5 million hospitalizations in the U.S. are linked to over-the-counter pain medications.

Natural and effective alternatives do exist!

How Does MSM Work?

MSM makes the cell walls flexible and elastic. If the amount of MSM in the body is too low, new cells lose some of their flexibility and elasticity. MSM makes cell walls permeable, allowing water and other nutrients to freely flow into cells and allowing waste and toxins to properly flow out, thus healing connective tissue and reducing pain. MSM also reduces inflammation and permits muscles to heal while preventing them from becoming sore.

Price:

120 Capsules \$11.99 HXHH-MSM

Suggested Adult Dosage: 2-8 Capsles each day.

To Order Call Today: 1.800.468.7884 or Visit us on the web at: www.hopeforhealthusa.com

***Prices listed above do not include shipping and handling or sales tax**

**These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any disease.*

Hope International does not solicit tithes; however, we are a tithe-worthy organization and accept tithes. We use the tithe only for the gospel ministry. Donations designated "Gospel Ministry" will be considered tithe.

Subscription Order Line: 1-800-468-7884

Subscription Information

United States US \$23.99 per year
Canada & Mexico US \$34.99 per year
Foreign (Air Mail) US \$59.99 per year
Large Print Edition Black & White US \$29.99 per year
Large Print Edition Color US \$39.99 per year
Audio CD or Cassette Edition US \$36.00 per year
Foreign Audio & Large Print Edition..... Please Inquire

Shipping, Sales Tax & Currency

For all products advertised in this publication (unless otherwise noted): • **USA destinations:** \$0.00-\$25.00=\$6.25, \$25.01-\$50.00=\$9.25, \$50.01-\$100.00=\$13.50, \$100.01-\$200.00=\$16.75, \$200.01 or more \$2.99
• **To destinations outside the USA:** Actual shipping rate will be charged.
Sales tax: Illinois residents, please add 6.5%.
All money sent must be in US funds, drawn on US banks.

Subscription Assistance

We strive to keep our subscription prices as low as possible. We want this material to be available to all. If your finances cannot meet the requested amount, please send whatever you can. Those desiring to assist in providing subscriptions for individuals with limited funds should send a gift marked "Subscription Assistance" to Hope International. Your donations are tax deductible

Letters to The Editor



I am being overwhelmingly blessed by your ministry's programmes to the extent that I feel you have invigorated my spirit towards serving the Lord Jesus Christ more seriously. Since the beginning of 1995 the Lord had impressed in my heart the need to establish a support ministry with a view to providing Christian counseling and mediation services to our nation here. I have discussed this matter with my pastorate at local church, field conference and union levels. As I write to you now, one of the union directors is editing our draft of the Notarial Deed of Trust. As soon as he is done, we will be handing the same document to the executive director of the union for his comments before registering with government. Please pray for me, as the founder and president of the envisaged ministry. I even need your assistance on matters of literature resources to strengthen our service delivery. My major setback is that at the moment I am unemployed, yet a husband with a wife, daughter and son. Any free materials which you may find helpful to us, please be free to send such to me at the postal address mentioned. God richly bless you in your ministry.

KL, Botswana

Last night my wife and I watched your DVD entitled *Are Our Schools Catholic?* The information was a tremendous blessing to us, to the point that it answered some questions that we had been praying to God about. God bless you in all your faithful ser-

vice. Thank you again and Lord bless you all with grace!

LI, Colorado

I received a *Good News* newsletter and checked out the website. I look forward to receiving the free DVD. Thank you!

WS, Maine

Thank you so much for the extra copies of the DVD message *Another Opportunity*. We were blessed by the message and I knew three people right off that I wanted to share the extra copies with who really needed to hear these words of hope from God's word. Please remember the three individuals in prayer. May the peace of God be with you all.

JS, Minnesota

Thank you for sending me the information concerning the book *The End of Time*. I am enclosing the money for the book and shipping. May God continue to bless you all in your work for Him.

VE, California

What a delightful little book [*Good News* newsletter]. So many things touched my heart and sense of humor. I received this because the person who once lived here has moved and I don't know where, so I decided to read it and I am forever thankful that I did!

AN, Oregon

I have been reading through your health information on your website

which I found very informative and helpful. I am eager to share this information with many others. Would you mind if I use some of or all of the information on your website to publish on a page on our church website? God bless you as you minister for him.

MG, United Kingdom

When am I going to start getting a cut on your clay sales? I have been so blessed by the clay for my health problems that I am telling everyone I know about it. I was about to schedule an appointment for knee surgery, but now, after a week of applying clay to my knee, my pain is gone! Also, I am somewhat allergic to mosquito bites and after one bit me, I applied the clay and the itching immediately stopped and the swelling went down. It was completely gone after 20 minutes! Thank you for telling me about these wonderful natural remedies.

RK, Illinois

I like the messages. They give the true word of God. These are the messages the church and the world needs in these last days.

LL, Louisiana

This is a one-time donation of funds I had set aside to be used to help finish the Lord's work. Perhaps you can use it for the DVDs. I am enclosing some names and addresses for this purpose.

J&BT, North Carolina

**The days are getting shorter, there is a nip in the air,
and it is a great time of year to cuddle up with a good book.**

Here are a few Ideas:

Mind Character, and Personality – 2-Volume Set

Ellen G. White

Schools of psychology are variable and changing. Is there a reliable voice among the Babel of competing views? Yes. We believe that readers of this collection of guidelines on mental health will hear that voice in this collection. Written by one who was inspired by the Spirit of God, it offers faith-centered solutions to emotional and spiritual problems, and points the reader to the divine Healer of minds and hearts! - Hardcover, **\$24.99**

Christian Service

Ellen G. White

Every child of God reflects the light of the world to others. These pages explain how to polish the human mirror so that it may reveal truth more clearly, and thus attract others by its beauty. "Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life." - Hardcover, **\$13.99**

The Truth About Angels

Ellen G. White

This volume provides a behind-the-scenes view of the existence and activities of angels as they go about the work of heaven. Best of all, it will help you enjoy the fellowship of angels in your daily walk with God! - Hardcover, **\$12.99**

To Order Call Today: 1.800.468.7384 or Visit us on the web at: www.hopeint.org

***Prices listed above do not include shipping and handling or sales tax**



Hope International
P.O. Box 220
Knoxville, Illinois 61448

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 557
HARRISBURG, PA