Are You a Member of the Church?

To Hasten His Coming

How to Be Saved, One Day at a Time

The Impregnable Shield

A Vital Connection

Giants in the Land, see page 4
Recently while resting in a beautiful place in Florida, I visited with a pastor on vacation from another state. He is what we would call a straight historical Adventist, understanding, believing, and preaching the sanctuary message with the three angels' messages. It was refreshing to visit with an Adventist pastor who will stand strong for truth without compromise. But he had a concern that Our Firm Foundation was not recognizing that there are still historical ministers in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We want our readers to know that we receive mail from many faithful ministers from around the world who read, live, and preach the truths found in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

But let us move in now to the subject of this special edition “Righteousness by Faith.” Let me introduce this special issue with this inspired statement from our prophet. “The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ’s day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness. In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness. A jealous regard for what is termed theological truth often accompanies a hatred of genuine truth as made manifest in life. The darkest chapters of history are burdened with the record of crimes committed by bigoted religionists. The Pharisees claimed to be children of Abraham, and boasted of their possession of the oracles of God; yet these advantages did not preserve them from selfishness, malignity, greed for gain, and the basest hypocrisy. They thought themselves the greatest religionists of the world, but their so-called orthodoxy led them to crucify the Lord of glory. The same danger still exists. Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. But they have not brought the truth into practical life. They have not believed and loved it, therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through sanctification of the truth. Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world.” The Desire of Ages, 309–310. The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ’s day was that a mere assent to truth constitutes righteousness. Then the prophet tells us “the same danger still exists.”

Those who only give mental assent to the truth as it is in Christ and His righteousness are enemies of Christ, if they are not practicing the experience of full surrender to Him. Again the prophet explains in these inspired words: “There are many whose names are on the church books, but who are not under Christ’s rule. They are not heeding His instruction or doing His work. Therefore they are under the control of the enemy. They are doing no positive good; therefore they are doing in calculable harm. Because their influence is not a savor of life unto life, it is a savor of death unto death.” Ibid., 304

Neutrality brings a curse, it is a crime against God and a half-and-half experience makes us an enemy of God. See Testimonies, vol. 3, 281. God sent us this counsel and warning. The condition of the world previous to the first appearing of Christ is a picture of the condition of the world just previous to His second advent. The Jewish people were destroyed because they rejected the message of salvation sent down from Heaven. Shall those in this generation to whom God has given great light and wonderful opportunities follow in the trend of those who rejected light to their ruin?

“Many today have veils upon their faces. These veils are sympathy with the customs and practices of the world, which hide from them the glory of the Lord. God desires us to keep our eyes fixed upon Him, that we may lose sight of the things of this world.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 146.

Righteousness by faith is allowing, yes, inviting Jesus to be King of your life every day. It is being justified by true repentance and confession of all sin and being continuously sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit which holds us in the relationship of obedience to all truth revealed by His Word and His righteous law.

These inspired words will help us in our understanding of the vital soul-saving subject of righteousness. “The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control. He who under abuse or cruelty fails to maintain a calm and trustful spirit robs God of His right to reveal in him His own perfection of character. Lowliness of heart is the strength that gives victory to the followers of Christ; it is the token of their connection with the courts above.

“Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly.” Psalm 138:6. Those who reveal the meek and lowly spirit of Christ are tenderly regarded by God. They may be looked upon with scorn by the world, but they are of great value in His sight. Not only the wise, the great, the beneficent, will gain a passport to the heavenly courts; not only the busy worker, full of zeal and restless activity. No; the poor in spirit, who crave the presence of an abiding Christ, the humble in heart, whose highest ambition is to do God’s will—these will gain an abundant entrance. They will be among that number who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ‘Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.’ Revelation 7:15; The Desire of Ages, 301–302

In closing my editorial we quote from Christ’s Object Lessons, 97–98: “True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God.”

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

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

THE people of God had come a long distance. They had traveled over land and sea at the beckoning call of God. They had encountered many dangers from the elements as well as from enemies, but God had delivered them again and again. In fact, they had witnessed God's power to deliver in miraculous ways. What more could God have done to show them that through trust in Him, all things are possible?

And now came the final challenge. They were at the borders of the Promised Land. It only remained for them to send spies to search out the land, and with the knowledge gained thereby, to move forward in God's power to take over the land, a land "flowing with milk and honey."

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel." Numbers 13:1–2. A representative was chosen from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and this small group entered the Promised Land. As they moved from south to north many impressions were received by these twelve men, and samples of the fruit of the land were brought home with them. The land was rich and luscious, but there were many inhabitants within the land who would need to be conquered. Some of these were giants, and by human calculations, would be too powerful to overcome.

Caleb and Joshua, recognizing the power available from the God of heaven, recommended the immediate conquest of the land. To God the giants would be no problem. However, the other ten spies, relying on human reasoning, convinced the people that victory over the land and its inhabitants was impossible. Just at the time the people should have been rejoicing that God was willing to give them triumph over the formidable foes in the Promised Land, instead they began to deny the power of God that could be claimed in their behalf and began murmuring, wishing they had never come this far.

"Would God we had died in this wilderness," was their testimony in regard to God's leading; "and wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey?" Numbers 14:2–3

God allowed the people to make their choice. He had promised to give them the land of Canaan, but they had not the faith to enter in when the time came to do so. In accordance with their own request, therefore, He allowed them to stay in the wilderness where that generation eventually died.

"If the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die." Numbers 14:35

In these last days God has called a people to enter into the Promised Land, the heavenly Canaan, without tasting death. This people, the last generation of God's people, a remnant, have great light and many promises from God. We are told through the Spirit of Prophecy that they could have entered in many years before, but through lack of trust and insubordination, they have failed to do so. They have remained in the wilderness. See Testimonies, vol. 6, 450, Selected Messages, book 1, 68, and The Great Controversy, 458.

Now, again, they are being given the opportunity to enter into the Promised Land—to be the group that will give that final demonstration of what God can do with sinful human beings when they submit their wills to Him. "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will
Certain ones in the church have spied out the "lay of the land" and have determined that it is impossible to overcome the giant of sin in the life, thus again rejecting the promises and power of God.

Dr. Ford went on to state, "Well, not everybody in the church knows that changes are taking place in the direction that I suggested they should be made." He gives one example of Dr. Richard Hammill, the former president of Andrews University, calling for the same type of reform that Ford was criticized for suggesting in 1979. Ford says other scholars, too, are doing the same.

Then comes his statement, "I have several things before me, printed by the church, where there is a great shift already begun. But it has to be admitted, John, that most Adventists who do not read a lot aren't even aware of the progressive changes."

Dr. Ford next attacks our sanctuary doctrine, saying that Christ very clearly went into the second apartment in A. D. 31, thus doing away with any significance to the date 1844. He says, "I can document it very clearly from top Adventist leaders, where they say that scholars have known that the Adventist teaching in the judgment wouldn't hold water." He undercuts Ellen White by saying that she taught a wrong view by endorsing the investigative judgment. He also states that she borrowed extensively in her writings.

Dr. Ford says, "Traditionally, Adventists have regarded Ellen White as a prophet on a similar level to the prophets of the Bible. The modern position, in this time, in the 1990s, has switched from that: rather, in that she had a special gift such as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14, a gift of prophecy— not to be placed as a parallel with that of Daniel and Isaiah, but a gift to rebuke and to counsel. That makes her a good pastor.

"More and more Adventists are teaching that. For example, the latest issue of the Ministry magazine, published by the church, says that Ellen White should not be used as an authoritative commentator on the Bible.

Dr. Ford, the holder of two Ph. D.'s, and following years of patient study, concluded that the theology coming from Ellen White's teachings was not supported by, and was—in some places—not consistent with the Bible itself." Dr. Ford readily concurred in this analysis.

Ford, during the program admitted that at one time he was an embarrassment to the church "in suggesting, along with the majority of its scholars—who speak to themselves rather than to administrators—that there is necessity for doctrinal revision on its eschatological teachings about the judgment."
groups have said. Those that have contended for a short-aged earth have not a leg to stand on, either biblically or scientifically. So I'm not at all in favor of that. . . . I do not agree with those extreme Adventists who want an earth only six thousand years old and who deny the geological column."

Shifting back to theological issues, Ford indicates that there is a rising stress in Adventism on justification alone, "even among administrators."

Asked about traditional Adventists, Ford states: "You are quite right in what you are saying. The Adventist Church is more afraid of what it calls the 'lunatic fringe' (which is an unkind denomination name for the conservatives, the extreme traditionalists) than it is of those it would classify slightly liberal. They are usually perfectionistic. The church is afraid, deadly afraid, of the extreme narrowness, the fundamentalism, the lack of biblical literacy, that exist in these fringe groups."

He then points out that the leaders in the church are turning against these conservatives.

Dr. Ford speaks of the good friends he has among the scholars and leaders in the church at all levels.

A caller to the program asked about the Adventist stance toward Roman Catholics. Dr. Ford stated that the "opposition to Catholicism is to the teachings and not the people."

But then he goes on to repeat the statement of Neal Wilson that "we have in ending the program, Cleary asked Dr. Ford how he would summarize the direction the Seventh-day Adventist Church is going.

Ford: "The idolatry of Ellen White is gone forever in Adventism. It can never revive. . . . There is an increasing emphasis on the everlasting gospel of grace—that we are saved by grace through faith alone. . . . That is spreading in Adventism, and so it should. That is the essence of true religion."

Dr. Ford indicated that he had recently spoken in some of the biggest Adventist Churches in the world, naming Sligo, Capital Memorial Church, and Loma Linda University.

My friends, there are giants in the land. Many of them may have one or more Ph. D.'s after their names. Are they going to frighten you from your traditional Adventist beliefs? Or are you grounded sufficiently in the Scriptures to know that our doctrines, including the investigative judgment, the sanctuary doctrine, the 6,000-year age of the earth, and our antipapal stance are very well supported by the Bible? Have you studied Ellen White enough to know that she was more than a pastoral person, that she was a prophet?

Ellen White, in Selected Messages, book 2, 386, says, "Every position of our faith will be searched into, and if we are not thorough Bible students, established, strengthened, settled, the wisdom of the world's great men will be too much for us."

Should we not like Joshua and Caleb recognize the power of God in our lives to overcome sin rather than to follow in the footsteps of the ten other spies who put the power of the giants above that of their God?

Who would have ever thought this prediction would be referring to the scholars within our own Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Sister White gives many other statements quite pertinent in regard to this interview with Dr. Ford. I will share a few of those with you.

"In the very midst of us will arise false teachers, giving heed to seducing spirits whose doctrines are of satanic origin. These teachers will draw away disciples after themselves. Creeping in unawares, they will use flattering words, and make skillful misrepresentations with seductive tact." Review and Herald, vol. 5, 9

Dr. Ford is very good at flattering words, skillful misrepresentation and seductive tact. For him to assert that there is no biblical authority for the investigative judgment, the 6,000-year old earth, or our papal stance, fits into all three of these descriptions.

Testimonies to Ministers, 409-410, states: "Unsanctified ministers are arraying themselves against God. . . . Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. If doubts and unbelief are cherished, the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much."

In Selected Messages, book 1, 48, Ellen White says, "The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. . . . Satan will work ingeniously . . . to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. . . . The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them."

"When you find men questioning the testimonies, finding fault with them, and seeking to draw away the people from their influence, be assured that God is not at work through them. It is another spirit." Ibid., 45

"Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days." Ibid., book 3, 83-84

"Strengthened by unquestioning faith in Christ, even the illiterate disciple will be able to withstand the doubts and questions that infidelity can produce, and put to the sophistries of scorners. The Lord Jesus will give the disciples a tongue and wisdom that their adversaries can neither gainsay nor resist. Those who could not by reasoning overcome satanic delusions, will bear an affirmative testimony that will baffle supposedly learned men. Words will come from the lips of the unlearned with such convincing power and wisdom that conversions will be made to the truth. Thousands will be converted under their testimony.
"Why should the illiterate man have this power, which the learned man has not? The illiterate one, through faith in Christ, has come into the atmosphere of pure, clear truth, while the learned man has turned away from the truth. The poor man is Christ’s witness. He cannot appeal to histories or to so-called high science, but he gathers from the Word of God powerful evidence. The truth that he speaks under the inspiration of the Spirit, is so pure and remarkable and carries with it a power so indisputable that his testimony cannot be gainsaid.”

Manuscript Releases, vol. 8, 187–188

In regard to the sanctuary, we have strong warning messages:

“In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?” Evangelism, 224

“The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross.” The Great Controversy, 489

“The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered a supreme homage to ‘science falsely so called’ will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 80–81

Yes, there are many giants in the land, but Ellen White has warned us of these giants sufficiently in advance to recognize and overcome them. And this we must do, trusting in the power of God to be our power, whether these giants assume the form of sin in our lives or whether they assume the form of intellectuals or others seeking to dissuade or discourage us in regard to our historic Seventh-day Adventist message.2

“Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 331

“The only hope for us if we would overcome is to unite our will to God’s will and work in co-operation with Him, hour by hour and day by day. We cannot retain self and yet enter the kingdom of God. If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self and the reception of the mind of Christ. Pride and self-sufficiency must be crucified. Are we willing to pay the price required of us? Are we willing to have our will brought into perfect conformity to the will of God? Until we are willing, the transforming grace of God cannot be manifest upon us.” Thoughts From the Mount of Blessings, 143

Again, beware of those who seek to frighten you with the giants in the land. “Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that if these defects are cherished he will succeed. Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome.” The Great Controversy, 489

“Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God. . . . Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men cannot keep the law of God.” Signs of the Times, vol. 3, 264

Brothers and sisters, do not give in to fear of the giants in the land. You can overcome; you must overcome. You shall overcome if you are willing to be made willing to make a complete surrender to God.

Do not give in to fear of the giants in the land. You can overcome; you must overcome. You shall overcome if you are willing to be made willing to make a complete surrender to God.


1 The editors of Our Firm Foundation recognize that we have some faithful scholars in our church who do through the Holy Spirit contribute to the edification of the body. May these men stand for truth, no matter what the cost!
Are You a Member of the Church?

Oh—somebody says—you do not need to talk about that. We are all members of the church. Are you sure?

Turn in your Bible to Matthew 7. There are three verses in this chapter that people need to know, because they are verses for the end-time. This passage is appropriate whether you are studying about the mark of the beast or the Sabbath or the law of God or the second coming of Christ or the millennium or giving your heart to Christ, and it is also appropriate for our subject today: Are you a member of the church? I want you to see that there is going to be a multitude of people in the last days who will think that they are members of the church, and who are going to come right up to the end and find out that they are not.

"Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' " Matthew 7:21-22. (All texts are from the New King James Version.) Notice that these people are not atheists. These are Christians; they called Jesus Lord. And these are people who say: "I have been filled with the Holy Spirit. I have cast out demons. I have the gift of prophecy, and I have been working miracles in Christ's name. Obviously, I am a member of the church." But what is Jesus going to say to them? "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' " Matthew 7:23

Ellen White says that that kind of declaration will come out "from the lips that never make a mistake" and will be repeated to many who have had high places in our work. See The Upward Look, 301. This is a very serious question. Are you a member of the church? Am I a member of the church?

I want you to understand how important and how wonderful it is to be a member of the church. And I want to tell you, friend, if you are not a member, you need to make that decision today and become one. I will show you what is involved, how to become one, and how precious it is to be a member of God's church.

There is no teaching in either the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy that only people who are members of the church will be saved. But God has a plan for His

John Grosboll

John Grosboll is the director of Steps to Life, Wichita, Kansas.
church, and that plan cannot be fulfilled except through the church, because that is how He plans to fulfill it. “To me, who am less than the least of all saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 3:8–10; emphasis supplied

There is a mystery—the apostle Paul says—a mystery that has existed since the beginning of time, and it has been hidden. God understood it, but no created intelligence understood it. But now—the apostle says—if you become a member of the church, you will have a fellowship in this mystery, and through God’s church the whole universe is going to learn about this mystery. It is a mystery that angels desire to look into, and it is God’s plan to make it known to the whole universe through the church. Oh, whenever I read this I think to myself: “None of us comprehend the vastness of God’s plan for His church.” Oh, friends, I want to be part of this, do you? I want to be part of the fellowship of this mystery that reveals to the whole universe the manifold wisdom of God—a mystery that has been hidden since the beginning of time, and that is going to be revealed to the whole universe through the church.

But if you are not a member of the church, how do you become one so that you can have a part in the fellowship of this mystery? Here is the way you become a member of the church, part of the body of Christ. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:13. Now, what is this body that Paul is talking about? Reading several verses down we find that this body is the body of Christ. And what is the body of Christ? The church. How then do you get into the body of Christ? How do you get into the church? The verse says: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” Some years ago, I was attending a Sabbath school class. In fact, it was a special service, and there was only one class for the whole church, probably two hundred people. The person teaching the Sabbath school lesson said: “I want all of you to shut your eyes, and if you can answer the question that I am going to ask, I want you to hold up your hand.” He asked: “How many of you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit?” I immediately held up my hand. I did not see how many others held up their hands. But after the service I went to him and asked him how many people held up their hands, and he said: “Oh, two or three.” That is amazing in an Adventist Church. If you cannot hold up your hand to that question, you are not a member of the church. How is it that you become a member of the church? Look at verse 13 again: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized.” The way that you become a member of the church—part of the body of Christ—is through baptism by the Holy Spirit.

Water baptism is a symbol. It is a tragedy when people go through the motions and do not face the reality. The apostle Peter said on the day of Pentecost, “Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38. And if you had followed the divine prerequisite laid out in the Scriptures before you were baptized, you would have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now somebody may ask: “Is not the Holy Spirit working with everybody?” Of course, the Holy Spirit is working with everybody, but the Holy Spirit is not in everybody.

John 14:15–17 reads: “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” Now, that is present tense. But the attitude expressed among the disciples showed that they were not experiencing conversion at this point. The Holy Spirit was with them. But notice what is going to happen in the future: “For He dwells with you and will be in you.” (Emphasis supplied.) The Holy Spirit is working with the heart of everyone who has not committed the unpardonable sin. But when you are baptized with the Holy Spirit then the Holy Spirit is not just with you, He is in you. And when you are baptized by the Holy Spirit, you become a member of the church. Friend, it does not matter whether your name is written on any church book, or whether you have been baptized by water or not, if you have not been baptized by the Holy Spirit, you are not a member of the church yet. You are just going through the motions.

Do you remember that there were some people in the New Testament who had been baptized, and when the apostle Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit since their baptism, they answered that they did not know. Then the apostle Paul decided that those men needed to be baptized again. See Acts 19. Baptism by water is a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and if you have followed the instructions in the Scriptures concerning baptism, when you are baptized, you are baptized not just with water but you arise to “walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4

If you have followed the instructions in the Scriptures concerning baptism, when you are baptized, you are baptized not just with water but you arise to “walk in newness of life”
How to Keep Your Membership

Now, it is not enough to become a member of the church. After you become a member of the church, you want to stay in the church, because the Bible says that there is going to be a great shaking at the end of time. There will be some people who have been in the church all of their lives who will be shaken out just before Jesus comes. I do not want to be shaken out; I want to be a part of the group that stays in.

If you are going to ask the question, Are you a member of the church? you must not only know how you become a member, but also how you can stay in.

As Seventh-day Adventists we have believed for over a hundred years that we understood Revelation 12, and I believe that we have. However, that does not mean that there are no more lessons to be learned from it. Let us read verses 1-5. "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his head. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. And she bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne."

Some years ago, when I was a young pastor in North Dakota, I was at a woman's house trying to give a Bible study, and we read these verses. I asked her this question: "Who do you believe that this woman is?" She replied without any hesitation: "The Virgin Mary." When I stop to think about that, it sounds quite logical. Because, who is the Child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron? That child is Jesus. And in this chapter we read about the woman who was to bring forth the Messiah. The lady's answer was not really illogical, was it? However, do you know that often there are deep spiritual truths in the Bible and we almost miss them completely because we are used to simply looking at the flesh, at the form, at the external, at the appearance that we pass by the deep spiritual truths.

Do you want to get into some deep theology? Let us try to understand what Revelation 12 says. First of all, do you know for sure who this woman is? It is the church. But how do we know from the Bible that this woman is the church? We know that it is not the Virgin Mary, because the Virgin Mary has never stood on the moon. Also, we know that it is not talking about something literal, for verse 1 says that "a sign, or a wonder, appeared in heaven. A sign is a symbol. We are told in the very first verse of the chapter that this is symbolic and not literal. Now, are there any texts in the Bible that can show you exactly what a woman represents in Bible prophecy? See Jeremiah 6:2; 2 Corinthians 11:1-3; Ephesians 5:25-27; Isaiah 66 and others. A woman is one of the most common symbols used in the Bible to represent the church. For instance, in Ezekiel 23 an entire chapter is devoted to a description of God's people, and the metaphor used is two women. They were called harlots because God's people were worshipping idols at that time and were not keeping the Sabbath. Thus many times God's people, His church, are represented in the Scripture by the symbol of a woman.

In the book of Hosea, God's people are represented by a woman who had left her husband. When God's people go into apostasy, worshipping idols and transgressing the Sabbath, He accuses them of spiritual adultery and of being a harlot. Is the woman in Revelation 12 a harlot or a pure woman? A pure woman. Without question, this woman represents the church. But notice what this church is doing. This church is with child, and she cried out in labor, and in pain. Friend, if you are going to be part of this church, you are going to be in some pain, and you will have to give birth. You must bring forth the spiritual image of Jesus Christ if you are going to be in this church. It is a pure church who brings forth the spiritual image of Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians who were in apostasy and said: "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you." Galatians 4:19. Christ must be formed within us, and it requires some labor, some pain, trials, struggles of souls and of spirit for that to happen; but we must go through that experience. Every Christian must go through a Gethsemane experience at some time in his life and the image of Christ must be reproduced.

The great Christian apostasy that began in the first century and continued into the second century began as a great movement to be more successful in evangelism and to bring more people into the Christian church.

The Bible shows us the only way that we can have assurance of eternal life. "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. Here is the mystery that we read about in Ephesians—Christ in you. O friend, I want that experience more than anything in this world. I want to endure the pain, the labor, the struggle, the trials, the Gethsemane experience. I want to have the spiritual image of Jesus Christ brought forth in my character; how about you? That is the experience that you must have if you are going to be part of this church, because this church brings forth the man child.

What happens then? "Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days." Revelation 12:6. Do you understand that verse? Whole books have been written on it alone. One good book that you might like to read on that verse is Truth Triumph­ant by Wilkinson.

Two years ago, when I was in France, I went down to the headquarters of the Huguenots, just about a three- or four-hour drive from the Italian Alps where the Waldenses lived. Do you
know what the Huguenots called themselves in 1699? They called themselves the “Church in the Wilderness.” They knew who they were. They knew what time it was. They knew what the Bible said.

Friends, how does the woman flee into the wilderness? If you are looking for the true church, and you look during the time of the Dark Ages, you will not find her in the palaces of kings; you will not find her in the big cities of the world; you will not find her to be well-known among the nations, because the text says that the true church will be in obscurity—in the wilderness. Why does she have to flee into the wilderness?

Within twenty years after the death of the apostles, the church toboggan into apostasy. And there were two places in the world where the church went into apostasy the fastest and the worst. Those were two great cities of the world. One was the center of education of the ancient world—Alexandria, a city that went into apostasy and into a system of educational and theological philosophy. The other city was Rome. And it was still in the second century that a curious thing happened in the Roman church. The heathen had a wild solar holiday on the first day of every week. The Jews kept Sabbath. The Jews were being persecuted and the Christians wanted to be as much unlike the Jews as possible to avoid persecution. But that is not all—they wanted to be more successful in evangelism. Did you know that the great Christian apostasy that began in the first century and continued into the second century began as a great movement to be more successful in evangelism and to bring more people into the Christian church? I always think of that whenever I am at large meetings while we are having campaigns and talking about how many more people we are going to bring into the church. Are we more interested in the quantity than in the quality? Ellen White said that God would rather see six people baptized who were thoroughly converted than sixty who were not. See Testimonies, vol. 4, 317

In order to be more successful in evangelism, the Christians started to copy the ways of the heathen. One of the principal ways was observing their day of worship—Sunday. They celebrated the resurrection. Celebration Church services are nothing new; they were going in the second century. They were celebrating on Sunday, and that church is still celebrating many things. Celebrati-

...
rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17. Who is the dragon? The devil. Who is the woman? The church. Who is the remnant? The last of the church. What is the testimony of Jesus Christ? The Spirit of Prophecy. See Revelation 19:10.

Now, let us paraphrase verse seventeen: “And the devil was enraged with the church, and he went to make war with the last of the church, who keep the commandments of God and have the Spirit of Prophecy.” Are you a member of that church? If you are, you will be keeping God’s commandments and you will be living according to the Spirit of Prophecy. If you do not have confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy, then you cannot be part of this church of Revelation 12. And if you are not studying it and living according to it, you cannot remain a part of this church. Sooner or later the Lord will cut you off if you do not cut yourself off. Some people say: “Well, I am doing the best I can.” Friends, that is not the gospel. Revelation 12:17 does not say “who are trying to keep the commandments of God,” does it? It says that they actually keep the commandments of God. The gospel gives you the power through faith in Jesus and trust in Him to actually obey. See Romans 1:6; Jude 24; Hebrews 13:20-21. And if you are going to be part of this church you will not be just making a profession; by the grace of God imparted unto you, you will keep the commandments, and you will live according to the Spirit of Prophecy.

Are you studying the Spirit of Prophecy? Are you learning to live by it so that you can be part of this church? One of these days, very soon, it is going to be all over; and there are many people today who think that they are part of the church who will find that they are not.

When Jesus comes I want to be part of the people described in verse 17 who are keeping the commandments of God and have the Spirit of Prophecy, do you? Do you want to be part of that group who will have the fellowship with the mystery and will reveal the manifold wisdom of God to the whole universe? It is the greatest privilege in the world and nobody can take it away from you if you are part of the body of Christ—if you have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, if you are keeping God’s commandments and if you are living according to the Spirit of Prophecy. My greatest desire is to be part of that group.

1992 Camp Meetings

For those who need to make plans for this coming summer, we are announcing the tentative schedule for camp meetings sponsored by Hope International, Hartland, and Steps to Life. Please watch for further announcements from the sponsors.

1992 Camp Meeting Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>For More Info.</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 26–Mar. 1</td>
<td>Tampa, FL</td>
<td>(703) 672-3566</td>
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<td>Apr. 15–19</td>
<td>Christchurch, NZ</td>
<td>011-64-502-38908</td>
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<td>Apr. 29–May 2</td>
<td>Hot Springs, AR</td>
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<td>Hendersonville, NC</td>
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<td>Orlando, FL</td>
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<td>Wichita, KS</td>
<td>(316) 788-5559</td>
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<td>Singapore &amp; Malaysia</td>
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<td>Oct. 14–18</td>
<td>Hot Springs, AR</td>
<td>(703) 672-3566</td>
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As a non-Adventist Christian (born-again), I have enjoyed reading your publication. It has provoked many thought-ful discussions as well as raised many questions. I wish you could clear up a question for me that no one (Adventist or non-Adventist) seems willing to answer. What exactly is the “Spirit of Prophecy” and should it be considered holy text? I have noticed that your publication seems to favor quoting the “Spirit of Prophecy” more often than the Bible. In case of a contradiction, which should be favored? These are questions that have perplexed me for several years since I first encountered the Adventist faith. Is perhaps the “Spirit of Prophecy” only for Adventists and not for the larger Christian Church which meets on the Lord’s Day for worship?

I was raised in a solid evangelical Baptist Church and never heard that God had a testimony for today’s church. This was in spite of having grown up listening to three different radio and television programs on Sunday mornings before church. I did not realize until recently that these programs were Adventist.

If in fact the “Spirit of Prophecy” is for the current-day church, I feel slighted. Why is the message not being preached? Why is it not being shouted from the mountain top? There are multitudes of born-again Sunday Christians who are open to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit—and would certainly hear such a message if it was preached. I feel that perhaps the Adventist Church has “dropped the ball” in this area.

May I remind you that to whom much is given, much will be required. We believe as Christians that the Holy Spirit will lead us into truth and keep us from sin—and that He would not withhold anything of blessing to His adopted children. I feel perhaps the “Eli-jah” of the twentieth century has chosen to keep the message to himself.

May God speed His response in this matter.
—MB, California

For about a year now we have been receiving Our Firm Foundation. When it began arriving, we were not attending church and had not been attending for about six years. A first, I did little more than glance through the paper, but last January, God worked miraculously to bring us back into church. I was raised an Adventist; my husband originally joined twenty years ago. A month and a half ago my husband was rehabilitated and my children were baptized and joined the church.

Our Firm Foundation has been a help to us to understand the “new theology.” It has also fed us good food. In the December 1989 issue was an article entitled “No Time to Celebrate” which I found informative and instructive.

Please keep doing what you do, no matter how hard the winds blow. For we need the voices crying in the wilderness. Thank you for your voice.
—LS, Alabama

I was surprised to find that some think more Bible study and less Spirit of Prophecy is needed in Our Firm Foundation. Surely we need to hear from our special last-day prophet, especially if we don’t have access to manuscripts and Review and Herald articles that give truth important for our time.

Now, for the Bible study in Our Firm Foundation, there seems to be plenty of that in Our Firm Foundation. In the very issue where the letter appeared asking for more Bible study, the first article by Clark Floyd and the last one by Preston Monterrey had no less than ten Bible verses per page quoted (on an average), besides those referred to, to be looked up. But the center and longest article had even more verses per page; it was by someone named Ellen G. White. I have found out by experience that she quotes and explains the Bible better than any other writer in Our Firm Foundation. Maybe we could have more articles by her and that would give us more Bible study. Do your readers think anyone else is better qualified to explain the Bible?
—MW, Kentucky

My wife and I have just come to know the Lord. I went to a Baptist Church for about 15 years and decided that I could not follow a God that would burn every-one forever. I met some Seventh-day Adventists at work one day and one of them told me that the wages of sin was death! I knew the verse, but never really saw the contradiction. Satan can really blind you if you’re not following Christ. I recently read the article “Enoch: A Type of God’s Final Generation.” I was greatly blessed. I can see that the Lord is working through this magazine.

—LC, Maine

Thank God for the firm foundations He has laid for His church, based on the Solid Rock; and upon which our Seventh-day Adventist Church has been founded. What a tragedy that good men slept while the enemy sowed tares of errors in the teaching of our unsuspecting young ministerial students! What irreparable damage has been done while we have all been sleeping. How grateful we can be that we are being awakened by faithful watchmen!
—FL, Tennessee

I was raised in an Adventist home but lost my way—probably because the true gospel message was not given to me. I became agnostic and suffered in darkness for more than 23 years. The Lord mercifully continued to seek for me and reached me through my wife’s search for truth. I directed her to the Seventh-day Adventist Church to find Bible truth and the Lord mercifully touched my heart to go with her.

A few years ago, a friend introduced me to your publication. At first I didn’t really take the time to read it, but as the shaking has intensified among our people, I have begun to treasure your magazine more and more.

I praise the Lord that He is raising up His faithful ones to “cry aloud, and spare not.” May God continue to bless you in His work.
—PS, California
Many are asking, Why are we still waiting for the Lord to return? This question has prompted many answers, some suggesting that Christ has a fixed time for His second coming, which cannot be affected by either the good works or the sins of His people. It is our hope that each reader will prayerfully consider how God has answered this question through His last-day messenger.—EDITORS

How to Hasten the Second Coming

Long has God waited for the spirit of service to take possession of the whole church so that everyone shall be working for Him according to His ability. When the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission, the whole world will soon be warned and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory. “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14. The Acts of the Apostles, 111

“When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. Christ’s Object Lessons, 69

God “hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world.” (Acts 17:31.) Christ tells us when that day shall be ushered in. He does not say that all the world will be converted, but that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. (2 Peter 3:12, margin.) Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory. The Desire of Ages, 633-634

If those to whom God’s money has been entrusted will be faithful in bringing the means lent them to the Lord’s treasury, His work will make rapid advancement. Many souls will be won to the cause of truth, and the day of Christ’s coming will be hastened. Men and women are to be brought under the influence of true, earnest, wholehearted workers, who labor for souls as they that must give an account. All who are baptized into a measure of the apostolic spirit will be constrained to become God’s missionaries. If they will be true, firm in the faith, if they will not sell their Lord for gain, but will ever acknowledge the divine supremacy and superintendence, God will prepare the way before them and will greatly bless them. He will help them to represent His goodness, love, and mercy. And the glory of the Lord will be their rearward. There will be joy in the heavenly courts, and joy, pure, heavenly joy, will fill the hearts of the workers. To save perishing souls they will be willing to spend and be spent, and their hearts will be filled with love and thanksgiving. The consciousness of God’s presence will purify and ennoble their experience, enriching and strengthening them. The grace of
heaven will be revealed in their work, in the conquests achieved in winning souls to Christ. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 58–59

But before that coming, Jesus said, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” Matthew 24:14. His kingdom will not come until the good tidings of His grace have been carried to all the earth. Hence, as we give ourselves to God, and win other souls to Him, we hasten the coming of His kingdom. Only those who devote themselves to His service, saying, “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8), to open blind eyes, to turn men “from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified” (Acts 26:18)—they alone pray in sincerity, “Thy kingdom come.” *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, 108–109

**Reasons for the Delay**

God calls upon His people to awake to their responsibilities. A flood of light is shining from His word, and there must be a meeting of neglected obligations. When these are met, by giving to the Lord His own in tithes and offerings, the way will be opened for the world to hear the message that the Lord designs it to hear. If our people had the love of God in the heart, if every church member were imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, there would be no lack of funds for home and foreign missions; our resources would be multiplied; a thousand doors of usefulness would be opened; and we should be invited to enter. Had the purpose of God been carried out in giving the message of mercy to the world, Christ would have come, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God. *Counsels on Stewardship*, 36–37

I know that if the people of God had preserved a living connection with Him, if they had obeyed His Word, they would today be in the heavenly Canaan. *Evangelism*, 694

The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional.

God had committed to His people a work to be accomplished on earth. The third angel's message was to be given, the minds of believers were to be directed to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ had entered to make atonement of His people. The Sabbath reform was to be carried forward. The breach in the law of God must be made up. The message must be proclaimed with a loud voice, that all the inhabitants of earth might receive the warning. The people of God must purify their souls through obedience to the truth, and be prepared to stand without fault before Him at His coming.

Had Adventists, after the Great Disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unfeignedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to

As we give ourselves to God, and win other souls to Him, we hasten the coming of His kingdom

receive His people to their reward. But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the Disappointment, many of the Advent believers yielded their faith. . . . Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!

It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and estab-

vast and merciful plan by which He is seeking to compass the salvation of souls? *Ibid.*, 697

When we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples on the day of Pentecost will fall on us. *Ibid.*, 697–698

The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the Advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the Great Disappoint-
ment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mighty with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out. The Great Controversy, 457–458

I saw that watch after watch was in the past. Because of this, should there be a lack of vigilance? Oh, no! There is the greater necessity of unceasing watchfulness, perseverance watching here-tofore. The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay. But the coming of the morning to the faithful, and of the night to the unfaithful, is right upon us. By waiting and watching, God’s people are to manifest their peculiar character, their separation from the world. By our watching position we are to show that we are truly strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. The difference between those who love the world and those who love Christ is so plain as to be unmistakable. While worldlings are all earnestness and ambition to secure earthly treasure, God's people are not conformed to the world, but show by their earnest, watchful, waiting position that they are transformed; that their home is not in this world, but that they are seeking a better country, even a heavenly. Testimonies, vol. 2, 193–194

For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan.

It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But "they could not enter in because of unbelief." Hebrews 3:19. Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and

For Him who lead the people of Israel, forty years seems to be a long time. But to it was the period of the passing of the first watch. Now the period of waiting is necessarily shorter than at first. If we watched with unabated vigilance then, how much more need of double watchfulness in the second watch. The passing of the second watch has brought us to the third, and now it is inexusable to abate our watchfulness. The third watch calls for threefold earnestness. To become impatient now would be to lose all

of these benefits. The Philadelphia Age, vol. 4, 404

The return of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message. Ibid., vol. 6, 406

If every soldier of Christ had done his duty, if every watchman on the walls of Zion had given the trumpet a certain sound, the world might ere this have heard the message of warning. But the work is years behind. While men have slept, Satan has stolen a march upon us. Ibid., vol. 9, 29

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16 Our Firm Foundation Vol. 7, No. 3
To be saved means to learn to love God and one another as Jesus did in His life on earth. This is a day-by-day process. It is not a natural process but is made possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit supplied to us, moment by moment, when we are abiding in Christ. Although it is undeserved and totally outside of our natural power to secure, God offers this transforming grace to every person on earth. Transforming grace—so essential to salvation—and yet what is it, and how do we get it?

Transforming grace is the day-by-day process of God delivering us from sin and making us more loving like Himself. “And now abide faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13

More important than the understanding of prophecy is love. The apostle Paul said that we could even have the gift of prophecy, but if we did not have love, we would be “nothing.” Love is more important than good works. Paul said that we could give our bodies to be burned, but if we did not have love, it would do us no good. Love is more important than any theology. For again Paul says that we can “understand all mysteries,” but without love, we are nothing. Love is even more important than faith itself, for we can “have all faith,” and yet without love, we are still “nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:2–3

The Conditions of Salvation

We are saved by faith in Jesus. It is through faith that we receive the forgiveness of sin and our title to heaven. Our works have nothing to do with earning salvation. It was purchased by Jesus alone, and it is offered to us as a free gift.

But although the gift is absolutely free, it is not unconditional. Not everyone is going to be saved—only those who meet the conditions. Meeting the conditions does not earn our salvation in any way, but it does determine who will receive the free gift. The condition for receiving the free gift is twofold: We must first accept Jesus as our Saviour, and we must then learn to love God and one another as Jesus did. Paul is very clear that unless we obtain this love, our faith is absolutely worthless.

Satisfying a condition is far different from earning salvation. Suppose I was very rich and you were very poor, and, because I really loved you, I gave you a ten-million dollar check. Now there would be nothing that most of us could do to earn that money, but there would be at least one condition: You would have to go to the bank and cash the check. Is that a condition? Yes, it is. The gift is good only if it is cashed.

Could you imagine someone saying, “You mean I have to go all the way to the bank to get this money? Well then, it

Marshall Grosboll
is not a gift. If I have to go to the bank, I’ve earned it.” How preposterous! Yet some people think that way about the gift of salvation. They illogically overthrow all the conditions of salvation, assuming that such parameters constitute sinful works. Thus they delude themselves into thinking that they are saved unconditionally, when they are most assuredly lost.

Jesus plainly stated that at the Second Coming, many would say to Him, “Lord, Lord, we are saved! We have done everything in Your name.” But then He will surely declare to them, “I never knew you: depart from me, you workers of iniquity.” Matthew 7:21–23. Somehow, although they believed in Christ and claimed to be saved, they did not meet the conditions. The proof offered was that they were “workers of iniquity,” or, as the literal Greek says, “They practiced lawlessness.”

There are conditions to salvation which we must all meet, day by day. And these conditions are more involved than just cashing a check at a bank. Suppose, in the previous example of giving you a ten-million dollar check, I stated to you that this was a gift of love, totally free and unmerited—it was my inheritance which I purchased with my own life and which I am now giving to you. But I also stipulated that if you accepted the gift, you must promise me that you will never say anything bad about my kind and loving Father, from whom I inherited the money, or about any of His children whom He loved. Even in this, however, if you should fail at some time, the gift will still be yours if you will but repent and ask forgiveness. Those would be very fair conditions. The gift is still a free gift, which you did not earn, but you must meet the just and fair requirements.

Jesus died on the cross in order to earn eternal life for us. He “was treated as we deserved, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.” The Desire of Ages, 25. There is nothing we can do to earn even temporary life on this earth, and it is even more impossible to do anything to earn eternal life. We can neither pay for our past transgressions nor do a single good work that will merit eternity. Jesus has done both. But there is a condition. Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3

There is nothing we can do to earn even temporary life on this earth, and it is even more impossible to do anything to earn eternal life like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 19:16–17; 22:35–40

There is no salvation without learning to love. Jesus paid for our salvation, but He is not going to give it to anyone who is unwilling to develop a character that will allow him to fit into the loving and unselfish society of heaven. Love to God means that we willingly and lovingly obey Him. Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” John 14:15. Love to our fellow men means that we treat them just as we would wish to be treated in their place. This kind of love is manifested in heaven. The standard of love, by which we will be judged as to whether we have met the conditions of salvation, is the Ten Commandments as lived out in the life of Jesus. “Love is the fulfillment of the law.” Romans 13:10. “He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 2:4. “For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Romans 13:9

In Luke 11 Jesus tells of a man who was once delivered from the slavery of sin. He was delivered from his addictions and bad habits. But he did not go on from there to develop his character into the image of Jesus. Some time later the evil spirit that had once controlled his life came back to see how his old friend was doing. Lo and behold, he found that the man was the same as when he had left him—free from sin but destitute of the grace of Christ. The evil spirit leaped with joy, and went and found seven other spirits more evil than himself, and came back and took absolute control of this poor man. So the last state of that man, who had once been saved, was worse than the first.

How to Stay Saved

Thus we can see that salvation is not a process that merely happens once, after which eternal life is forever secure. “People, if saved at all, must be saved day by day, hour by hour.” Fundamentals of Christian Education, 240. Thus we are told that “Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to
feel that they are saved.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 155. Salvation is a day-by-day process of becoming more and more like God in love. Salvation is much more than a good beginning. It is a state of being in which we must choose to remain by the grace of God. But, note this, it is not a static state of being. The requirement of salvation is not just that we do not sin—that is what the Jews thought in Jesus’ day. That is what the hermit monks thought during the Dark Ages. But the requirement of salvation is that we must continually become more and more like God in character. If my character is no more like God’s next year than it is this year, I am not availing myself of the grace of Christ and I am not being saved.

“It is our privilege to grow more and more like Him every day... We are to learn in the school of Christ; yet it is manifest that many are satisfied with very limited experience in spiritual things... Christians are to be faithful students in the school of Christ, ever learning more of Heaven, more of the words and will of God.” Sons and Daughters of God, 72

“God designs that Christians shall grow continually, grow up unto the full stature of men and women in Christ. All who do not grow stronger, and become more firmly rooted and grounded in the truth, are continually retrograding.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 556

“Man may grow up into Christ, his living head. It is not the work of a moment, but that of a lifetime... The growing is a continuous work.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 367

“The want of spiritual growth closes the door to the rich rays of light that shine from Christ. We shall never reach a period when there is no increased light for us.” Selected Messages, book 1, 403-404

Jesus said, “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.” Luke 12:48. If we have been given ten years to develop a character, God requires of us more than if He has given to us just five years to develop a character.

In the parable of the talents, those who had the talents were strictly required to add unto their resources. The one who failed to do so was considered an unfaithful steward and was considered “wicked and lazy.” The servants of the king were commanded to “cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness” where there was “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 25:26-30

Peter counsels us, saying, “giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” 2 Peter 1:5-7

Thus the Christian life is a constant growth, a constant adding to what we already have. And the ultimate goal is to become more loving like God. If this character of love is not being daily developed within us, we are not in a safe relationship with the Lord. We cannot be satisfied with yesterday’s results or yesterday’s characteristics.

That is why Paul said, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13-14

Many have wondered why God was so exacting with Moses when he failed at the end of a long and faithful life. It was for the very reason that it was at the end of a long and faithful life that made it so serious. God required more from him at the end of his life than at the beginning. “The fact that Moses had enjoyed so great light and knowledge made his sin more grievous. Past faithfulness will not atone for one wrong act. The greater the light and privileges granted to man, the greater is his responsibility, the more aggravated his failure, and the heavier his punishment.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 420

Thus, to be saved means that we must continue, on a day-by-day basis, to cultivate more of the character of Jesus within our lives. We are to become more like Jesus every day—we must become more earnest and anxious to serve God because we love Him more every day, and we must become more kind, courteous, and patient toward our spouses and family members, toward our church members, and toward our fellow men and women.

This growth in grace is accomplished only by spending time with Jesus every day, and by allowing His Spirit to come into our lives to fashion us into the image of Jesus. This is the true purpose of devotions. We need to know more about true theology and prophecy, but the first and most important purpose of prayer and Bible study is to become more like Jesus.

“It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross. The Desire of Ages, 83

As we kneel each morning to devote our lives to God for that day, and as we open the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy to feed upon His Word, our first and primary objective must be to have our lives and characters changed. The purpose of our Bible study and prayer must be to develop characters like Jesus. We are not only to be intelligent Christians, but also loving Christians. This comes by daily spending time with Jesus at the foot of the cross, and then, out of love for Christ utilizing the divine power that He imparts to us to “refuse the evil and choose the good.” Isaiah 7:15

1 Bible quotations are from either the King James or the New King James Version.
THERE is nothing of greater importance to the best interest and success of the Lord's work, than the devotion and efficiency of the ministry. It may properly be said that all depends on this. While it is true that the work is the Lord's, yet He works through the means of human agencies, in carrying forward His work in the earth. An intelligent, earnest, thorough-going minister, inspired by divine grace, actuated by love to God and man, is a great power for good, and will be so much more successful and efficient than one that is indifferent and slack, that there can be no comparison.

There is no position that affords greater opportunities for self-improvement and for doing good than the ministry; and at the same time there is no position that gives a greater chance for abuse of power and influence.

There is much truth in the adage, "Like priests, like people." A fervent, earnest, God-fearing minister will impress the same characteristics on his congregation. A man full of faith and love for souls, will show it in his work, and it will beget the same spirit in the church.

As a people we profess light and truth in advance of many others; and it is therefore rightly expected that this will show itself in a more genuine Christian experience; but we are sorry that this is not more generally the case. To the careful observer it must be apparent that for some time it has not been possible for us to say much in the way of commending ourselves on increased spiritual attainments. We have not increased in spirituality in the same ratio that we have increased in numbers; on the contrary, we have been losing ground. If matters should continue in this direction, Seventh-day Adventists would not be a whit better than other professing Christians who have a form of godliness but know nothing of its power. The difficulty seems to be: First, that many are so blinded that they do not see the dangers of the situation; a feeling of self-complacency prevails, a feeling of being rich and increased with goods, having need of nothing; and therefore, instead of trying to remedy the evil, their labors only encourage the careless, and thus aggravate the evil. Secondly, others seem to see that things are not right, but they appear utterly unable to arouse themselves. Their hands seem to fall helpless by their side. They do not exercise the willpower to say as did Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." If they would, they might have just as signal a victory as he had. But instead of victory, it is only defeat. This is sad, very sad.

Under such circumstances, what can be expected of the church?—Not very much at the best. Can we wonder that many become discouraged? Can we wonder that they have not a spirit to contribute to the support of the ministry and other branches of the work? Can we wonder that the spirit of the world is gaining the ascendancy? To us it seems perfectly natural that it should be so, and that it could not, under the circumstances, well be otherwise.

But this is certainly not such a state of things as ought to exist. Here we are, living on the verge of the eternal world. In a little from this we shall meet eternal consequences face to face. We feel deeply over this matter, and are exceedingly anxious for a change. We appeal to our ministers everywhere to stop and consider, and turn to the Lord with all the heart, with repentance, with fasting and earnest prayer, and by faith lay hold on the mighty arm of God for strength and efficiency.

We are also burdened over the fact that so few are entering the ministry at the present time. We fear this is largely due to the inefficiency of the present ministry. What is becoming of our promising young men? Have they set their minds on the more lucrative positions offered by the world? This would be a natural course for them to pursue from a worldly standpoint. But if they do this, does it speak well for our spirituality, and our faith in God? It certainly is not what we might have reason to expect at this stage of the work. This subject is worthy of most careful consideration. We would naturally expect, at this time and at this stage of the work, that the first and the uppermost thing in every mind would be the work of God preparatory to the coming and kingdom of Christ. But at present this is not so.

Generally speaking, our ministry are better paid today than they have been at any time since the message started. Still, there is but little being accomplished, and, in a general way, less success than in former years, when the difficulties in the way of the work were much greater than they are now.

Today there is a larger number of our ministers who every year take more money from the Lord's treasury than they bring in, and as a result, the cause is greatly crippled for funds. How will such ministers meet the record of the judgment? What will they say when they meet the facts face to face? If all our ministers work in this manner, we would not get very far in extending the truth. I do not say that this applies to all our ministers; there are some exceptions; but the labors of the faithful ministers are to a great extent neutralized by the unfaithfulness of others, and thus the work is hindered.

It makes us very sad to write these things; but it is our duty to place them before you in this plain way. We have let the matter drift altogether too long. We had hoped that the general warning and appeals that have come to us again and again through the Testimonies and in other ways would arouse our ministry to a sense of these things, and bring about a real reform; but to all appearance these things have not had all the effect that we so much desired to see. The ministerial schools and institutes were looked forward to with interest as a means of help and of bringing up the work to a higher standard, and we see some good results from them; but we cannot be satisfied to let it rest here. We must agitate the matter, and not cease till we see such a turning to God, such earnest work, as will bring the blessing of the Lord in its fulness.

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God." Note the first word, "study." A large number of our ministers have not acquired the habit of studying. They read a little at random, but it is not connected. This text does not mean merely to study how to put a few texts together and say something about them; but it is to study to become "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." That means a great deal. It takes in the whole scope of the ministry. It means most earnest and close application to your work and calling, not for a day or two occasionally, but constantly. "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed." In looking over your work, ask yourself, Does my work meet the standard? Will it stand the test of God's measuring rule? Perhaps you may express remorse and shame, and feel that it has been poorly done. If so, then who is to blame? Is the fault with God? Has He been negligent, and proved Himself unfaithful to His promise?—No: the fault is with your-
selves. You have not studied, you have not put that earnest, persevering energy into your work that would insure success. You have not sought God with that constant, humble faith that takes no denial. God has great blessings for you, and it is His will that you should be clothed with power from on high.

In your labors you have looked more to man than to God, and you have been more anxious for the approval of man than to have your work "approved unto God." Or perchance you have mistaken your calling, and are not in your line of duty. There is no such thing as failure with God. Many appear to rest quite satisfied with their unsuccessful labors, feeling that when they have preached the sermon, they have done their duty, and leave the matter without any further concern. Such have no sense of the sacredness of the work of God, or of the responsibility resting upon an ambassador for Christ.

This is not the way Paul regarded this matter. See Acts 20:18-20. After having called the elders of the church to him, he said, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." The soul-burden, the energy, the earnestness, the solicitude, manifested in these words speak for themselves. It was labor in public and private, with humility and many tears. It was thorough work; nothing was lacking. No wonder that churches were raised up. So also would there be now if the same earnestness and thoroughness were put into the work. And is there any reason why there should not be the same earnestness in the work now? If any difference, we should be the more in earnest.

Verses 26-27: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Is that the character of your work? Is not, why not? Is there any reason why we should not be as earnest and devoted in our labors as was Paul? We are living on the very verge of the close of time. The investigative judgment is now in session, and in a little from this your work will be weighed in the balances.

Paul speaks further of his labors, in Colossians 1:28: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." He could not be satisfied in his work with anything less than that which was "perfect in Christ Jesus"; and this he accomplished by the power of God which worked in him mightily. The same power will also work in you if you will let it. Then why rest satisfied with your feeble, unsuccessful efforts? Why not lay hold upon God's mighty resources, by which you may become an able minister of Christ? How dare you draw means from the treasury of the Lord that you know you have not earned? We entreat you, brethren, to consider these matters.

More attention must be given, at our Conferences, to the subject of issuing credentials and licenses, than has been for some time. We shall urge every Conference not to grant credentials to persons who have not made full proof of their ministry. We have been altogether too indifferent in regard to this matter in the past. There are ministers, and not a few, either, that have carried credentials for years, and yet they do not give evidence of being converted men, either in their personal experience or in their labors. Their labors do not benefit the church, but in many instances are a positive injury. Many of our brethren have expressed themselves to the effect that if their Conference continues to pay money to such ministers, they will withhold their tithes. We do not say that it would be right for individuals to withhold from the Lord that which is His; but, on the other hand, it certainly is very wrong for the Conference to give credentials to such men, and it is nothing less than sin to take the Lord's money to pay for such labor. There must be earnest labor with such men; and if they will not reform, there can be no reason why they should continue to hold credentials.

Then there are many that are even light and frivolous, and by this course they do more harm than good. These, too, should be labored with faithfully, and if they do not give evidence of reform, they should certainly not be continued in the ministry; for only evil can result from their work.

Much more attention should be given to the matter of granting licenses. There should be a careful investigation in every case. It should be ascertained whether the person to whom they are to be given are converted or not, whether they are sound in the faith, and what is their acting motive. It is very unfortunate, to say the least, to have men go out as preachers, presenting the truth of God for this time, who are unconverted, and who only partially believe the truth. Such things must not continue.

We do not write these things to discourage any one from entering the ministry who has the cause of God at heart, and who will take hold of the work in the spirit of the gospel. But we must raise the standard. We are living in a time of gross spiritual darkness; true piety is at a low ebb. We are cursed with a form of religion without the power. We must be reformers in every sense of the word. The standard must be raised high, for a mighty work is to be accomplished; the truth of God is to go with power, and the earth is to be lighted with its glory. It stands us in hand to be seriously in earnest. Our ministry must sense these things. If we do not awake to the importance of these things, we shall soon find ourselves left behind, and God will raise up another people that will do His work that we may now, if we acquit ourselves, be the instrumentalities in doing.

An effort should be made to encourage proper persons to enter the ministry. It is sad indeed to notice how few have given themselves to the ministry in the last few years. We need laborers, earnest, faithful, God-fearing men. We need much greater efficiency in the ministry. We plead for a higher standard. A great work is to be done for our churches; but this calls for an efficient ministry, thoroughly imbued by the spirit of the message, to accomplish it. An unconverted minister cannot go into a church and carry on a deep spiritual revival. These things must receive more attention. Young men should be encouraged. They should not be left to themselves, to drift and be tossed hither and thither by every circumstance. A faithful care should be felt by the Conference Committee, and by older and experienced brethren. If this were done, I am sure that we would see better results than have been seen of late. The work is suffering from this great dearth of efficient laborers. We must not be indifferent to this matter, for much is at stake.

While we caution against the continuing of unfaithful men, on the one hand, we do most urgently beseech that earnest efforts be put forth in developing faithful men. We cannot afford to lose a moment's time, for the situation is an urgent one.

I here take the privilege of sending you some testimonies and extracts from late testimonies from Sister White. They speak to the point, and in a very earnest manner set before us the true situation of things. Do not let these earnest entreaties pass by unheeded. You cannot afford to do this, dear brethren. We must wake up and repent and change our course, or else God will remove us from the work, and call other laborers to take our places.

But I will not say more at this time. I pray earnestly that the Spirit of the Lord may come in and set our great need of God before us in such a way that we will not rest till we do consecrate ourselves to God that we shall have that power that He has promised His servants.

Ellen White's Concept of Righteousness by Faith

Do not allow your minds to be diverted from the all-important theme of the righteousness of Christ by the study of theories. Review and Herald, vol. 2, 557

The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. Gospel Workers, 161

What Is Righteousness?

What is righteousness? ... Righteousness means being good and doing good. Manuscript 68, 1894

Righteousness is obedience to the law. Selected Messages, book 1, 367

Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Christ's Object Lessons, 312

Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and “God is love.” 1 John 4:16. It is conformity to the law of God, for “all thy commandments are righteousness” (Psalm 119:172), and “love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:10. Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 18

He who enters heaven must have a character that is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Naught that defileth can ever enter there. In all the redeemed host not one defect will be seen. Messages to Young People, 144

The Ground Rules of Salvation

Repentance has in it nothing of the nature of merit, but it prepares the heart for the acceptance of Christ as the only Saviour, the only hope of the lost sinner. Selected Messages, book 1, 365

God has made the first advance. While you were in rebellion against Him, He went forth to seek you. With the tender heart of the shepherd He left the ninety and nine and went out into the wilderness to find that which was lost. ... In the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. Christ's Object Lessons, 189

Coming to Christ does not require severe mental effort and agony; it is simply accepting the terms of salvation that God has made plain in His Word. The blessing is free to all. Selected Messages, book 1, 333

Jesus said unto him [the rich young ruler], “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” Here are conditions, and the Bible is full of conditions. Selected Messages, book 1, 378

From a sense of thorough conviction, you can ... testify to men of the immutable character of the law manifested by the death of Christ on the cross, the malignant nature of sin, and the righteousness of God in justifying the believer in Jesus, on condition of his future obedience to the statutes of God's government in heaven and earth. Review and Herald, vol. 2, 206

No man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place. ... In order for man to be justified by faith, faith must reach a point where it will control the affections and impulses of the heart. Selected Messages, book 1, 366

Salvation is a gift offered to you free; on no other condition can you obtain it, only as a free gift. But co-operation on your part is essential for your salvation. Letter 9a, 1891

Saving Faith

Faith is trusting in God—believing that He loves us, and knows what is for our best good. Thus, instead of our own way, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership, and accepts its blessing. Gospel Workers, 259
Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even omnipotence; therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency. Ibid., 262.

Where there is not only a belief in God's Word, but also a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Steps to Christ, 63

**Justification by Faith**

What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. The Faith I Live By, 111

As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Ibid., 116

The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace. Ibid., 107

It is not God's will that you should be distrustful, and torture your soul with the fear that God will not accept you because you are sinful and unworthy. Ibid., 102

But, you say, if I could only know that He is my Saviour! Well, what kind of evidence do you want? Do you want a special feeling or emotion to prove that Christ is yours? Is this more reliable than pure faith in God's promises? . . .

There is not a friend in the world of whom you would require one-half the assurance that our heavenly Father has given you in His promises. Review and Herald, vol. 2, 415

Those who accept Christ, and in their first confidence say, I am saved, are in danger of trusting to themselves. They lose sight of their own weakness and their constant need of divine strength. They are unprepared for Satan's devices, and under temptation many, like Peter, fall into the very depths of sin. We are admonished, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12. Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ. Christ's Object Lessons, 155

In order that we may have the righteousness of Christ, we need daily to be transformed by the influence of the Spirit, to be a partaker of the divine nature. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to elevate the taste, to sanctify the heart, to ennoble the whole man. Selected Messages, book 1, 374

In order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Ibid., 366

It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained. Ibid., 397

**Sanctification by Faith**

Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. Steps to Christ, 63

The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven. Messages to Young People, 35

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The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to bless others springs constantly from within

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Both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ. The Desire of Ages, 300

When through repentance and faith we accept Christ as our Saviour, the Lord pardons our sins, and remits the penalty prescribed for the transgression of the law. The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son. Then there is yet another work to be accomplished, and this is of a progressive nature. The soul is to be sanctified through the truth. And this to again rise above their evil natures; and, remembering this, we are ready to renew the conflict ourselves. Ibid., vol. 4, 10–11

**Sanctification's Goal: A Christlike Character**

True sanctification is nothing more or less than to love God with all the heart, to walk in His commandments and ordinances blameless. Sanctification is not an emotion, but a heaven-born principle that brings all the passions and desires under the control of the Spirit of
God; and this work is done through our Lord and Saviour. Signs of the Times, vol. 2, 384

When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within. Christ’s Object Lessons, 384

When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to

Those only who through faith in Christ obey all of God’s commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. They testify to their love of Christ by obeying all His precepts. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, 1118

In every phase of your character-building you are to please God. This you may do; for Enoch pleased Him, though living in a degenerate age. And there are Enoch in this our day. Christ’s Object Lessons, 332

The illiterate as well as the educated can bear the testimony of our faith, saying “I know in whom I have believed”

Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Ibid., 312

Total Victory a Reality

We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him. Testimonies, vol. 1, 144

If you will stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, faithfully doing His service, you need never yield to temptation; for One stands by your side who is able to keep you from falling. Our High Calling, 19

The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to sin. The will must consent, the heart must yield, or passion can not overbear reason, nor iniquity triumph over righteousness. Signs of the Times, vol. 1, 379

If we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The Desire of Ages, 668

Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Ibid., 123

When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. Ibid., 69

We Need Not See All Points Alike

Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to be more minute than is inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith? Why try to work out every minute point, as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter? All cannot see in the same line of vision. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, 1072

It is not essential for you to know and tell others all the whys and wherefores as to what constitutes the new heart, or as to the position they can and must reach so as never to sin. You have no such work to do. All are not constituted alike. Conversions are not all alike. Selected Messages, book 1, 177

A Perfect Heart Is More Essential Than a Perfect Theology

There is to be no dread of anyone being borne down even in a widespread apostasy, who has a living experience in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If Jesus be formed within, the hope of glory, the illiterate as well as the educated can bear the testimony of our faith, saying, “I know in whom I have believed.” Some will not, in argument, be able to show wherein their adversary is wrong, having never had any advantages that others have had; yet these are not overborne by the apostacy because they have the evidence in their own heart that they have the truth, and the most subtle reasoning and assaults of Satan cannot move them from their knowledge of the truth, and they have not a doubt or fear that they are themselves in error. Manuscript 6, 1889

“I want,” says one, “to reason out this matter.” Well, reason it out if you can. “The wind bloweth where it listeth,” and you hear the sound thereof, but you cannot explain it. And no more can you explain the things of God upon the human heart. You cannot explain this faith that lays right hold upon the merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour to bring Christ’s righteousness into your life. Clothed with the righteousness of Christ and not your own righteousness, you will not depend upon what you can do or what you will do. Faith and Works, 65–66

He is our Saviour. He saves us because He said He would. Are we going to go into all the explanations as to how He can save us? Do we have the goodness in ourselves that will make us better and cleanse us from the spots and stains of sin, enabling us then to come to God? We simply cannot do it. Ibid., 70

Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ ascended into the heavens, Christ coming again, should so soften, gladden, and fill the mind of the minister that he will present these truths to the people in love and deep earnestness. Gospel Workers, 159

I love Him! I love Him! I see in Jesus matchless charms. I see in Him everything to be desired by the children of men. Let us come to the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” Let us, through His merits and righteousness, obtain a fitting up for heaven. Review and Herald, vol. 2, 294

The quotations above are drawn from a very helpful 20-page document of the same name, prepared by the staff of the Ellen G. White Estate—EDITORS
M ANY Christians in every generation have sought after peace of the soul. Luther, as well as many like him, thought climbing the stairs in Rome on their knees, and punishing their bodies in a lonely monk’s cell, would bring peace to the soul.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Isaiah 26:3. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1

God’s Word says that only justification by faith in God will bring peace to the soul. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17. Then how is one justified? When he is so sorry for sin that he is willing to be made willing to stop sinning by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” 2 Corinthians 7:9–10

In man’s sorrow for sin he gives his will to God, and God justifies him. The Holy Spirit now has control of his mind, thoughts, and life and holds him fast in that relationship as long as he is willing to surrender.

“It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ; and as you do this, God will immediately take possession and work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Your whole nature will then be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ, and even your thoughts will be subject to Him. You cannot control your impulses, your emotions, as you may desire; but you can control the will, and you can make an entire change in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, your life will be hid with Christ in God and allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from God that will hold you fast to His strength; and a new life, even the life of living faith, will be possible to you. But your will must co-operate with God’s will, not with the will of associates through whom Satan is constantly working to ensnare and destroy you.

“Will you not without delay place yourself in right relation to God? Will you not say, ‘I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now,’ and from this moment be wholly on the Lord’s side?” Testimonies, vol. 5, 514

Immediately God places His hedge about us. It is an impregnable shield which Satan can never penetrate, and, as long as we stay in this wonderful protection, we will not sin. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” 1 John 3:9

Let us read from inspiration: “So far from making arbitrary requirements, God’s law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It insures man’s well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life; for it expresses the principles that endure forever.

“Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied.” Education, 76–77

“What a God is our God! He rules over His kingdom with diligence and care; and He has built a hedge—the Ten Commandments—about His subjects, to
preserve them from the results of transgression. In requiring obedience to the laws of His kingdom, God gives His people health and happiness, peace and joy. He teaches them that the perfection of character He requires can be attained only by becoming familiar with His Word.” Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 454

Then by continuously giving our will to God moment by moment, we can never be tempted above our ability to resist. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

In this beautiful relationship God’s righteous law becomes our impregnable shield and Satan can never defeat us. Praise the Lord!

“When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolting world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan.” The Desire of Ages, 324

What is God’s standard of righteousness, and what is our part in God’s plan of saving our souls from sin? Some say we are not to strive to keep His law.

Let us remember there are only two groups of people in the world: those who follow the narrow way to eternal life and those who follow the broad way to damnation. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and there enter in many which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:13–14. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke 13:24

Those who are depending on Jesus to do it all and are sitting complacently in the other seat to let Jesus drive them through the pearly gates will be disappointed. “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7:22–23

“Christ presents before us the highest perfection of Christian character, which throughout our lifetime we should aim to reach. ... Concerning this perfection Paul writes: ‘Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after. ... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’ Philippians 3:12–15. . . .

Our Saviour does not require impossibilities; He expects nothing of His disciples that He is not willing to give them strength to perform.

“How can we reach the perfection specified by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—our Great Teacher? Can we meet His requirement and attain to so lofty a standard? Can we, else Christ would not have enjoined us to do so. He is our righteousness. In His humanity He has gone before us and wrought out for us perfection of character. We are to have the faith in Him that works by love and purifies the soul. Perfection of character is based upon that which Christ is to us. If we have constant dependence on the merits of our Saviour, and walk in His footsteps, we shall be like Him, pure and undefiled.

“Our Saviour does not require impossibilities of any soul. He expects nothing of His disciples that He is not willing to give them grace and strength to perform. He would not call upon them to be perfect if He had not at His command every perfection of grace to bestow on the ones upon whom He would confer so high and holy a privilege. He has assured us that He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children.

“Our work is to strive to attain in our sphere of action the perfection that Christ in His life on the earth attained in every phase of character. He is our example. In all things we are to strive to honor God in character. In falling day by day so far short of the divine requirements, we are endangering our soul’s salvation. We need to understand and appreciate the privilege with which Christ invests us, and to show our determina-

...
"The Saviour overcame to show man how he may overcome. All the temptations of Satan, Christ met with the Word of God. By trusting in God's promises, He received power to obey God's commandments, and the tempter could gain no advantage." Ibid., 156

We have something to do if we are to be saved in God's kingdom. What is it? To strive with mind and body to reach the great goal of righteousness. In our intensive search for it we must express the same spiritual violence as Jacob did. He clung to Christ as the day was breaking, with the cry from his soul wearied by the night's wrestling, "I will not let you go until you bless me."

Let us not forget that righteousness by faith is the science of holiness. Ellen White beautifully portrays this truth in Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 20:

"There is a science of Christianity to be mastered—a science as much deeper, broader, higher, than any human science as the heavens are higher than the earth. The mind is to be disciplined, educated, trained; for men are to do service for God in ways that are not in harmony with inborn inclination. Often the training and education of a lifetime must be discarded, that one may become a learner in the school of Christ. The heart must be educated to become steadfast in God. Old and young are to form habits of thought that will enable them to resist temptation. They must learn to look upward. The principles of the Word of God—principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity—are to be understood in their bearing on the daily life. Every act, every word, every thought, is to be in accord with these principles.

"No other science is equal to that which develops in the life of the student the character of God. Those who become followers of Christ find that new motives of action are supplied, new thoughts arise, and new actions must result. But they can make advancement only through conflict; for there is an enemy who ever contends against them, presenting temptations to cause the soul to doubt and sin. There are hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil that must be overcome. Appetite and passion must be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. There is no end to the warfare this side of eternity. But while there are constant battles to fight, there are also precious victories to gain; and the triumph over self and sin is of more value than the mind can estimate." See also The Ministry of Healing, 453-454

The devil's counterfeit righteousness is being preached in the pulpit today, and thousands are accepting it to their destruction. May God have mercy on our souls!

"Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. Every sinful indulgence strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The man who manifests an infidel hardihood, or a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. In all the Bible there is not a more fearful warning against trifling with evil than the words of the wise man that the sinner 'shall be holden with the cords of his sins.' Proverbs 5:22

"Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not desire to be set free, if we will not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.' 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-8." Steps to Christ, 34

Justification and sanctification can never be experienced in the life while one is practicing known sins or neglecting known duties. God says so.

"But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul." Selected Messages, book 1, 366

"We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us." Testimonies, vol. 2, 355

By practicing the presence of Jesus moment by moment, by continual submission to God's will, by faithful daily obedience to God's law, we are clothed with righteousness, we are surrounded by His impregnable fortress, His righteous law. This relationship produces the character of Jesus and the keys to the kingdom.

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

"It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel! Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain." Christ's Object Lessons, 69

Perfect peace can only be found in full surrender of the life each moment of the day, and, in this relationship, perfect love casteth out all fear. 1 John 4:18 □

Those who become followers of Christ find that new motives of action are supplied, new thoughts arise, and new actions must result...
A Vital Connection

He who has genuine faith in Christ will have a knowledge of Christ. He will have a growing sense of the power and preciousness of redeeming love and grace, because Christ has been brought into his daily life. He believes in Christ as his Saviour, and hopes in the mercy of God. Although he knows that he is a sinner, and deserves the wrath of God, yet he looks to Calvary and sees the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He knows that Christ has died for him, and that in Christ it is possible to keep the commandments of God. He has the witness in his own soul of the virtue and the love of Jesus, which his faith grasps, and appropriates to himself.

His faith is not of that fraudulent character which refuses to lift the cross, and follow Christ by yielding obedience to all the precepts of Jehovah. It is not of that presumptuous nature that lays claim to the promises of God without complying with the conditions upon which they are to be granted. His is a faith that understands what the Saviour meant when He said, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:53–54. True faith takes the Word of God and weaves it into the life and character. Faith lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Christ explained to His disciples the meaning of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. He said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63

Faith is that mysterious and mighty principle that attracts the soul of man to God. As the sapless branch is united to the living vine, so we must be connected with Christ. There are two kinds of connection between the branches and the vine stock. One is visible, but superficial. The other is invisible and vital. So there is an apparent union, a membership with the church; and a profession of religion, which, though in itself good, is too often unaccompanied by saving faith in Jesus, or living obedience to the commandments of God. The branches which are connected with Christ, the living vine, will make it manifest by bearing much fruit in good works to the glory of God. But the branches which have nothing but an apparent union, will be fruitless. As the branch cannot possibly bring forth fruit without a vital connection with the parent stock, so the Christian can be fruitful in good works only as union with Christ is made and preserved. The ruin of those who are not connected with Christ, is as complete as though they had no name to live; for they are dead. Christ compares them to lifeless branches that are gathered and burned in the fire. "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.” John 15:2

There can be no actual connection with Christ if the person who claims it has no practical knowledge of the sufficiency of the grace of God that is potent to elevate, ennoble, refine, and fit the Christian for the courts of heaven. Those who know Christ, will make manifest the desirability of His love and peace. Every genuine believer will taste, and see that the Lord is good, and will show forth the praises of Him who called us out darkness into the marvelous light of the children of God. The true believer not only has faith, but he has also a knowledge of the efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse from the defilement of sin. Christ crucified is the subject of his thought and meditation. The Word of God to him is not a cunningly devised fable. Christ crucified, though unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness, is to him the power and wisdom of God. When assailed by skeptics, his living experience in the things of God will furnish him with arguments that cannot be gainsaid, and

Ellen G. White
will enable him to resist every dart of the wicked one, so that even the uneducated believer may have simple and genuine proofs of his position, that cannot be overborne by the doubts and cavils of infidels. He can relate that which he has himself experienced. He can say, “I know whom I have believed.” 2 Timothy 1:12

Those who connect with the school of Christ will be careful to obey the words of the Lord. Their faith will be founded upon knowledge, for they will be diligent students of the Scriptures. Like the humble fishermen who united with the Saviour to learn of Him, those who love Christ today will not only listen to His words, but also practice His precepts, and follow in His footsteps. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known, has opened their understanding, and has given them knowledge and judgment, that they may approve things that are excellent. The most educated, as well as the most ignorant, may become partakers of the knowledge of Christ’s salvation. The great apostle himself learned in the school of Christ, and strengthened his faith by his experience in following Jesus, and by acquiring knowledge of Bible history. He convinced men that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and Christ shed His glory upon the apostle, and he could speak from what he had seen and known.

It is the very knowledge that we gain daily, in our conflicts with Satan, that will be valuable to us in the future. It is the experience that we acquire in the things that Jesus is doing for us, in guarding our souls and bodies from the cruel power of our enemy, that will increase our hope and add to our power to fight our way through. In Paul’s experience of suffering for his Lord, he realized the consolation and support of his Redeemer. His trials did not dishearten him, for the rich grace of God nerved him for the conflict, and with fortitude and courage, he gloried in tribulation.

What are we doing with the light God has given to us? In temporal matters, many give thought and attention, and close application of mind, in order to make a business success. Should we not give our very best talent to the service of God? Should we not seek to gain a greater knowledge, and a more intelligent manner of doing the work of the Lord? Are we content to exalt the temporal above the eternal interests?

As the apostle prayed for the Philippian brethren, so pray for yourselves, and for each other, “that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” Philippians 1:9-11. We should not be satisfied with our present spiritual attainments. If the Lord should open before us our condition as it really is, and we should see the danger there is of losing our souls, even those who now profess to be Christians would fall upon their knees, and pray earnestly, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.” The astonishing indifference and carelessness which many now feel, is that they are separated in their thoughts from God, and really ignorant of their own peril. If the truth does not have a sanctifying influence upon your life and character, you will be like the foolish virgins, whose lamps were gone out at the very time when the bridegroom came to go in to the marriage. A theory of the truth is not enough. There is a high standard for us to reach. Our conflict is a continual conflict with the powers of darkness, and we must put on the whole armor of God, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. But how few are world know of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of your Lord and Saviour, unless you make it the theme of your thought and conversation? If our hearts are rejoicing in the hope of beholding our coming Saviour, shall we not speak of it to others? “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Matthew 12:34. We shall have the Spirit of Christ, if we are in union with Him; and with the same uniting love and patience, we shall seek that which is lost. One soul is worth the world. It is the purchase of the blood of Christ, and those who really love Christ will feel the value of the souls for whom He shed His precious blood.

The glory of the eternal world is just before us. Are you forwarding your treasure from this perishing earth to the land of safety? What care is taken to secure proper titles to your worldly possession! Has your thought been exercised in regard to securing a title to the heavenly possessions? Your worldly estates will soon pass away, notwithstanding all your anxiety and toil. You must leave them all sometime. You may die before the coming of Jesus, or you may live till His appearing; however it is, the thoughts and ambitions of earth must be relinquished; but if your treasure is laid up on high, your riches will be incorruptible, undefiled, and will never pass away.

Make friendship with Christ today. Put your case in the hands of the great Advocate. He will plead your cause before the Father. Though you have transgressed the law, and must plead guilty before God, Christ will present His precious blood in your behalf; and through faith and obedience, and a vital union with Christ, you may stand acquitted before the Judge of all the earth, and He will be your Friend when the final trump shall sound, and the scenes of earth shall be no more.

If our hearts are rejoicing in the hope of beholding our coming Saviour, shall we not speak of it to others?

willing to urge their way heavenward against every opposing force of evil in the world!

The apostle prayed that love might abound more and more. There must be a living faith, before there can be a living experience. There are many who have a certain formal knowledge of Christ, and an indefinite faith that does not have an active influence upon the life and character. This faith is not a saving faith. Our love for Jesus must commence here, if we expect to love Him through the ages of eternity. All who love Christ will talk of Him. How shall the

SEVERAL years ago I was alarmed when I heard a fellow minister proclaim from the pulpit that “to put justification and sanctification together in the gospel is to commit spiritual adultery.” My immediate impulse was to challenge such error right then and there in the church service. And perhaps I should have. I cannot deny that there must have been many people in that congregation that day who took this perverse error at face value.

After the service I did challenge the preacher: “What you said today would have been true, given your false understanding of sanctification.”

“What do you think I believe?”

“You believe that justification is God’s perfect work for man through His Son Jesus Christ.”

“What do you believe justification to be?”

“I too believe that justification is God’s perfect work for man through His Son, Jesus Christ. But it is your false concept of sanctification with which I have a serious problem.”

“What do I believe sanctification to be?”

“You believe sanctification to be man’s imperfect works to God.”

Without either confirming or denying what I had said, he asked for my definition of sanctification. I replied: “Like justification, I believe that sanctification is God’s perfect work for man through His Son, Jesus Christ.”

Somehow over the centuries large segments of Christians have been led to believe that justification is the free gift of grace, but that sanctification embodies merit from the works of man. Nothing could be further from the truth. Both justification and sanctification are free gifts from God through Christ. A true understanding of sanctification underlies a true understanding of the gospel. It is the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Galatians 5:6, Acts 15:9

Those who believe in the fullness of the gospel believe it encompasses the

Unless we understand true sanctification, we cannot understand the gospel message

total salvation acts of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Such believers have often been accused of being perfectionists and legalists, of having been oriented to a works-based salvation. This belief is due to the false presuppositions of the accusers concerning sanctification. As Ellen White has so wonderfully explained it: “While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.” Selected Messages, book 1, 377

I was talking some years ago to a friend who was deeper involved in the New Theology. When I explained to him the biblical concept of sanctification by faith (Acts 26:18), his immediate response was: “Well, that’s not the definition that modern theologians use today.” I urged him to come back to the only valid source of definition, that of the inspired Bible writers. Unless we have a true understanding of the nature of sanctification, we cannot understand the gospel message. Paul referred not only to the forgiveness of the gospel, but also to the power of the gospel: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16

On one occasion, I talked to a prominent Adventist theologian, who quickly denied my affirmation that sanctification was indeed an integral part of the gospel. He said, “Sanctification is a very good principle, but it is not part of the gospel.” It was difficult to understand how this learned scholar could be unaware that the New Testament is replete with statement after statement linking justification and sanctification in a perfect whole:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins [justification], and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [sanctification].” 1 John 1:9

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“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus [justification], who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit [sanctification].” Romans 8:1

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins [justification], and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me [sanctification].” Acts 26:18

Even in the Lord’s prayer, the two are placed together. “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors [justification]. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil [sanctification].” Matthew 6:12–13

Within the great challenge of Christ to Nicodemus, there is clearly implied the unity of justification and sanctification: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water [justification] and of the Spirit [sanctification], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John 3:5. In the Bible, the water clearly encompasses justification (Acts 19:4; Matthew 3:11), whereas being born of the Spirit encompasses sanctification (Acts 5:32; 1 Peter 1:22).

Of paramount importance is the fact that justification and sanctification are characteristics of the final generation who will be redeemed into the kingdom of God: “And he that is righteous [justified], let him be righteous still: and he that is holy [sanctified], let him be holy still.” Revelation 22:11

When we clearly recognize that the gospel of Jesus Christ includes both pardon for sin and reclamation from sin, we understand the fullness of the gospel. Indeed, nothing that Christ did, is doing, or will do, is directed to anything else but the salvation of God’s people. The whole energy of Heaven is concentrated upon the restoration of harmony within the universe in the redemption of all who will accept the wonderful gift of God through Jesus.

The gospel that teaches justification by faith alone sees salvation only in the light of forgiveness. But such is not scripturally valid. Those holding to this narrow concept of the gospel, see the cross alone as the essential element in the salvation of man rather than central to man’s salvation. But if Christ had not been born a babe in Bethlehem, we could not be saved. If He had not lived a sinless life upon earth, we could not be saved. If He had not died on Calvary, we could not be saved. If He had not been resurrected, we could not be saved. If He had not ascended into the presence of His Father, we could not be saved. If He were not now ministering in the sanctuary above, we could not be saved. If He does not come with power and great glory to redeem His saints, we will not be saved.

There is no biblical basis for misunderstanding the totality of the ministry of Christ for the salvation of mankind. Indeed, Paul made these points very clear by frequently indicating that we are saved because of His resurrection: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.” Romans 5:10. “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . And if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain; ye are yet in your sins.” 1 Corinthians 15:14, 17

When the gospel is understood in the fullness of its biblical representation, there is no need to infer that the gospel does not include sanctification with justification. Nor can it be said that to place sanctification with justification in the gospel is to put our salvation partly in the area of human works. A full understanding of the gospel makes it clear that there is no human merit in our sanctification. Like justification, sanctification is the work of Christ through His sacrifice and ministry.

The word sanctification in both the Hebrew and the Greek is from the same root word as “holiness.” God will have a sanctified, holy people to take with Him into the kingdom. When the biblical concepts of the gospel are rightly understood, they will bring rejoicing to the hearts of men and women who know that they do not need to remain in the bondage of continual, repetitive sin. They have faith that through the power of the sacrificed and risen One they may gain victory over every temptation of Satan. Their good works will in turn glorify their Father in heaven.

The understanding of the breadth and the spirit of the gospel is essential to the salvation of God’s people. Not only, however, must we know the gospel, we must also ask the Holy Spirit to translate it into the fabric of our lives. Until we experience the fullness of God’s power in our lives, God’s people will not be united. Jesus said in His prayer for unity, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17

When that unity is achieved through a sanctifying truth, then the Lord will entrust His people with the Holy Spirit. Then the loud cry will be given in every corner of the earth, and Jesus will return. Preaching and practicing the full gospel of Jesus Christ is essential to the disposition of sin and the heralding of the age of eternal peace. Jesus is the center of every aspect of our salvation.

Justification and sanctification are characteristics of the final generation

The gospel makes it clear that there is no human merit in our sanctification
Over the last few months there has been a veritable flurry of published works regarding the subjects of the storehouse, tithe, and stewardship. There have been supportive ministry booklets and personal open letters. There has been an article in the September 1991 issue of this magazine and a supplement to the *Adventist Review* of November 7, 1991. All of these contain personal understandings of the Lord’s instructions in these areas.

If you desire to know all that God has said regarding tithe, send for *All About Tithe*. It is a 376-page comprehensive compilation of every scripture verse and Spirit of Prophecy paragraph that refers to tithe, without comments by the compiler. It is organized to be conveniently used as a devotional book. Why not purpose during the next few months to let the Lord, through Ellen White, share with you the “real truth” about the sacred tithe and how and where it is to be used? Copies of this timely volume may be ordered from Hope International for a suggested donation of only US$8 per copy plus 15% for postage and handling ($1.50 minimum).

For those who wish to request it, Ralph Larson has prepared a response to the article printed in the November 7, 1991, *Adventist Review*. You may write Hope International and request “The Tithe Problem—Continued.”

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