SAVING faith, what is it? Let the Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy explain.

"Justification by faith is to many a mystery. A sinner is justified by God when he repents of his sins. He sees Jesus upon the cross of Calvary. Why all this suffering?" *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, 355.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James 2:17.

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" James 2:22.

"Ye see then that by what a man is justified, and not by faith only." James 2:24.

"It is important that we understand clearly the nature of faith. There are many who believe that Christ is the Saviour of the world, that the gospel is true and reveals the plan of salvation, yet they do not possess saving faith. They are intellectually convinced of the truth, but this is not enough; in order to be justified, the sinner must have that faith that appropriates the merits of Christ to his own soul. We read that the devils 'believe, and tremble,' but their belief does not bring them justification, neither will the belief of those who give a merely intellectual assent to the truths of the Bible bring them the benefits of salvation. This belief fails of reaching the vital point, for the truth does not engage the heart or transform the character." *Selected Messages*, book 3, 191-192.

"To be pardoned in the way that Christ pardons, is not only to be forgiven, but to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Lord says, 'A new heart will I give unto thee.' The image of Christ is to be stamped upon the very mind, heart, and soul. The apostle says, 'But we have the mind of Christ.' 1 Corinthians 2:16. Without the transforming process which can come alone through divine power, the original propensities to sin are left in the heart in all their strength, to forge new chains, to impose a slavery that can never be broken by human power. But men can never enter heaven with their old tastes, inclinations, idols, ideas, and theories. Heaven would be no place of joy to them; for everything would be in collision with their tastes, appetites, and inclinations, and painfully opposed to their natural and cultivated traits of character." Ibid., 190-191.

"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 also is accomplished through faith. For it is only by the grace of Christ, which we receive through faith, that the character can be transformed." Ibid., 191.

So we see that character development is to be accomplished by faith in Jesus that will produce a character that God can trust with eternal life. We cannot be justified while we continue practicing known sins or neglecting known duties. See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 366. Listen to God explain this important soul-saving doctrine by our prophet.

"Sinners can be justified by God only when He pardons their sins, remits the punishment they deserve, and treats them as though they were really just and had not sinned, receiving them into divine favor and treating them as if they were righteous. They are justified alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ. The Father accepts the Son, and through the atoning sacrifice of His Son accepts the sinner.

"A general faith is entertained by many, and their assent is given that Christianity is the only hope for perish-
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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When God Takes the Reins

By our stiff-necked persistence in following our own methods and those of the world in the operation of God's health and educational systems in direct disobedience to God's expressed will, we have grasped the reins of the government of Christ's church out of His hands. By refusing to permit Christ's will to reign in His institutions, we have refused to work under His theocratic rule. By following our own way we have caused a controversy between ourselves and God. Ellen White's words written over one hundred years ago well describe our situation today:

"We can stand down here, in 1892, and with the aftsight we are privileged to have, we can see what it means to disobey God's commandments. Adam yielded to temptation, and as we have the matter of sin and its consequences laid so distinctly before us, we can read from cause to effect and see the greatness of the act is not that which constitutes sin; but the disobedience of God's expressed will, which is a virtual denial of God, refusing the laws of His government. . . . No man can be happy and depart from God's specified requirements, and set up a standard of his own which he decides he can safely follow. Then there would be a variety of standards to suit the different minds, and the government taken out of the Lord's hands and human beings grasp the reins of government. The law of self is erected, the will of man is made supreme, and when the high and holy will of God is presented to be obeyed, respected, and honored the human will wants its own way to do its own promptings, and there is a controversy between the human agent and the divine." Manuscript Releases, vol. 6, 338.

By operating the church and its institutions in many ways contrary to Christ's directives we, not God, have caused a long delay in Christ's second coming.

"We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action." Maranatha, 19.

The usurpation by man of Christ's rule in His church has indeed delayed and made the work much harder.

"Men make the work of advancing the truth tenfold harder than it really is, by seeking to take God's work out of His hands into their own finite hands. They think they must be constantly inventing something to make men do things which they suppose these persons ought to do. The time thus spent is all the while making the work more complicated; for the great Chief Worker is left out of the question in the care of His own heritage." Evangelism, 635.

We need not despair because of the human rule that has usurped Christ's theocratic rule of His people, for where the shepherds are not true, Christ has promised to take charge Himself.

"We have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers there can be no true Christians, but this is not the case. God has promised that where the shepherds are not true He will take charge of the flock Himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities." Testimonies, vol. 5, 80.

Those who are obedient to Christ's directives in their personal lives and in their work for Him will remain in His church after it is purified. See "The Shaking of Adventism, Phase 3," Our Firm Foundation, September 1993. Those remaining faithful will then receive the full measure of the latter rain and give the loud cry. Through the Holy Spirit in the latter rain God will fully take the reins into His own hands. Through His fully surrendered, purified, remnant people Christ will then cut His work short in righteousness—right doing. See Romans

Vernon Sparks

“There will be a series of events revealing that God is Master of the situation.” Testimonies, vol. 9, 96.

We are not to be depressed when there is unfaithfulness of the watchmen, for God will make the remaining faithful radiant with His Word.

“Do not be depressed, do not mourn in secret because of the unfaithfulness of the watchmen on the walls of Zion. There is no call for despondency and misapprehension. Place yourself where the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness can shine into all the chambers of your mind and into the soul-temple. We are the light of the world, God says. He will make those who are faithful in the church radiant with the Word of God. His Spirit will be communicated to human instrumentalties, giving them light before which moral darkness must flee away.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 12, 102-103.

Even if all the leaders were to reject the truth, God would raise up other messengers.

“Even if all our leading men should refuse light and truth, that door will still remain open. The Lord will raise up men who will give the people the message for this time.” Testimonies to Ministers, 107.

In the final work, God will use men and women of His own choosing.

“Light must come to the people through agents whom God shall choose, who will give the note of warning, that none may be in ignorance of the purposes of God or the devices of Satan. At the great heart of the work Satan will use his hellish arts to the utmost. He will seek in every possible way to interpose himself between the people and God, and shut away the light that God would have come to His children.” The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 507.

Humble men and women, still sensitive to truth, and even children will be impelled to give the message.

“God will move upon men of humble position in society, men who have not become insensible to the bright rays of light through so long contemplating the light of truth, and refusing to make any improvement or advancement therein. Many such will be seen hurrying hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to bring the light to others. The truth, the Word of God, is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. Children are impelled by the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from Heaven.” Review and Herald, July 23, 1895.

God will not satisfy our curiosity as to why He chooses whom He chooses.

“Men professing godliness have despised Christ in the person of His messengers. Like the Jews, they reject God’s message. The Jews asked regarding Christ, ‘Who is this? Is not this Joseph’s son?’ He was not the Christ that the Jews had looked for. So today the agencies that God sends are not what men have looked wonderful activity in the courts above. The Lord often works in a manner which is not in accordance with the ideas of the men who are in responsible positions. The speculations and calculations of human minds are not always in wisdom of God. Some move altogether too slowly, and their caution is a defective spoke in the wheel, keeping it from rolling. Again, others may devise and plan how this one and that one shall work, when the Lord has other work for these men to do, other places where He wants them to till in as His agents. His plans are not built on any

Even if all our leading men should refuse light and truth, that door will still remain open. The Lord will raise up men who will give the people the message for this time.

for. But the Lord will not ask any man by whom to send. He will send by whom He will. Men may not be able to understand why God sends this one or that one. His work may be a matter of curiosity, God will not satisfy this curiosity; and His Word will not return unto Him void.” Ibid., August 17, 1897.

We must be careful not to reject light because it does not come through expected channels.

“We should be ready to accept light from God from whatever source it may come, instead of rejecting it because it does not come through the channel from which we expected it.” Review and Herald, August 27, 1889.

God often purposely uses unexpected channels to help identify the true lovers of truth.

“The Lord often works where we least expect Him; He surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits—because it is truth.” Testimonies to Ministers, 106.

The Lord often works contrary to the ideas of church leadership and uses those who will be molded by His counsels.

“I wish that occasionally the curtain could be rolled back and all could see the manner of the Lord’s working, and the foundation that is laid by man, but as the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, He lays the foundation, and erects the structure, in lofty independence through those who will be worked by Him. The Lord Jesus takes those that He finds will be molded and uses them for His own name’s glory, to meet His own spiritual conception. He sees material that others would pass by, and works all who will be worked.” Spalding and Mogan Collection, 65.

In God’s final work we can expect resistance from the very ones expected to be engaged in such work.

“If we are to bear a part in this work to its close, we must recognize the fact that there are good things to come to the people of God in a way that we had not discerned; and that there will be resistance from the very ones we expected to engage in such a work.” The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 1024.

Those in the church who obstruct the channels God chooses will have an account to settle with Him.

“But when God speaks to men, commanding them to bear His message to the people, it means something. Those who are commanded to bear a message must move out although obstacles of a forbidding character are in the way. Those who claim to know the truth, and yet lay every obstacle in the way so that light shall not come to the people, will have an account
to settle with God that they will not be pleased to meet. God manages His own work, and woe to the man who puts his hand to the ark of God.” Ibid., 1032.

The following counsels regarding how those who are disobedient to the Lord, or who refuse to accept truth, should respond to Christ’s leadership of His people will certainly be fully applicable when He takes the reins into His own hands.

“The third angel’s message will not be comprehended, the light which will lighten the earth with its glory will be called a false light, by those who refuse to walk in its advancing glory. The work that might have been done, will be left undone by the rejecters of truth, because of their unbelief. We entreat of you who oppose the light of truth, to stand out of the way of God’s people. Let Heaven-sent light shine forth upon them in clear and steady rays. God holds you to whom this light has come, responsible for the use you make of it. Those who will not hear will be held responsible; for the truth has been brought within their reach, but they despised their opportunities and privileges.” Review and Herald, May 27, 1890.

“You who are finite, erring, and unsanctified, have supposed that God’s children were put under your jurisdiction, for you to plan for them, and bring them to your terms . . . . Let it no longer to regarded as your privilege to control God’s heritage.

“The Lord Himself will turn and overturn, and set things in order. He has the responsibility of His own work, and He has not entrusted the management of His people to unsanctified human hands.

“It is hard for men to learn their real weakness and ignorance and inefficiency. It is hard for the ambitious heart to receive God’s ideas and plans, with unquestioning faith and obedience. Some have very high ideas of the importance of their own individuality, and by their headstrong course are saying, We want not God’s way, but our own way.” The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 1367.

planted the seed of truth centuries ago. Do not many turn from this work to trample down the growth springing from the same seed today? The old cry is repeated, ‘We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow [Christ in the messenger He sends], we know not from whence he is.’ John 9:29. As in earlier ages, the special truths for this time are found, not with the ecclesiastical authorities, but with men and women who are not too learned or too wise to believe the Word of God.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 79.

Many of God’s helpers in the closing work will come from the untrained, common people.

“In this closing work of the gospel there is a vast field to be occupied; and, more than ever before, the work is to enlist helpers from the common people. Both the youth and those older in years will be called from the field, from the vineyard, and from the workshop, and sent forth by the Master to give His message. Many of these may have had little opportunity for education; but Christ sees in them qualifications that will enable them to fulfill His purpose. If they put their hearts into the work, and continue to be learners, He will fit them to labor for Him.” The Youth’s Instructor, March 3, 1908.

God’s helpers will follow the directions of the Holy Spirit regardless of Conference support.

“There are among our church members faithful souls who feel a burden for those who know not the truth for this time. But one will say to such, The Conference will not support you if you go here or there. To such souls I would say, ‘Pray to God for guidance as to where you shall go; follow the directions of the Holy Spirit, and go, whether the Conference will pay your expenses or not.’ ‘Go work today in My vineyard,’ Christ commands. When you have done your work in one place, go to another. Angels of God will go with you, if you follow the leadings of the Spirit.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 8, 206–207.

God will pass by those who have worked according to their own wisdom.

“The Lord does not ask permission of those in responsible positions when He wishes to use certain ones as His agents for the promulgation of truth. But He will use whom He will use. He will pass by men who have not followed His counsel, men who feel capable and sufficient to work in their own wisdom; and He will use others who are thought by these supposedly wise ones to be wholly incompetent. Many who have some talent think that they are necessary to the cause of God. Let them beware lest they stretch themselves beyond their measure, and the Lord shall leave them to their own ways, to be filled with their own doings.” Review and Herald, July 23, 1895.

The following counsels, many applicable today, of how we are to relate to kingly power will certainly be fully applicable when Christ takes the reins into His own hands.

“If the cords are drawn much tighter, if the rules are made much finer, if men continue to bind their fellow laborers closer and closer to the commandments of men, many will be stirred by the Spirit of God to break every shackle, and assert their liberty in Christ Jesus.”

Phariseeism in the Christian world today is not extinct. The Lord desires to break up the course of precision which has become so firmly established, which has hindered, instead of advancing, His work. He desires His people to remember that there is a large space over which the light of present truth is to be shed. Divine wisdom must have abundant room in which to work. It is to advance without asking permission or support from those who have taken to themselves a kingly power.” Manuscript Releases, vol. 14, 203.

“Let those who would follow Christ fully come up to the work, even if it be over the heads of ministers and president.” Testimonies vol. 5, 369.

I

f men continue to bind their fellow laborers closer and closer to the commandments of men, many will be stirred by the Spirit of God to break every shackle, and assert their liberty in Christ Jesus.
"Under the showers of the latter rain the inventions of man, the human machinery, will at times be swept away, the boundary of man's authority will be as broken reeds, and the Holy Spirit will speak through the living, human agent with convincing power. No one then will watch to see if the sentences are well rounded off, if the grammar is faultless. The living water will flow in God's own channels." The Paulson Collection, 102.

"The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man's machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit's power." Review and Herald July 23, 1895.

See also Testimonies to Ministers, 362, 411.

When God's people cease to let others mold them at will a great advance will be made in finishing the work.

"May the Lord place this matter before you as it is. God works, not as men plan, nor as men wish, but 'in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.' Why treat God's ways as worthless, because they do not coincide with our private ideas? God has appointed channels of light, but these are not necessarily through the minds of any particular man or set of men. When all shall take their appointed places in God's work, and not allow others to mold them at will, then one great advance will have been made toward letting the light shine upon the world." The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 113.

We will be disappointed if we try to limit how God will work, for He will work in ways least expected.

"You are not to limit the Holy One of Israel, whose power is of old, and whose ways are past finding out. If you mark out ways whereby you expect God to work, you will be disappointed. The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation. You are to leave God to work in His own way, and you must walk, not by sight, but by faith. God has a work to be done, and it is a very solemn, sacred work. It is not wise to follow plans of your own devising. . . . God will work in ways least expected. It is not your own strength that will turn the battle against the enemy, but the strength of the mighty General of armies, who works for His own name's glory." Series A, No. 7, 18–19.

God will take the reins into His own hands. With simple means He will work contrary to any human planning.

"Unless those who can help in —— are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the loud cry of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness." Testimonies to Ministers, 300.

Laborers will be led to leave their ordinary employment and to labor in economical house-to-house work.

"Men will be moved by the Holy Spirit to leave their ordinary employment and enter the barren fields that have never heard the last message of mercy. Many will be endowed with power from on high. They will work wisely, not expending means lavishly, but studying how souls can be brought to the knowledge of the truth by the opening of the Scriptures in house-to-house labor. This work men and women will take hold of for the love of Christ." Manuscript Releases No. 311, 45.

Humble, obedient laborers will travel from city to city and country to country with great success.

"When the church is awakened, decided changes will be made. Men and women will be converted, and so filled will they be by the Spirit of God that they will pass from country to country, from city to city, proclaiming the message of truth. With hearts filled with earnest love for souls, they will open their Bibles and present the Word, 'It is written.' Wherever they go a people will be raised up to stand in the day of the Lord. The simplicity of these humble workers will be their strength; for angels of God work with those who are humble and obedient. Learned, eloquent men will not see the results from their work that are seen by these humble, zealous, praying men." ibid.

We are told that the loud cry of the fourth angel of Revelation 18:1–5 will largely be accomplished through publications. See The Publishing Ministry, 50. It is of significance that as the publications of our publishing houses have increasingly promoted the beliefs of the New Theology (See "God's Plan Misused" Our Firm Foundation, vol. 7, no. 12.) just so has there been a parallel increase in publications from independent ministries untainted by the doctrines of fallen Christianity. These magazines, books, tracts, audio cassettes and video tapes in harmony with the beliefs of historic Adventism may very well be among the simple means that God will use to cut His work short in righteousness.

Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.
THE hopelessness of sinful man outside of God’s plan for his redemption is declared in the words of the psalmist: “If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” Psalm 130:3. But the ground for hope in the Lord is stated in the next verse: “There is forgiveness with Thee.”

This basic fact in Christian belief was taught by the typical service of the earthly sanctuary: “If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord,” “he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock, . . . for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord; and it shall be forgiven him for anything of all that he hath done in trespassing therein.” Leviticus 6:2, 6-7.

This forgiveness is of God, and is in definite relationship to the promises of the unchangeable covenant. “O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him.” Daniel 9:8-9.

Even the most vile, and those most hopelessly discouraged by their sins, need not despair, for God’s forgiveness covers all our iniquity. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.” Psalm 103:2-3. [All emphasis in original article.]

It was misunderstanding of this great truth that ruined Cain. “The Lord said unto Cain, Where is thy brother?” And he said, I know not: am I my brother’s keeper? And He said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto Me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. And Cain said unto the Lord, Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven.” Genesis 4:9-13, margin.

Misconception of God’s attitude toward the sinner wrung from Cain those despairing words, “Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid.” It was with this burden of unbelief and misunderstanding on his heart that he “went out from the presence of the Lord.” This attitude of persistent unbelief never permitted the revelation of God’s mercy in the forgiveness of sins to lead Cain from the darkness of his own sinful course to the light and love and plenteous redemption of his Lord who delighteth in mercy.

The fact of forgiveness as taught in the Bible has to do with a need as wide as the race, for “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23.

Men, according to the Scriptures, are divided into two classes: Those who are dead, distant, and alien, and those who have been made alive, brought near, and given the place of sons. Those of the first class are said to be without hope, while those of the second are said to have been begotten unto a lively hope. Between these two conditions of life the forgiveness of God has wrought, working upon the one class and making possible the other. “You, being dead in your sins, . . . hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Colossians 2:13.

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians, clearly says that the basis of this forgiveness is the blood of the atonement, for in Christ “we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:14.

But it should be understood that the sins that are forgiven are the sins of the persons who repent of their wrongdoing and confess their guilt in their transgressions. To this, both the Old and the New Testament witness.

Francis M. Wilcox served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an author, minister, and administrator and was the editor of the Review and Herald from 1911 to 1944.
Testament, in many passages, bear witness. Observe the following:

"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Psalm 32:5.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

It should also be understood that conversion precedes forgiveness. It is not enough merely to have sorrow for sin, and to cry to the Lord for its removal. We must come in confession with sincere purpose to turn away from sin, and to live apart from it, turning to God in all things.

"When Thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against Thee, and shall turn again to Thee, and confess Thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto Thee in this house: then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which Thou gavest unto their fathers." 1 Kings 8:33–34.

"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, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." Acts 26:18.

Forgiveness is not holiness. Our guilt is the obstacle that stands in the way of a life of progressive holiness for us. For forgiveness provides a way whereby our guilt is canceled. But the remission of our sins is not to be confused with the actual bestowal of righteousness. Forgiveness is precedent to the bringing in of righteousness. "Then did I own my sin to Thee, uncovering my iniquity; and as I vowed I would confess, Thou didst remit my sinful guilt." Psalm 32:5, Moffatt’s translation.

The cleansing from all unrighteousness accompanies the forgiveness of our sins. That this cleansing is by the blood of Jesus we learn from the words of the apostle John: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

Cleansing us from all sin by the blood of the atonement is as surely an act of atonement as is the shedding of the blood by which the cleansing is accomplished. Since it accompanies the act of forgiveness, it is clearly a work that is performed by the risen Saviour as priest in the sanctuary above. Observe this in the preaching of the apostles: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31.

But we proceed a step further, to find in the teachings of Paul that forgiveness precedes justification. Proclaiming Christ to the people at Antioch, he said: "He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13:37–39.

By this it is evident that justification follows belief in God’s willingness to forgive, that belief of God’s forgiveness follows the preaching of that particular truth, and that this preaching is through Jesus Christ, who, though slain, saw no corruption, and was raised again from the dead.

Now if the preaching of the doctrine of forgiveness is through the crucified and risen Christ, and belief of this doctrine brings justification, then the priestly service which obtains for us that justification, is rendered after we believe. Since this work of justifying us is an important part of the atoning work of Christ, then it is quite evident that the work of atonement was not completed at the cross. The Scriptures plainly state that Christ there "was delivered for our offenses," but "was raised again for our justification." Romans 4:25.

In the type it is clear that forgiveness was obtained for the penitent through the blood of the sacrifice by an act of the priest. "If a soul sin," he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord. . . . And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord." Leviticus 6:2, 6–7.

Because forgiveness is a gift obtained for us by the Saviour exalted in heaven, the obtaining of our forgiveness through the mere payment of the penalty, while basic to the act of forgiveness, is not forgiveness. There must be acceptance of the payment by Him who demands it. There must be tendered with it acknowledgment of the justice of the penalty. There must accompany it evidence of a purpose to turn away from sin. There must be a seeking of new power to live aright in God’s sight. There must be acceptance of new principles for that new life.

These were provided in the type by the penitent’s bringing a substitute to sacrifice at the appointed place, thus acknowledging his need and the justice of the penalty prescribed; by laying his hand upon the head of the victim, thus expressing his willingness to have his guilt borne by another, and his debt paid by substitution; by slaying the victim as an offering for his sin, thus expressing his willingness to die in his substitute, and to accept the life which his victim’s death permitted to continue; thus, also, signifying the acceptance of a new principle and a new power for that life. These all were provided in the typical service by the individual sin offerings.

At the making of the continual burnt offering there was no personal acknowledgment of guilt, no personal tender of this offering as an individual ransom, no presentation of this as a personal substitute, no laying on of the hands of individual sinners, no personal acceptance of the victim’s life...
in substitution by individuals, no personal killing of the sacrifice by the penitent, and no evidence presented with it that individuals had purposed to live anew in new power upon new principles. At the making of the sin offering, all these were in evidence.

The continual burnt offering served to keep before the minds of the people the great fact of redeeming love, that God had provided a ransom for all. The individual sin offering signified that the penitent, in approaching God, did so by faith in the heavenly sanctuary and obtains forgiveness for him. Then it is that our antitypical Priest, through his own blood ministered in the heavenly sanctuary, presents the merits of the life He gave for the penitent, and secures his justification. This latter, as we have already seen by Paul's teaching in the book of Acts, is made possible by the belief of the penitent in the doctrine of forgiveness. Thus justification is dependent upon forgiveness, and follows it in the penitent's experience.

None of these is obtainable by the transaction at the cross in itself, yet not one of them is obtainable but by the blood of the cross ministered in the heavenly sanctuary.

It is to be observed that this justification is very full and all embracing: "By Him all that believe are justified from all things," Acts 13:39.

It is evident, then, that since this justification is dependent upon the faith of the penitent in God's forgiveness of him, the justification which is thus made possible by that faith embraces all that has been forgiven and no more. That being so, and since the penitent is justified from all things, we therefore conclude that he has been freely and fully forgiven all the sins.

In the type, however, forgiveness followed the killing of the sacrifice and the offering of its blood on the altar. There is no indication that forgiveness was obtained by other means. It is so in the antitype. Forgiveness can come only after we have paid the penalty by dying in our Substitute, and the price of our ransom from sin's guilt has been accepted in discharge of our debt. In other words, forgiveness comes when in confession of our faults we hold nothing of the price back, but yield ourselves wholly to God. As surely as no partial confession of our sins can be acceptable to God, so surely can there be no partial forgiveness of sins extended by God.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. But it cleanses us from sins that have been forgiven. The cleansing of all unrighteousness is the immediate result of being forgiven. Since the cleansing can be no more complete than the forgiveness, the forgiveness must be complete. In other words, when the heart is cleansed, the Lord does not cast out six devils and leave one. Neither does He partly cast out the whole seven and at the same time leave them partly in. Rather does He leave the whole heart swept and garnished and ready for full occupancy by the Holy Spirit, and the sending of the Holy Spirit is an act of Christ's priestly ministry: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." John 16:7.

The coming of the Spirit, then, is possible only through Christ's priestly ministry. Righteousness is obtainable only through Christ's priestly ministry. Forgiveness is a gift of the exalted Saviour. None of these is obtainable by the transaction at the cross in itself, yet not one of them is obtainable but by the blood of the cross ministered in the heavenly sanctuary.

This truth in no way militates against the fact that throughout the centuries that elapsed before the death of Christ, men did obtain forgiveness of sin and were accepted by God. This, however, was done by virtue of a sacrifice yet to be offered, and a priestly ministry yet to be begun. Jesus is referred to in the Scriptures as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." His death was anticipated in God's purpose to save man, and He was counted as having already been slain from the moment that His death was pledged as necessary to meet man's need. This, though, does not change the fact that in the course of the development of God's purpose to save us by Christ, it was of necessity that an hour should arrive when that which was only of promise would become a reality. The time would come when the slaying of the Lamb would no longer be prospective, but actual. Until that time came, these things that as yet were not, were counted in God's purpose as though they were.

During all the years that intervened between man's fall and Christ's death, prayers were offered, confession of sin was made, and forgiveness was implored. Without question these prayers were heard, these confessions were received, and pardon was bestowed. This, however, was all done through faith in, and by virtue of, that which, in the fullness of time, was yet to be actually done in man's behalf.

In a most positive way the Scriptures declare that it is the blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 17; Revelation 1:5. With equal clearness of state-
ment they set forth the truth that it is through the blood of the Saviour that we have redemption. Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18–19. In no less positive terms the Scriptures also declare the truth that without the resurrection of Christ, faith in the blood of the sacrifice is vain, and we would yet be in our sins. I Corinthians 15:17.

So, then, faith before the cross and faith since the cross have the same resting place, namely, the substitutionary death and the priestly life of the Saviour, the one as much as the other. The word of God makes it abundantly clear that neither Christ’s death for man nor His atoning ministry preceded His taking our flesh and becoming man. He became a priest after He sprung out of the tribe of Judah. Hebrews 7:14. His priestly ministry did not begin before He was made a priest, but in the same way that provision was made whereby men could obtain forgiveness of sin and acceptance with God through faith in the merits of the blood that was not yet shed, so they obtained forgiveness and acceptance by virtue of a priestly ministry of that blood which had not yet been instituted in fact.

In the Saviour’s teaching He used a parable by which He set forth a very important phase of this question of forgiveness. This we now should note.

A certain king, taking account of his servants, found one who owed him ten thousand talents, but had not the means to pay the debt. According to the law, the king ordered that he, his wife, his children, and all that he had, be sold, and that payment be made from the proceeds. At this the servant fell down at the king’s feet, and besought him, saying, “Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” Then the king, moved with compassion, had him loosed, and forgave him the debt.

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

“Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” Matthew 18:23–35.

The forgiveness of God, represented by that of the king in this parable, is the basis in us for a compassionate attitude toward our fellow men.

“We ourselves owe everything to God’s free grace. Grace in the covenant ordained our adoption. Grace in the Saviour effected our redemption, our regeneration, and our exaltation to heirship with Christ. Let this grace be revealed to others.” Christ’s Object Lessons, 250.

If we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses. “Nothing can justify an unforgiving spirit.” We are forgiven by God, not because we are worthy, but because, without merit in us, He so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us. We do not make ourselves worthy of His forgiveness by forgiving our brethren, and we are not forgiven because we forgive. A forgiving spirit in us makes it possible for God to give us His pardon. An unforgiving spirit keeps us in a condition of disobedience, and reveals that we are unwilling to receive the love of God into our hearts. This is nothing less than rejection of God’s pardoning love. The blessing of forgiveness cannot come to such, for by their own attitude they have alienated themselves from the pardon of God. The simple fact is that if we would be forgiven, we must be forgiving. “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:14–15.

In the round of ministry in the earthly sanctuary, a sin offering was presented for all the people. “And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering.” “And he brought the people’s offering, and took the goat, which was the sin offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin.” Leviticus 9:3, 15.

The blood of the sin offerings for the people was borne into the sanctuary by the priest, some of it was sprinkled before the veil, and placed on the altar of incense in the holy place, then the rest of it was poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering.

“The priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, even before the veil. And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the Lord, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” Leviticus 4:17–18.

Thus the blood being the life (Leviticus 17:14), in which the guilt of the people was removed from them, was the medium through which sin was “transferred in figure to the sanctuary.”

Besides the sin offerings for the whole of the people, were the sin offerings which were brought to the sanctuary by individual penitents. The individual approached God through the blood of the sacrifice. His faith took hold of the promise of God, renewed in the general offerings of the daily ministration, that through the merits of the substitutionary Sacrifice which God would provide, all sin would be purged from him. His own individual sin offering indicated that he was willing to accept that Sacrifice as his own to take away his sins, and purge his guilt, and to pay his penalty by dying his death.

Sometimes the blood of the sin offering was not taken into the holy place of the sanctuary. Instead it was placed by the priest upon the horns of the altar of burnt
offering, and poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering. In such cases, its flesh was taken into the holy place, to be eaten there by the priest through the medium of the blood borne into the sanctuary or put upon the altar. The sanctuary and the altar were defiled by the uncleanness of the people in all their sins. There was thus a blood record of the sins of the people in the sanctuary. From this defilement the sanctuary was cleansed by the atoning blood once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

"He shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. . . . And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Leviticus 16:16–19.

Until the sanctuary was thus cleansed, the sins of penitent sinners remained in the sanctuary in the blood of their sin offerings, and though the penitent had been pardoned, the blood record of his sins remained until the work of atonement for that year was completed. When the prescribed atonement had been made on the Day of Atonement, for himself, for the people, for the sanctuary, and for the altar, the high priest, in his character of mediator, and by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, took the sins upon himself, and confessed them over the scapegoat for the purpose of their extinction. See Leviticus 16:6–22.

With this Scriptural teaching the following statement is in entire agreement:

"On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering from the congregation, went into the holy place with the blood of this offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, directly over the law, to make satisfaction for its claims. Then, in his character of mediator, he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary. Placing his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, he confessed over him all these sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the goat. The goat then bore them away, and they were regarded as forever separated from the people." The Great Controversy, 420.

Editor’s comments:

1 An example is the story of the paralytic. See The Desire of Ages, 267–271.
2 See the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 916.
3 We understand this statement not to mean that the cleansing of the heart is fully complete at conversion. It means that at any given point in the true believer’s life the Holy Spirit fully cleanses the heart of all disobedience which He has revealed to the believer and which has subsequently been repeated of and turned away from. Inspiration clearly teaches that day by day the Holy Spirit is revealing to us new weaknesses and faults which, by His grace, we are to overcome. See The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, 186; Testimonies, vol. 1, 187; Gospel Workers, 162; The Upward Look, 267; Testimonies, vol. 3, 542.

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What Shall I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." Luke 10:25-34.

The scribes and Pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. They looked with contempt upon the Samaritans, and Jesus related this parable to show them that it is the spirit of the man that makes him of value with God, and not his nation or profession. The priest and Levite had passed by the man who was in need of their help, and had left him to die by the wayside; but the Samaritan had had compassion upon him, and had acted the part of a Christian neighbor to him. It would not have been best to present this lesson to the haughty priests except in a parable, yet in this parable Jesus made it evident that they had only a religion of ceremonies. They rested in outward observances of the law, but did not keep it in heart. The Scriptures declare that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20. In the gospel the great standard of righteousness is not presented in a dimmer light than in the Old Testament. Christ declared that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass until heaven and earth should pass. See Matthew 5:18.

The divine Teacher held up the perfect standard of righteousness as the only thing by which to test human character. The law reveals to men the deformity of the heart, and the gospel enforces the law by presenting Christ in contrast to man.

In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. Man had been deceived, bruised, robbed, and ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but Christ had compassion on our helpless condition. He left His glory to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, and He undertook our case. He healed our wounds, He opened to us a refuge of safety, made complete provision for our needs at His own charges. He died to redeem us. We are to look to Christ's life, we are to see His Spirit and work, that we may view our life and work in the light reflected from the life of Christ. We may see how far short we come of keeping the commandments of God, how far short we come of loving our neighbors as ourselves.

When the rich young ruler came to Christ, inquiring the way of salvation, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The ruler answered that he had kept them from his youth up, but He who could penetrate into the secrets of the heart, showed him that he had failed. Jesus said to him: "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. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions." Matthew 19:21-22.

Conviction of sin is the first step in conversion, and by the law is the knowledge of sin. When the sinner has a realization of his sin, he is in a condition to be drawn to Christ by the amazing love that has been shown for him on the cross of Calvary. When he is humble and penitent, he does not look for pardon to the law which he has broken, but he looks to God, who has provided forgiveness and sanctification through His well-beloved Son. As he beholds the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, he grows to love Him, and by beholding he becomes changed into His image. The apostle wrote, "Let this mind be in you,
which was also in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:5. The meek and holy Sufferer bore our sins, that the plan of salvation might be opened before men, that whosoever should believe on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

All who see their own ignorance and sin, will have some appreciation of the great work of redemption, through which man is chosen as the object of God’s patience and lovingkindness. As man sees the sinfulness of his nature in the light of the law, he will realize his great need of a Saviour. We all need to search the Scriptures, that we may become acquainted with the conditions of salvation, by which reconciliation may be brought about between man and God. Man must find the path that leads back to the Father’s house, and every step away from transgression is a step toward Paradise. Every step in repentance, contrition, obedience, and faith, is a step toward the Father. True faith in Christ will lead to obedience to the requirements of God.

There are many who say, “Believe, believe; all you have to do is to believe.” But faith must have foundation, and those who preach that all we must do is to believe, do not themselves know what constitutes true faith. They do not carefully search the Scriptures to know on what ground faith should rest. The advocating of faith, and the disparaging of the keeping of the commandments of God, is only another phase of the controversy originated by Satan in heaven. Indifference to the precepts of the law lowers the conception of what constitutes righteousness; and one who opposes the law at this time, places himself in a more perilous position than that in which Adam and Eve were when they disobeyed God’s commandments, for they afterward repented of their sin, and turned away from their allegiance to his enemy.

After Satan brought sin into the world, he tempted man to set himself in rebellion against the authority of God. He inspired him with hatred against God because of the results that followed sin. He suggested that God was arbitrary, destitute of mercy and benevolence, because the penalty of the law fell upon the transgressor. When fallen man views God in this light, he casts aside His authority as a moral governor. God has a right to enforce the penalty of the law upon transgressors, for law without a penalty would be without force. God’s law is the foundation of all law and government. The fact that Christ suffered the penalty of the law for all transgressors, is an unanswerable argument as to its immutable character, and it will justly condemn those who have sought to make it void. When the curse fell upon the beloved Son of God, who became sin for us, the Father made it manifest that the unrepenting transgressor of His law would have to suffer its full penalty. The Word of God declares, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Ezekiel 18:4. The law of God was upheld and vindicated by the Son of God. The death of Christ, as an expiatory sacrifice, opens a way whereby the sinner may be pardoned, and turn from the path of transgression into the path of truth and righteousness, while at the same time it vindicates the honor and

thou, Lord?” and the Lord answered, “I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.” Acts 9:5. Paul then inquired, “What will thou have me to do?” Verse 6. When Christ is revealed to the soul, the sinner’s relation to the law is made plain. There must be repentance toward God for the transgression of His law, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ as the sinner’s Substitute. The convicted sinner sees his bruised, demoralized condition, feels his need of a physician, sees Christ as his only hope, and lays hold of Him by faith. He is deeply conscious of his sin and ruin, and seeks the divine remedy in the world’s Redeemer.

But faith must have foundation, and those who preach that all we must do is to believe, do not themselves know what constitutes true faith.

Man is prone to forget God, even while claiming to be His servant. When Jesus stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth, announcing Himself to be the Messiah, the people thought they loved Him. They were glad to hear the tidings He brought them as He read the words of the prophet Isaiah concerning Himself, saying: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Isaiah 61:1–2. Divine light flashed upon their darkened minds, and their hearts were stirred to adoration. But when Christ showed them that they were no more in favor with Heaven than were the Gentiles, who had had less light and fewer privileges, but who had walked in all the light they had, and improved all the opportunities they had been given, they dragged Him from the synagogue, and sought to hurl Him from the brow of the hill.

The multitudes who had been fed by Christ in the desert place imagined that they loved Jesus; but when He reproved them, charging them with caring more for the bread which perisheth than for the bread of life, they were angry, and many turned away from Him. The rich young ruler came to Jesus, calling Him master. He had lis-
tended to His wonderful words, he had seen His wonderful works; but when Christ showed him that he loved his riches more than his neighbor, he went away sorrowful, clinging to his idols. Simon thought he loved Jesus, but when he found that a poor, sorrowful, repentant woman was esteemed more highly than himself, the shallowness of his love was proved.

Many will see beautiful characteristics in Christ, and will admire them; but that sinless, Jesus teaches me that if I keep the law I am fallen from grace. The law is a yoke of bondage.” The Lord says, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14. We should study the Word of God carefully, that we may come to right decisions, and act accordingly; for then we shall obey the Word and be in harmony with God’s holy law.

Jesus died to save His people from their sins, and redemption in Christ means to cease the transgression of the law of God, and to be free from every sin.

love which embraces his entire character, will never dwell in a heart filled with self-righteousness, will never dwell in a heart that does not realize and abhor its own sinfulness. Not to hate ourselves in sin, is not to love Jesus. Not to see our own deformity, is not to see the beauty of Christ; for it is when the heart is fully aroused to its own state of degradation that Jesus will be appreciated. The more humble our views of self, the more exalted will be our views of Christ, and the more clearly we shall discern the sacred, spotless character of our Redeemer.

There are many who say, “We are holy, we are sinless.” By their words they give the impression that they think themselves as good as Jesus, and some have even dared to assert that they were Christ; but even to entertain such thoughts as these is blasphemy. Not to see the marked contrast between ourselves and Jesus is not to know ourselves, and to be ignorant of our Lord.

Jesus died to save His people from their sins, and redemption in Christ means to cease the transgression of the law of God, and to be free from every sin; no heart that is stirred with enmity against the law of God, is in harmony with Christ, who suffered on Calvary, to vindicate and exalt the law before the universe.

Those who make bold assumptions of holiness give proof in this that they do not see themselves in the light of the law; they are not spiritually enlightened, and they do not loathe every species of selfishness and pride. From their sin-stained lips fall the contradictory utterances: “I am holy, I am righteous.”

While we are to be in harmony with God’s law, we are not saved by the works of the law, yet we cannot be saved without obedience. The law is the standard by which character is measured. But we cannot possibly keep the commandments of God without the regenerating grace of Christ. Jesus alone can cleanse us from all sin. He does not save us by law, neither will He save us in disobedience to law.

Our love to Christ will be in proportion to the depth of our conviction of sin, and by the law is the knowledge of sin. But as we see ourselves, let us look away to Jesus, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity. By faith take hold of the merits of Christ, and the soul-cleansing blood will be applied. The more clearly we see the evils and perils to which we have been exposed, the more grateful shall we be for deliverance through Christ. The gospel of Christ does not give men license to break the law; for it was through transgression that the floodgates of woe were opened upon our world. Today sin is the same malignant thing that it was in the time of Adam. The gospel does not promise the favor of God to anyone who in impenitence breaks His law. The depravity of the human heart, the guilt of transgression, the ruin of sin, are all made plain by the cross where Christ has made for us a way of escape.

Self-righteousness is the danger of this age; it separates the soul from Christ. Those who trust to their own righteousness cannot understand how salvation comes through Christ. They call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. They have no appreciation of the evil of transgression, no understanding of the terror of the law; for they do not respect God’s moral standard. The reason there are so many spurious conversions in these days, is that there is so low an appreciation of the law of God. Instead of God’s standard of righteousness, men have erected a standard of their own by which to measure character. They see through a glass darkly, and present false ideas of sanctification to the people, thus encouraging egoism, pride, and self-righteousness. The doctrine of sanctification advocated by many is full of deception, because it is flattering to the natural heart; but the kindest thing that can be preached to the sinner is the truth of the binding claims of the law of God. Faith and works must go hand in hand; for faith without works is dead, being alone. The prophet declares a truth by which we may test all doctrine. He says, “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. Although error abounds in the world, there is no reason why men need remain in deception. The truth is plain, and when it is contrasted with error, its character may be discerned. All the subjects of God’s grace may understand what is required of them. By faith we may conform our lives to the standard of righteousness, because we can appropriate to ourselves the righteousness of Christ. In the Word of God the honest seeker for truth will find the rule for genuine sanctification. The apostle says: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:2. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” Romans 8:1-11. □

The Signs of the Times, July 7, 14, 21, 1890

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EXCEPT a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” John 12:24. Jesus often used illustrations in nature to teach us the way of life. Let me illustrate. Take the life of the great oak tree. How was that oak tree born? In a grave. The acorn was planted in the ground; a grave was made for it, that the acorn might die. It died and disappeared. Henceforth it lives and stands rooted in its grave. If it had a choice and wanted to leave the ground it was buried and rooted in, it would surely die. But no, it lives hundreds of years growing higher and stronger and broader and more beautiful in the very grave where it had died. And all the fruit it bears and all the foliage it produces year after year, it owes to that grave in which its roots and life are cast and kept.

Oh, let us live every day, every hour of the day, every moment of the day, rooted in Calvary. Let us not merely assent to Calvary, let us not merely speak of Calvary but let us enter into a true Calvary experience. No, we cannot die for sin; only Christ could do that, but we can consent to die to sin. We can choose, by the powerful grace of God, through a living faith, to continually say Yes to God and No to Self. To my own will, I will die; to human wisdom, and human strength, and to the world I will die; for it is in this death to Self, my grave, that His life in me has its beginnings and its fulfillment. We can read about it in Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.”

Death is a solemn thing, an awful thing. In the garden it cost Christ great agony to die that death. No wonder it is not easy for us. But we must willingly consent to find our life every day at Calvary. The apostle Paul said, “I die daily.” I Corinthians 15:31. We must, in order to live the true Christian experience, die to Self every day. It is by faith that we “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:11. Then, we must by God’s grace, through a living faith consent not to yield ourselves throughout the day to sin and selfishness, but instead to yield ourselves unto God. This yielding is what is meant by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:10, “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” You see there is not just a one-time reckoning of ourselves dead to sin and selfishness, but a daily Calvary experience, where we agree to bury the Self-life at the beginning of our day. Then there must be throughout the day a continuous reckoning of our wills dead to all that is sinful and selfish. Just like the oak tree, we must remain in that death-to-Self grave experience if we are to be successful Christians. In every situation we must find ourselves saying, as Christ did, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Luke 22:42.

It is through this constant surrender to God that we are enabled to live the new life, the life of faith. This warfare against Self, the surrendering of all to the will of God, and then the continuous yielding of all to the will of God throughout the day, is the first essential. This total surrender is what it means to live our life rooted in Calvary. Oh, let us live every hour of the day, rooted in Calvary and by faith say, “To my own will, I will die: to human wisdom, and human strength, and to the world I will die.” And now by the grace of God we can live according to His will and His principles as revealed to us in

Jim Hohnberger and his wife, Sally, of Restoration International, live in Polebridge, Montana, and have dedicated their lives full-time to reaching all people with the practical gospel.
His Word, His guidelines for our every
thought, word and action.
It is a rule of the Christian life that
only in death is there to be found life. This
death is the meaning of baptism. It sym-
bolizes going down into a watery grave and
then coming up out of that grave
of the old Self-life and now
living a new life altogether by the power
and strength of Jesus our Saviour.

This new life is not to be found
in ourselves. It can be found only in a con-
tinual receiving of Jesus Christ. For He
alone has the power to enable us to live
the new life, this life of continual faith.
"But as many as received him, to them
gave he power to become the sons of
God." John 1:12. This power is the second
essential; after death there must be life,
and this life can be found only in a con-
tinuous abiding experience day by
day, hour by hour, in Christ Jesus our Lord
and Saviour. Yes, a total dependency on
the power outside of ourselves, and that
power is Christ. The initial receiving of
Christ is not sufficient. No, there must be
a continuous ongoing receiving of Christ,
who is now our continual Source of
strength and life. John 15:4 says it well:
"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch
cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide
in the vine; no more can ye, except ye
abide in me." Here again, Christ uses
nature to illustrate the true Christian ex-
perience. How long can a branch bear fruit if
it is severed from the vine? It begins to die
immediately.

It is the same with us. If we choose to
think impure thoughts, to give way to
irritations or gossip, or to indulge our
appetites and passions, we cease to abide
in Christ. And "He that hath not the Son
of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12. How
vitaly important it is then, that we never
consent to let go of Christ, for it is only as
we abide in Him that we have life,
strength and power to live the new life,
even this life of continual faith! Always
trusting, always yielding to God's will
and way. Always saying Yes to God and
No to Self. It is an attitude of total
dependency at all times and in all places
upon our Saviour, Jesus Christ. And what
does He save us from? Ourselves. From
our sinful, selfish ways. For this reason
He came and lived in our flesh, to show
us how to live. His life was a life of total
dependency on His Father. He said, "I
can of mine own self do nothing." John
5:30. He also says to us, "Without me ye
can do nothing," John 15:5. We can live
the true Christian life only if we surren-
der all to Him, and then place our absolu-
te dependency in Him every hour of
every day for the rest of our lives. This
total surrender is what God is waiting for
His people to make.

But friends, most of us have been
trying to live the Christian life without a
fresh and continual receiving of Christ
every day of our life.

We are instructed in Romans 13:14 to
"put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." When
you arose this morning, did you "put ye
on the Lord Jesus Christ"? If not, then you
strength, submitting my will instead of
following inclination? I praise God, I
submitted my will to His will. I looked up
at my son and said, "Let's have a look at
it." And to my surprise and his elation the
answer book was wrong, probably a mis-
print. This whole situation took only ten
minutes to resolve. I remained in Christ;
my son saw by example what it means to
die to Self and live to Christ.

This union with Christ by living faith
is enduring. Every other union must per-
ish. True Christians will choose Christ as

This true Christian experience is only in virtue
of our full and continuous surrender of Self to
God, and then our connection and utter depen-
dency in Christ for wisdom and strength to live this
new life, even this life of faith.

have not life. You may have membership
in a church, an intellectual knowledge of
spiritual things, an outward compliance,
a verbal assent to truth, but you do not have
life.

"He that hath the Son hath life." 1
John 5:12. To have Christ means that
we abide in Him continually. All our
thoughts, all our words, all our actions
are filtered through Him, before they find
expression. We simply cannot live the
true Christian life without personal con-
tact with Christ every hour of the day,
which is the second essential. It is like a
trolley car; it has power only as long as it
is connected and continues to remain
connected.

I would like to illustrate these two
essentials from my own experience. I was
upstairs at my desk, writing a sermon,
when my oldest son walked in the room
with his arm full of his math books.
"Father, you need to solve a problem,
Mother and the answer book say my
answer is wrong; I say it's right." Here I
was, deep in thought and not wanting to
be disturbed. My flesh wanted to say, "Go
away, not now; solve your own problem.
I don't have time, Can't you see I'm busy?"
Friends, a surrendering all to the will of
God requires a struggle, but there must be
a continuous death to my will and way,
and a continuous holding onto Christ.
What would I do? Would I consent to say
No to Self and Yes to God? Would I
consent to hold onto Christ and in His

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The Two Swords

(With acknowledgments to W.A. Cord's book—The Rights of Man)

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” Religious liberty is safe only as a knowledge of its principles is familiar to the people. Therefore, to understand these principles it is vital that we have a good grasp of the nature and boundaries of civil government referred to in the Scriptures as “Caesar,” and compare this knowledge with the principles of the kingdom of God.

All civil government is ordained by God for the protection of civil rights in the world and can, therefore, deal only with secular matters. It is not given to human governments to initiate primary rights such as the right to life, liberty or man’s pursuit of happiness. Basic human rights such as these are God-given and, as such, are not initiated by governments of men—so the State can deal with these rights only as it meets them. Neither is it within the province of civil governments to enforce rights—and therefore it has no authority to compel men to practice or exercise their rights—they must be left free to do so or not—as they choose.

The business of civil government is simply to protect mankind in the exercise and enjoyment of their God-given rights. However, there are other considerations which make human governments necessary. Mankind is by nature selfish and, as a result, the entrance of sin into human affairs made civil government a necessity. If there had been no such thing as sin—would civil government be needed? Of course not. All that would be needed is the government of God and the jurisdiction of God’s law. But until sin is eradicated from the human heart by conversion, mankind will continue to need the authority of civil government with its influences and restraints to compel its citizens to do right, and the fear of physical punishment to deter them from doing wrong. When any man or woman becomes a Christian, immediately such a person becomes a citizen of another kingdom, the kingdom of God—and is controlled by higher motives than the fear of man and physical deterrents. This transformation of the life and character is referred to as the new birth and those who experience it are spoken of as having been “translated into the kingdom of his dear Son.” Colossians 1:13.

Even though we may live in this world we are said to be not of this world but to have our citizenship in heaven. However, as long as sin continues to exist in this world—as long as men and women are by nature selfish—just so long will civil governments be needed and, just think for a moment, imperfect as they are, the worst of them is better than anarchy or the absence of all law, order and government. Under the existing conditions, therefore, earthly governments are a vital necessity and have been ordained to meet and deal with actual crimes resulting from sin. Their power and authority are there to restrain violence and the outward manifestations of sin such as theft, pillage, rape and so on, commonly called crime.

However, God has never ordained government to handle matters concerning the transforming of character or of eradicating sin from the life. Although governments are ordained to restrain criminals and to uphold human rights, it should not be forgotten that God also restrains the rulers of nations. The lives of all are in His hands and He sets limits beyond which they cannot go—even though some attempt to do so. And while there may be many whom Satan controls,

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we must remember that God has His agents even among rulers and in legislative assem-
blies who play the role He would have them play. Under the influence of specially com-
missoned angels, a few of God's agents will have power to hold in check a great mass of evil. "The powers that be are ordained of God." Romans 13:1. The con-
cept of government, whether that of heaven, or civil governments of earth, is from God, for God is a God of law and order. In their God-ordained sphere, there-
fore, all political rulers or civil powers and officers from the king, president or prime minister to the ordinary policeman on his beat, are commissioned by God and are His servants—sent by Him to keep the peace, to
protect the God-given rights of the people and to punish evildoers.

Now, for this reason God has put the sword of civil justice in Caesar's hand and, in Romans 13:4, said: "He beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." On the other hand—or the other side of the coin that Jesus held up—the church exists for the purpose of saving mankind from sin and, therefore, with the affairs of state or of civil government it can of right have nothing directly to do. It upholds law and order and as a result of pursuing its natural and legitimate work, strengthens the moral foundations of society.

In this way the church makes the task of civil government much lighter, for its business, directly and specifically, is to teach the principles of the kingdom of God and to prepare men and women for the world to come. The church's weapons of warfare are not literal or tangible—its means of warfare are prayer, persuasion and the preaching of the Word of God. The church is not to attempt to pull up the tares, but is to allow the tares and the wheat to grow together until the great harvest day—which is the end of the world, God will deal with the tares Himself. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Romans 12:19.

Just as the sword has been put into the hands of civil government, so has the church been given a sword: "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

be reconciled to God—not to compel them. Now then, we can readily see that the church and the state operate in two separate and distinct realms. Matthew 22:21: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Therefore, with that which is God's, Caesar can have nothing to do. To violate this principle is to violate the clear teaching and meaning of Jesus. The duties which we owe to Caesar are civil duties, while the duties we owe to God are entirely moral or religious and, according to Christ, civil or political government can never of right have anything to do with religion—with a man's personal relation of faith and obedience to God—or with a man's personal morality. What do we mean by morality? We mean "the relation of conformity or nonconformity to the true moral standard rule." That is—the divine law.

The moral law is defined as "The will of God as the supreme moral ruler, concern-
cing the character and conduct of all responsible beings—the rule of action as obligatory on the conscience of moral nature."

Now we all know that the Ten Com-
mendments comprise the law of God and they express the will of God—they apply to the conscience and take into account the thoughts and intents of the heart, and obedience to these commandments is the duty that man owes to God. "Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13. Obedi-
ence to this law is morality since it is the moral law and, moreover, since it has to do with the thoughts and the intents of the mind it lies outside the reach and control of civil government. For example, to hate is murder; to covet is idolatry. To think im-
purely of a woman is adultery. Now these are all equally immoral and as such are transgressions of the moral law; but no civil government can prescribe any punishment for these violations as long as these actions are restricted to man's thoughts. I repeat,
crime and deal with crime, but not with sin; while the divine laws define sin and deal with sin, but not with crime. Now it is quite logical that since God is the only moral Governor and He is the only One who can punish immorality, it follows that the teaching of morality belongs to Him alone. He uses His church to promote that morality throughout the earth. It was to the church that He said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark

counsels of the heart, and since God alone can measure either the merit or the guilt involved in any question of morals, any man or body of men—secular or spiritual—is wholly disqualified to be in this arena. In fact, the Inquisition is the inevitable logic of any assembly of men attempting to punish immorality. Apart from God’s divine ability to read the thoughts and the intents of the human heart, the only other method is to wring

The state, or civil government, can never have anything to do with men’s souls—the state can never have anything to do with the world to come—it can never have anything to do with the life to come or even with the question as to whether or not there is any life to come. No state or human government will ever reach the world to come—nor will any state ever, in the least degree, be partaker of the life that is to come. The state is of this world only.

Entirely. It has to do only with the affairs of this world and with men as they are in this world. Civil government has to do only with men’s bodies and is to see to it that the lives which men live are civil, that is, in harmony with civil laws. In short, the business of civil government is to deal with the temporal rights and obligations of men as citizens—without any reference to the question of whether they are religious or not.

A man’s religious faith is no part of his citizenship and no measure of his rights, and should confer on him no immunities and impose no restrictions whatever. His faith is between himself and God, and civil government has no right to concern itself with what he believes. The state cannot, in any way, forbid him to be an atheist or command him to be a Christian. The first four of the Ten Commandments concern a man’s duty to God alone, and with these, civil government has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do. When a man surrenders his own personal religious beliefs to any government he has virtually surrendered his right to think—in fact, he surrenders everything and it is impossible for him to receive an equivalent by way of compensation. He has surrendered his very soul. Eternal life depends upon believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and the man who surrenders his right to believe—surrenders eternal life.

"With the mind I myself serve the law of God." Romans 7:25. So then the man who surrenders his right to believe—surrenders God. Consequently no man, no association or organization of men, can ever rightly ask of any man a surrender of his right to believe in God as he chooses.

Every man has the right, so far as organizations of men are concerned, to believe as he pleases and that right, so long as he is a Protestant—so long as he is a Christian—yes, so long as he is a man and maintains his individuality and remains a free man, he can never surrender. Now the question arises: "Are we not to obey the powers that be?" Yes, we

The church beseeches—she entreats—she persuades men to be reconciled to God. She trains them in the principles and the practice of morality—but she cannot compel them.

16:15. The gospel "is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Romans 16:26.

As far as the gospel is concerned, there is no obedience but the obedience of faith—that is, there is no morality but the morality of faith—therefore to the church, and not the state, has been committed the task of teaching morality to the world and of cultivating that morality among the nations. Civil governments do not have the necessary credentials to do so for the very obvious reason that the Spirit of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ are both essential to the teaching of morality. Neither of these has been committed to the state—only to the church. History records only too clearly—and painfully—what happens when civil powers take over the church’s role of teaching morality. Even though this work has been committed to the church only, there is one aspect associated with the teachings of morality that has not been committed to the church, and that is the privilege to reward morality or to punish immorality. The church beseeches—she entreats—she persuades men to be reconciled to God. She trains them in the principles and the practice of morality—but she cannot compel them. She may use moral persuasion or spiritual censures to preserve the purity and discipline of her members, but the church has not been granted that power or authority to reward morality or to punish immorality. This prerogative is God’s alone.

Why? Because, whether it be morality or immorality, it springs from the secret

Professor W.T. Harris in commenting on these roles of church and state makes the following observations:

"A crime, or breach of injustice, is a deed of the individual which the state, by its judicial acts, returns on the individual—the state furnishes a measure for crime. Now a sin is a breach of the law of holiness, a lapse out of the likeness to the divine form and, as such, it utterly refuses to be measured. A sin cannot be atoned for by any finite punishment, but only (as revelation teaches) by a divine act of sacrifice. . . . It would destroy the state to attempt to treat crimes as sins (and vice versa) and to forgive them in cases of repentance. It would impose on the judiciary the business of going behind the overt act to the . . . frame of mind within the personality. But as long as the thought is not translated into the act it does not belong to society but only to the individual and to God. No human institution can go behind the overt act and attempt to deal absolutely with the substance of man’s spiritual freedom."

The Christian religion, in particular, lies beyond the province of civil government and pertains solely to the conscience, resting entirely between the individual and God.

George Washington said: "Every man who conducts himself as a good citizen, is accountable alone to God for his religious faith, and should be protected in worshiping God according to the dictates of his own conscience."
are—but only when they are in harmony with the highest powers that be. God made His law for all the universe—He created man—He gives the bounteous provisions of nature, and holds our breath and life in His hands. In view of this fact, He is to be recognized and His law honored before the great men and the highest earthly authority. It should not be forgotten here that the "higher powers" are not the "highest" power. Man's duty to God takes first place both in order of time and in degree of obligation to the claims of civil society.

James Madison put his finger on the pulse of the matter when he said: "It is an eternal principle, therefore, that in matters of religion no man's right is abridged by the institution of civil society and that religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance."

Since in religious matters everyone is responsible to God and everyone is to give account of himself to God—then in religious things everyone has the right to judge for himself what he will believe, profess and practice. This principle must be self-evident.

Now if everyone has the right thus to judge for himself in religion it must also be evident that he has the right to freedom to exercise this right, as long as in doing so he does not infringe upon the equal rights of others. The one right would be valueless without the other. Anything, therefore, which interferes with the freedom of the person to thus judge and act for himself in religious matters, is an unwarranted interference with the inalienable rights of man. In addition, Christ being our Master in all spiritual matters and we being His servants in these matters, any attempt on the part of men to rule over men in religious matters is both a usurpation of Christ's right to control His own servants and an interference with the servant's responsibility to his Master.

1 Corinthians 7:23, "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." Notice what Psalm 49:7 has to say concerning men: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give a ransom for him." Now then, since this statement is the Word of God and is unmistakably true, it is a direct usurpation of the position and power of God for men to deal with their fellowmen as being responsible to them in religious things. It is directly contrary to the will of God and the order of God that man should be subject to other men in that which pertains to eternal life. The point is that subjection in spiritual matters is real worship and should be rendered only to the Creator.

Matthew 4:10 states: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." No man, therefore, has any right to dominate another in religious matters. A man does not even have any right to dictate to his wife what her religious faith and practice is to be, or vice versa. The trouble is that where reason only should be used, men seek to compel the conscience. Satan's methods in this matter always tend to one end, to make men the slaves of men. Anything, therefore, which tends to break down man's sense of personal responsibility to God and to make him the slave of men belongs to the mystery of iniquity.

Having said all that, I want to bring another aspect of religious liberty to your attention: Rule by majority. The future order of things, that is, the New World Order will operate on this principle, and minority groups will be compelled to give way to the majority in religion. However, majority rule is not a principle of universal and unlimited application; otherwise how can there be such a thing as individual rights? There must be some limit of the right of the majority to rule. Majorities may have unlimited power, but they do not possess unlimited rights. The right to absolute, arbitrary power over the lives, liberty and conduct of men exists nowhere in civil society—not even in the largest majority. The majority does have a right to rule in those matters concerning which they have a God-given civil right to legislate, but not otherwise.

The true principle of civil government recognizes in the majority no authority over the minority except in civil affairs, that is, in matters relating to the conduct of men toward their fellowmen. As stated before, the state being a civil or political institution has no right to legislate in religious matters. It should recognize in every one the right to choose his own religion and to enjoy it freely without molestation.

The proper object of government is to protect all persons in the enjoyment of their rights—both civil and religious and not to determine for any what their religious faith and practice shall be. In matters of conscience therefore, the majority can, of right, have no power. Religious or God-given rights are not a question of majorities against minorities, for, if the conscience of the majority is to be the standard, then there can be no such principle as the rights of conscience.

Remember the conscience of a single person is as sacred as the conscience of an entire community, and it is the duty of civil government to protect the person in the exercise of his rights, even if it has to call out the entire Defense Force to do so. Majority rule in religious matters is the cry of the bigot and the persecutor. No one ever suggests that the majority rule in religious affairs when he thinks the majority are not in harmony with his religious views. It is only when he stands with the masses or with those in power that a man talks in this way. But strip him of his power, place him with the few, give him an unpopular faith, threaten him with fines and imprisonment if he does not comply, and see how quickly he will reject the principle of majority rule in religion and demand the right of freedom to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience! However, it is a sad fact that men do not generally recognize this truth except when they are in the minority.

Lord Macaulay in his essay entitled "Gladstone on Church and State" underlined a great truth:

"Have not almost all the governments in the world always been in the wrong on religious subjects?"

Alexander Campbell in his book entitled *Debate with Bishop Purcell*, page 295, has this to say about majority rule in religion:

"The man who seeks the truth by the test of sincerity, majority and antiquity will never find it on earth. This is amply
true of the present and all past ages. There are sincere Turks, Jews, pagans and infidels. There are many ancient errors, heresies and sects. And as for majorities from Enoch till now they have generally, if not always, been wrong in religion. Where was the majority when Noah was building the ark? When Abraham forsook Ur of the Chaldees? When Lot abandoned Sodom? When Moses forsook Egypt? When Elijah witnessed against Ahab? When Daniel and his companions were captives in Babylon? When Malachi wrote? When the Baptist preached? When Christ was crucified? When the apostles and many of the first Christians were persecuted?"

Let those ponder this fact who are constantly insisting that the majority should rule in religious matters. This doctrine of majority rule in religion is the strength of error, but the weakness of truth.

God Himself says in Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment."

The great test by which all beliefs and doctrines are to be proved is not the voice of the majority, or multitude, but the Word of God.

Isaiah 8:20: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” If the opinion of the majority settles what is right in religion then the pagans should keep to their creed—Protestants should go back to Catholicism—and Catholicism to the paganism out of which it came. However, to reason in this way is unworthy of anyone who loves the Bible. But such is the logic and such the practical and inevitable conclusions of the principle that the majority should rule in matters of religion. It destroys individual responsibility and ignores the right of private judgment—it implies the right to use force in religion to coerce the conscience. It can result only in religious persecution or in habits of hypocrisy and meanness.

Moreover, it is utterly inconsistent with the principles of religious liberty and with the well-attested examples in which God has vindicated those who utterly ignored the rule of the majority in religion. It is also utterly unworthy of anyone who cherishes his rights and his liberties or places any real value upon the religion which he professes. In civil affairs the majority of today may be the minority of tomorrow. Therefore, he who adopts the principles of majority rule in religious issues thereby places himself under the obligation to change his religious views with every wind of change in the political or national fortunes. The pages of history are replete with examples of those who have followed this expediency. In doing so a man gives up his rights. He, in fact, sells his soul.

Now, friends, a crisis awaits the world, a crisis awaits the people of God. The most momentous struggle of all the ages is just before us. But God will not forsake His people in the hour of the trial. The God of liberty is not dead and His pur-

There’s a star to guide the humble—
“Trust in God, and do the right.”

Let the road be long and dreary,
And its ending out of sight,
Foot it bravely, strong or weary;
“Trust in God, and do the right.”

Perish “policy” and cunning,
Perish all that fears the light—
Whether losing, whether winning,
“Trust in God, and do the right.”

I
n civil affairs the majority of today may be the minority of tomorrow. Therefore, he who adopts the principles of majority rule in religious issues thereby places himself under the obligation to change his religious views.

poses will not be defeated. Nothing takes God by surprise. He is prepared for every emergency and every trial and His grace is sufficient for His people. Truth will finally triumph and those who are loyal and true will gain the victory over every opposing power. When the kingdoms of this world will pass away and the everlasting kingdom of God is established upon earth a glorious day will dawn on those who, in spite of all the opposing powers, have stood loyal, and true to the God of heaven and His laws.

Courage, brother, do not stumble,
Though thy path be dark as night;

A Note of Appreciation

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

My family and I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the many cards and letters we have received assuring us of your prayers and Christian love. Your letters have been, and continue to be, a great source of comfort and encouragement to our family. The thought that so many faithful saints are praying for me lifts my spirits and fills me with hope of a full recovery. I believe your prayers in my behalf are being answered. I am feeling much better now and will soon be able to continue my work for the Lord. We praise God for His endless love and bountiful blessings. Thank you for your continued prayers.

Bob Bresnahan and Family
When God Takes the Reins

Continued from 7

It is not at all unlikely, or contrary to the ways and works of God to send light to His people in unexpected ways.” The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 239.

We have been cautioned that many of us will tend to condemn the latter rain as fanaticism.

“The baptism of the Holy Ghost as on the day of Pentecost will lead to a revival of true religion and to the performance of many wonderful works. Heavenly intelligences will come among us, and men will speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit of God. But should the Lord work upon men as He did on and after the day of Pentecost, many who now claim to believe the truth would know so very little of the operation of the Holy Spirit that they would cry, ‘Beware of fanaticism.’” Selected Messages, book 2, 57.

We are told that there will be a sanctified ministry and press in the final work of the third angel. We are warned not to complain of those who seem to talk too strongly.

“A sanctified ministry and press will be a power in flashing the light of truth on this untoward generation. . . . Victory will attend the third angel’s message. As the Captain of the Lord’s host tore down the walls of Jericho, so will the Lord’s commandment-keeping people triumph, and all opposing elements be defeated. Let no soul complain of the servants of God who have come to them with a Heaven-sent message. Do not any longer pick flaws in them, saying, ‘They are too positive; they talk too strongly.’ They may talk strongly, but is it not needed? God will make the ears of the hearers tingle if they will not heed His voice or His message. He will denounce those who resist the Word of God.” Testimonies to Ministers, 410.

Rather than judge upon the laborers of God’s choosing, ministers are to pray that God will send forth additional strong-feeling, determined men.

“Rather than sit in judgment upon men whom God has accepted to do Him service, let the burden of their prayer be, night and day, that the Lord may send forth more laborers into His vineyard. Ministers, do not dishonor your God and grieve His Holy Spirit, by casting reflections on the ways and manners of the men He would choose. God knows the character. He sees the temperament of the men He has chosen. He knows that none but earnest, firm, determined, strong-feeling men will view this work in its vital importance, and will put

such firmness and decision into their testimonies that they will make a break against the barriers of Satan.” Ibid., 412-413.

Eleventh-hour workers will come in and take the crown of those who have not appreciated the whole counsel of God.

“But God will not be left without witness. The one-hour laborers will be brought in at the eleventh hour, and will consecrate their ability and all their entrusted means to advance the work. These

will receive the reward for their faithfulness, because they are true to principle, and shun not their duty to declare the whole counsel of God. When those who have had abundance of light throw off the restraint which the Word of God imposes, and make void His law, others will come in to fill their place, and take their crown.”

The General Conference Bulletin, January 1, 1900.

Those in other denominations living up to all known light will come in while light-rejecting Seventh-day Adventists will leave.

“Many souls will come from other denominational churches, and at the eleventh hour will obey all the truth, because they have not set themselves in array against Heaven’s light, but lived up to all the light they had.”

Many souls will come from other denominational churches, and at the eleventh hour will obey all the truth, because they have not set themselves in array against Heaven’s light, but lived up to all the light they had.

knowledge the truth and the movements of the Spirit of God. ‘Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed.’ Amos 9:13.

“The accessions to the truth will be of a rapidity which will surprise the church. God’s name alone will be glorified.” Ibid., 755.

As in the taking of Jericho the Lord alone will receive the glory.

“Our Lord is cognizant of the conflict of His people in these last days with the satanic agencies combined with evil men who neglect and refuse their great salvation. With the greatest simplicity and candor, our Saviour, the mighty General of the armies of heaven, does not conceal the stern conflict which they will experience. He points out the dangers, He shows us the plan of the battle, and the hard and hazardous work to be done, and then lifts His voice before entering the conflict to count the cost while at the same time He encourages all to take up the weapons of their warfare and expect the heavenly host to compose the armies to war in defense of truth and righteousness. Men’s weakness shall find supernatural strength and help in every stern conflict to do the deeds of Omnipotence, and perseverance in faith and perfect trust in God will ensure success.

“While the past confederacy of evil is arrayed against them He bids them to be brave and strong and fight valiantly for they have a heaven to win, and they have
more than an angel in their ranks, the mighty General of armies leads on the armies of heaven. As on the occasion of the taking of Jericho, not one of the armies of Israel could boast of exercising their finite strength to overthrow the walls of the city, but the Captain of the Lord's host planned the battle in the greatest hands, while a mighty general cried out with a loud voice: 'Come into line. Let those who are loyal to the commanders of God and the testimony of Christ now take their position.' Testimonies, vol. 8, 41.

Yes, the gospel truth will be preached into all the world.

The Captain of the Lord's host planned the battle in the greatest simplicity, that the Lord alone should receive the glory and man should not be exalted.

“Police of the Lord's host planned the battle in the greatest simplicity, that the Lord alone should receive the glory and man should not be exalted.” Sons and Daughters of God, 202.

Many will change sides in the conflict. Only those obedient to the law and to the testimonies are on Christ's side.

“In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world's insignia; the other was led by the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust as company after company from the Lord's army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. An angel flying in the midst of heaven put the standard of Immanuel into many

“The truth will be proclaimed in clear, unmistakable language. As a people we must prepare the way of the Lord under the overruling guidance of the Holy Spirit. The gospel is to be given in its purity. The stream of living water is to deepen and widen in its course. . . . Through most wonderful workings of divine providence, mountains of difficulty will be removed and cast into the sea. The message that means so much to the dwellers upon the earth will be heard and understood. Men will know what is truth. Onward and still onward the work will advance until the whole earth shall have been warned, and then shall the end come.” Ibid., vol. 9, 96.

Dear fellow Seventh-day Adventist Laodicean, it is my greatest desire that each one of us may fully awaken to how our largely unacknowledged and largely unrepented of disobedience (insubordination, apostasy) to the Lord's directives as to how to live and to work for Him is preventing us from putting on the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness—the right doing of Christ in the lives of the saints. It is not too late to repent of and turn from our disobedience to Christ's counsels of the Lord.

Fifty days after his apostasy by the denial of His Lord, a fully repentant Peter experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Think what potential there would be in bringing to an end the immeasurable suffering of present humanity; think what joy it would bring to Heaven and the fallen universe if we as a people would truly acknowledge and turn from our insubordination to Christ's rulership in our lives individually and in the work of the corporate church. Dare we dream of, dare we pray and labor for a fifty-day-apostasy-to-Pentecost experience? We have no promise that a general revival and reformation of God's people would be followed in fifty days with the latter rain, but we are told that Christ will do a great work in a short time.

“Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.” Testimonies, vol. 9, 11.

“My people are to do a sharp, quick work.” Battle Creek Letters, 49.

“There is to be a rapid and triumphant spread of the gospel.” Ibid., 57.

May we each one be a loyal member of Christ's church in that hour, is my prayer. □

Editorial

Continued from 3

His Saviour in a daily relationship of prayer and study and becomes willing to be made willing to obey without compromise.

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Hebrews 5:9.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Romans 6:16.

“Sanctify them through thy word: thy word is truth.” John 17:17.

This is the born-again experience that gives us entrance into the kingdom. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3.

“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” Ezekiel 11:19-20.

The faith of Jesus is saving faith that justifies and makes the sinner righteous and produces a character acceptable to God and makes him safe to save through loving obedience to God's law.

“All who would be saved, high or low, rich or poor, must submit to the working of this power. . . .

“A profession of faith and the possession of truth in the soul are two different things. The mere knowledge of truth is not enough. We may possess this, but the tenor of our thoughts may not be changed. The heart must be converted and sanctified. . . .

“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.” Christ's Object Lessons, 97-98.

This is righteousness by faith, saving faith, which produces true obedience to all known truth. This is justification and sanctification by faith. □

Ron Spear, Editor
Faith and Works

W ITHOUT faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). There are many in the Christian world who claim that all that is necessary to salvation is to have faith; works are nothing, faith is the only essential. But God’s Word tells us that faith without works is dead, being alone. Many refuse to obey God’s commandments, yet they make a great deal of faith. But faith must have a foundation.

God’s promises are all made upon conditions. If we do His will, if we walk in truth, then we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. While we earnestly endeavor to be obedient, God will hear our petitions; but He will not bless us in disobedience. If we choose to disobey His commandments, we may cry, “Faith, faith, only have faith,” and the response will come back from the sure Word of God, “Faith without works is dead” James 2:20. Such faith will only be as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. In order to have the benefits of God’s grace we must do our part; we must faithfully work and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

We are workers together with God. You are not to sit in indolence, waiting for some great occasion, in order to do a great work for the Master. You are not to neglect the duty that lies directly in your pathway, but you are to improve the little opportunities that open around you . . .

To Wrestle, Labor, and Strive

We are to do all that we can do on our part to fight the good fight of faith. We are to wrestle, to labor, to strive, to agonize to enter in at the strait gate. We are to set the Lord ever before us. With clean hands, with pure hearts, we are to seek to honor God in all our ways. Help has been provided for us in Him who is mighty to save. The spirit of truth and light will quicken and renew us by its mysterious workings; for all our spiritual improvement comes from God, not from ourselves. The true worker will have divine power to aid him, but the idler will not be sustained by the Spirit of God.

In one way we are thrown upon our own energies; we are to strive earnestly to be zealous and to repent, to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts from every defilement; we are to reach the highest standard, believing that God will help us in our efforts. We must seek if we would find, and seek in faith; we must knock, that the door may be opened unto us. The Bible teaches that everything regarding our salvation depends upon our own course of action. If we perish, the responsibility will rest wholly upon ourselves. If provision has been made, and if we accept God’s terms, we may lay hold on eternal life. We must come to Christ in faith, we must be diligent to make our calling and election sure.

The forgiveness of sin is promised to him who repents and believes; the crown of life will be the reward of him who is faithful to the end. We may grow in grace by improving through the grace we already have. We are to keep ourselves unspotted from the world if we would be found blameless in the day of God. Faith and works go hand in hand; they act harmoniously in the work of overcoming. Works without faith are dead, and faith without works is dead. Works will never save us; it is the merit of Christ that will avail in our behalf. Through faith in Him, Christ will make all our imperfect efforts acceptable to God. The faith we are required to have is not a do-nothing faith; saving faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul. He who will lift up holy hands to God without wrath and doubting will walk intelligently in the way of God’s commandments.

If we are to have pardon for our sins, we must first have a realization of what sin is, that we may repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. We must have a solid foundation for our faith; it must be founded on the Word of God, and its
results will be seen in obedience to God's expressed will. Says the apostle, "Without . . . [holiness] no man shall see the Lord" Hebrews 12:14.

Faith and works will keep us evenly balanced and make us successful in the work of perfecting Christian character. Jesus says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter in the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" Matthew 7:21. Speaking of temporal food, the apostle said, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." 2 Thessalonians 3:10. The same rule applies to our spiritual nourishment; if any would have the bread of eternal life, let him make efforts to obtain it.

We are living in an important and interesting period of this earth's history. We need more faith than we have yet had; we need a firmer hold from above. Satan is working with all power to obtain the victory over us, for he knows that he has but a short time in which to work. Paul had fear and trembling in working out his salvation; and should not we fear lest a promise being left us, we should any of us seem to come short of it, and prove ourselves unworthy of eternal life? We should watch unto prayer, strive with agonizing effort to enter in at the strait gate.

Jesus Makes Up for Our Deficiency

There is no excuse for sin or for indolence. Jesus has led the way, and He wishes us to follow in His steps. He has suffered, He has sacrificed as none of us can, that He might bring salvation within our reach. We need not be discouraged. Jesus came to our world to bring divine power to man, that through His grace, we might be transformed into His likeness.

When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit. But He will not accept those who claim to have faith in Him and yet are disloyal to His Father's commandment. We hear a great deal about faith, but we need to hear a great deal more about works. Many are deceiving their own souls by living an easy-going, accommodating, crossless religion.

But Jesus says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matthew 16:24.

Morning talk at Basel, Switzerland, September 17, 1885. Published in Signs Of the Times, June 16, 1890.

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**What Is the Church?**


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I have subscribed to your magazine Our Firm Foundation for several years and must say I appreciate every number. I just lack three months of reaching my hundredth birthday.

I worked for the denomination in many different positions many years of my life and finally had to leave denominational employment because of old age and physical disability.

The leaders of our beloved church have brought so many new and strange teachings into the church that it is not the same church that I was baptized into almost 90 years ago.

I have known many of the old-time leaders: A.G. Daniells, G.I. Butler, and many others. I stood across the street and watched the old Battle Creek Sanitarium go up in flames. Then a few weeks later I watched the Review and Herald building burn. The fire fighters practically emptied a small lake on those two fires, and an old minister standing near me said, "They just as well spit on it."

I could write a large book on my experiences in the Adventist church. I have attended church from the Panama Canal to Circle City, Alaska.

I want you to send me the book Issues Clarified. Keep up the good work and don't be intimidated by threats against you and your work.

—RW, Missouri

I am 77 years young and in good health. I just wrote to the president of the Washington Conference to encourage consensus seeking, as Maxwell suggests, and have just ordered Issues Clarified.

Thank you for your Open Letter, Earth's Final Warning, newsletters, and the Bob Bresnahan Update. Do take heart, and refuse to separate!

—TM, Georgia

I have sent a letter to the president of the Washington Conference protesting the recommendation that they have made. I appreciate very much having received the copy of "An Open Letter," and was especially heartened by Dr. Maxwell's letter. It is comforting to know that some of our theologians are still true to the message and willing to stand up for it.

I plan to give a copy of the Open Letter to each of my fellow elders in our local church as well as to each member of my SDA family.

—DC, New Mexico

Please renew my subscription to Our Firm Foundation. I let it lapse 1 1/2 years ago and have missed it greatly. I feel that your magazine is informative and Christ-centered. I have never felt that you have been negative or unfairly or overly critical of our denomination. My heart is saddened by the recent letter I read from the Washington Conference to Ron Spear. What a mistake some of our leaders are making! I encourage you to continue as you have. I believe God has led you and I will pray for you and our leaders.

—DU, Oklahoma

I want to thank all of you for your God-appointed job. I am a Seventh-day Adventist and my husband is a Jehovah's Witness. He has a progressive disease and is a quadruple. He asked me to read my Firm Foundation to him. He has learned about the Sabbath and the true mark of the beast. I read the last issue to him from cover to cover. We both love them so much. It has helped us in our spiritual lives together. Please continue to send all you can to me.

—EM, Texas

My wife and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the many years that your ministry has positively influenced our spiritual lives. We were sent the very first issue of Our Firm Foundation and have been subscribers ever since. However, it is just the last few issues of your magazine that prompt this letter. They have been beacons of light to help us sort out the many winds of doctrine that have blown our way this year.

Our family has followed the camp meeting circuit this summer on satellite television. For the most part, we have enjoyed their message; however, several things have caught our attention that caused us to be concerned.

Last night I thought it timely to read the "Running Ahead of the Lord" article in the November issue to my wife and mother-in-law who had not already read it. It was extremely disheartening for us today as we watched the — holiday special where —, in his sermon entitled "Modern Day Judaizers," refers to this article and accuses those who believe in both a visible and an invisible church as false teachers. We have seen their true colors as to how they have related to Jim Hohnberger and now to those at Hope, Hartland, Lightbearers, and others like Bob Jorgensen who teach something as innocuous as a visible and invisible church. Let me say that we have been enlightened.

On page 16 of the November issue Vernon Sparks refers to a quotation from Counsels to Writers and Editors, 40. If all else fails to arouse the sleeping virgins of His "visible" church, God has promised to arouse them by permitting the entrance of heresies. Are we seeing this happen?

—RB, California

I usually don’t write much, but I want to thank you for your article entitled "Cunningly Devised Fables," part 2, which tells about Larry Wilson's book The Revelation of Jesus. I received this book in the mail a while back, and I felt right away not to read it. I just had a funny feeling about it—almost like the Holy Spirit was telling me in my mind. So I never read it. Now I am glad I did not. I don't have time for that kind of reading. All I have time for is the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I know what to do with that book—burn it. I read Our Firm Foundation from cover to cover, and I am fed. Time is short. Stay faithful; hard times are coming soon. May God be with you there.

—PL, Pennsylvania

February 1994 Our Firm Foundation 27
Spiritual Restoration

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all that therein is—the plants, the animals, and in particular, man. But He did not just create man. He, in His great love, created man in His own image—in form, feature and character. See The Great Controversy, 644. And throughout eternity man would have the ability, through God working in and through him, to develop the attributes of God. What an opportunity for man; what condensation on the part of God!

But man lost all this perfection at the Fall. Through sin the image of God in man was almost obliterated, and from that time onward, “Evil, unrestrained grew stronger, while the appreciation and desire for good diminished. Men lost the image of God and received the impress of the demoniacal power by which they were controlled.” Education, 76. Satan, in his hatred for God, brought about the Fall of man, and it has been his purpose and work to continue to destroy God’s image in man and replace it with his own image. See

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, 1105.

But God has a plan of restoration. And if we truly understand that plan, it will help us in our own Christian walk to avoid many of the pitfalls and winds of doctrine found in such variety and number in these last days as Satan seeks to hold us in his net. We must keep in mind that “the central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God.” Education, 125.

The Godhead, even before the foundations of the earth were placed into position, devised a plan for the salvation of lost man. Ellen White tells us, “By sin the image of God in man has been marred and well nigh obliterated; it is the work of the gospel to restore that which has been lost; and we are to co-operate with the divine agency in this work.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 743. “It was to restore [the image of God in man] that the plan of salvation was devised, and a life of probation was granted to man. To bring him back to the perfection in which he was first created is the great object of life—the object that underlies every other.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 595.

Do you comprehend that? The great object of life is our restoration to our pre-Fall condition. But our God will not force this result upon us. This fact is clear from Bible history from the time of the antediluvians down through the present. Our choice is involved. And it appears that only a very few finally make that choice in favor of God’s plan. Only eight passed through the waters of the Flood; they made a choice to be obedient to God.

“What [we] need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.” Steps to Christ, 47.

God will do the work in you if you will allow Him the opportunity through submission to Him, but it must be a day-by-day, moment-by-moment submis-
sion. Even some of the eight who came through the Flood did not maintain this surrender of their wills to God. Clearly, there is no such thing as “once saved—always saved.” And of course, the majority of the offspring of these eight people down through the ages lost their way and chose to remain on Satan’s ground. What tragedy!

But God has maintained a remnant, and His plan for the restoration of His image in those who consent and cooperate has remained intact. God has continued in every generation to woo man and to guide him by love, while never forcing his will to bring it into a right relationship with Him. And it remains true that “Man, who has defaced the image of God in his soul by a corrupt life, cannot by mere human effort, effect a radical change in himself. He must accept the provisions of the gospel; he must be reconciled to God through obedience to His law and faith in Jesus Christ. His life from thenceforth must be governed by a new principle. Through repentance, faith, and good works he may perfect a righteous character, and claim, through the merits of Christ, the privileges of the sons of God.” Testimonies, vol. 4, 294. All emphasis supplied.

Did you notice that obedience and good works, as well as faith and repentance, are all part of this whole process of reconciliation and restoration? God will work in us if we surrender to Him and allow Him to do so, to perform His good works. “All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heartwork with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.” The Desire of Ages, 668.

And all this heart work, again, has the purpose of restoring the image of God in each of our lives, and through us to encourage others to submit to God. “He [God] designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man.” Prophets and Kings, 16.

There is a biblical example of physical restoration that I wish to share with you to bring home in a greater sense the need of spiritual restoration in our lives. After the Babylonian captivity, there was a return to Jerusalem. Ellen White speaks of this return in the following words: “The work of restoration and reform carried on by the returned exiles, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, presents a picture of a work of spiritual restoration which is to be wrought in the closing days of this earth’s history. . . . Prophets and Kings, 677–678; emphasis supplied.

And why is obedience necessary? Why do the divine institutions need to be restored? What is God’s purpose? Again, God is ultimately seeking the restoration of His image in His people. “The lost coin, in the Saviour’s parable, though lying in the dirt and rubbish, was a piece of silver still. Its owner sought it because it was of value. So every soul, however degraded by sin, is in God’s sight accounted precious. As the coin bore the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God. Though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul. God desires to recover that soul and to retrace upon it His own image in righteousness and holiness.” The Ministry of Healing, 163.

In the same way that the walls, the temple, and the city were to be restored physically as the exiles returned from their Babylonian captivity, God desires to restore in a spiritual sense, to those that are His, those qualities which were important before the Fall in building the character of man. It is through character development that God’s image will be restored. And we are assured in the Spirit of Prophecy, “The defaced image of God will be restored in humanity, and a family of believing saints will finally inherit the heavenly home.” The Desire of Ages, 625.

It is important that we understand the areas in which these spiritual walls need to be rebuilt.

Diet Reform. “In order to know what are the best foods, we must study God’s original plan for man’s diet. He who created man and who understands his needs appointed Adam his food . . . . Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a
strength, a power of endurance, and a
vigor of intellect, that are not afforded by
a more complex and stimulating diet.”

Ellen White was shown “that God is
bringing His people back to His original
design.” *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 82.
Will we pay attention? Will we truly submit
our wills to God in the area of appetite?
Will we only submit in those areas that do
not cross our likes? Will we go just so far

B

y the transforming agency of His grace, the
image of God is reproduced in the disciple;
he becomes a new creature. Love takes the
place of hatred, and the heart receives the
divine similitude.

and no farther? Or will we study the books,
such as *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, and
determine that by the power of God we will
follow all of the inspired counsel contained
therein? Temperance is the foundation of
the Christian graces, for “It is impossible
for those who indulge the appetite to attain
to Christian perfection.” *Testimonies*, vol.
2, 400.

“It is of great importance that individu-
ally we act well our part, and have an
intelligent understanding of what we
should eat and drink, and how we should
live to preserve health. All are being
proved to see whether they will accept the
principles of health reform or follow a
course of self-indulgence.” *Review and

We will have clear minds only as we
return to God’s original plan for main-
taining the body. Only with clear minds can we
truly understand other aspects of God’s
program for restoring His character image
in each of us. Our growth as God’s end-
time people does not stop with eliminating
flesh foods from our diets. God’s instruc-
tion as given by His end-time prophet goes
far beyond this recommendation, and here
many historic Seventh-day Adventists fail
to follow all the light we have been given.
For example, there is counsel regarding
overeating, even of wholesome food. There
is counsel about the number of meals a day
which best maintain a healthy body, about
eating between meals and late at night;
about foods which cause irritability to the
nerves and stomach and dullness of the
brain, and which bring on disease, such as

He works through these laws of healthful
living.

Let us as historic Seventh-day Ad-
ventists not experience the same failures
as the Israelites who complained and mur-
mured over God’s attempt to bring them
back to a simple diet. See *The Se-
venth-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol.
1, 1102, 1112; *Testimonies*, vol.9, 165; *The
Desire of Ages*, 824; *Testimonies*, vol. 1,
129. Let us go forward in total faith
trusting fully in God’s provision for our
lives.

Christ-centered Bible Study. God
wants to see a restored relationship be-
tween man and the Godhead, in particular
at this time with Jesus. But in order for
this ideal to be realized, we must spend
the time necessary daily studying God’s
Word. “The education to be secured by
searching the Scriptures is an experimen-
tal knowledge of the plan of salvation.
Such an education will restore the image
of God in the soul. It will strengthen and
fortify the mind against temptation, and
fit the learner to become a co-worker with
Christ in His mission of mercy to the
world. It will make him a member of the
heavenly family, and prepare him to share
the inheritance of the saints in light.”
*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 42–43.

“By looking constantly to Jesus with
the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened.
God will make the most precious revela-
tions to His hungering, thirsting people.
They will find that Christ is a personal
Saviour. As they feed upon His Word,
they find that it is spirit and life. The Word
destroyes the natural, earthly nature, and
imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The
Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Com-
forter. By the transforming agency of His
grace, the image of God is reproduced in
the disciple; he becomes a new creature.
Love takes the place of hatred, and the
heart receives the divine similitude. This
is what it means to live ‘by every word
that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’
This is eating the Bread that comes down
from heaven.” *The Desire of Ages*, 391.

“The knowledge of God as revealed in
Christ is the knowledge that all who are
saved must have. It is the knowledge that
works transformation of character. This
knowledge, received, will re-create the
soul in the image of God. It will impart to
the whole being a spiritual power that is
divine.” *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 289.

Denial of Self and Communication
With God. “Sin has marred the divine
image in man. Through Christ this may be
restored, but it is only through earnest
prayer and the conquest of self that we can
become partakers of the divine nature . . .

“The true toilers in the Lord’s vine-
yard will be men of prayer, of faith, of
self-denial —men who hold in restraint
the natural appetites and passions. These
will in their own lives give evidence of
the power of the truth which they present
to others; and their labors will not be
without effect.” *Gospel Workers*, 80.

“The less you follow natural inclina-
tions, the better it will be for yourself
and for others. The natural inclinations
have been perverted, the natural powers misap-
plicated. Satan has brought man into collision
with God. He works continually to destroy
the divine image in man. Therefore we
must place a restraint on our words and
actions.” *Messages to Young People*, 68.

Brothers and sisters, it must be very
clear by now that God wants to build up the
old waste places in your lives; He wants to
rebuild the walls. Satan will continually
seek to destroy all that God wants to do.
The choice is yours. Will you let God
restore His image in you? Will you allow
Him to bring you back to the perfection in
which man was originally created? Will
you allow Him to promote the development
of body, mind, and soul that the divine
purpose in your creation might be realized?
This is the work of redemption. This is the
great object in your life. May it be brought
to pass as you submit fully and trusting to
God and allow Him to control your Christi-
ian walk.□
Go Ye Into All the World

The Bible Study Companion Set

This attractive set of five books from Remnant Publications is a new (unabridged) printing of the Conflict of the Ages set—some of the most timely books that can be shared with your neighbors. Each set comes shrink-wrapped in a display box, ready to sell. The cover price for The Bible Study Companion Set is $39.95.

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God calls for workers from every church among us to enter His service as canvasser evangelists. . . . . If the members will do His will, if they will strive to impart the light to those in darkness, He will greatly bless their efforts. —Colporteur Ministry, 20.

Entering the homes of your neighbors to sell or to give away our literature, and in humility to teach them the truth, you will be accompanied by the light of heaven, which will abide in these homes. —Evangelism, 115.

Those who at this time take up the canvassing work with earnestness and consecration will be greatly blessed. You have no time to lose. —Colporteur Ministry, 15.

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