



GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT



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The Reformation Herald

"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."
—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 488.

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In the Street

*Around me, before me, behind me,
I am meeting with many a face,
And the tears fill my eyes till they blind me,
For on each one has sorrow left trace;
For many the eyes that look weary,
And the face that is shadowed with care:
Their lives may be loveless and dreary,
And their burdens heavy to bear.*

*We meet, and we pass, we are strangers,
And perhaps we shall meet not again.
For each life is shadowed with danger,
And each joy is mingled with pain.
I can see a weariness showing
In the tread of the hurrying feet,
And my heart is with pity o'erflowing
For those that I pass in the street.*

*And I wonder how many have treasures
Laid up in the kingdom above,
And how many find their chief pleasure
In trusting in Christ and His love,
And how many ne'er have been given
The light to the Christian allowed,
That have no knowledge of heaven,
Of those that I meet in the crowd.*

*Around me, before me, behind me,
I am meeting with many a face,
But the tears cease to flow, that did blind me,
As I think that Christ and His grace
Is offering salvation to many,
To those who are stricken and bowed,
And I ask myself oft, Are there any
That I can help here in the crowd?*

— L. D. Santee

WILLS AND LEGACIES

THE Lord would have His followers dispense their means while they can do it themselves. Some may inquire: 'Must we actually dispossess ourselves of everything which we call our own?' We may not be required to do this now; but we must be willing to do so for Christ's sake. We must acknowledge that our possessions are absolutely His, by using of them freely whenever means is needed to advance His cause. Some close their ears to the calls made for money to be used in sending missionaries to foreign countries and in publishing the truth and scattering it like autumn leaves all over the world. Such excuse their covetousness by informing you that they have made arrangements to be charitable at death. They have considered the cause of God in their wills. Therefore they live a life of avarice, robbing God in tithes and in offerings, and in their wills return to God but a small portion of that which He has lent them, while a very large proportion is appropriated to relatives who have no interest in the truth. This is the worst kind of robbery. They rob God of His just dues, not only all through life, but also at death. . . .

"Those who neglect known duty by not answering to God's claims upon them in this life, and who soothe their consciences by calculating on making their bequests at death, will receive no words of commendation from the Master, nor will they receive a reward. They practiced no self-denial, but selfishly retained their means as long as they could, yielding it up only when death claimed them. That which many propose to defer until they are about to die, if they were Christians indeed they would do while they have a strong hold on life. They would devote themselves and their property to God, and, while acting as His stewards, they would have

the satisfaction of doing their duty. By becoming their own executors, they could meet the claims of God themselves, instead of shifting the responsibility upon others. We should regard ourselves as stewards of the Lord's property and God as the supreme proprietor, to whom we are to render His own when He shall require it. When He shall come to receive His own with usury, the covetous will see that instead of multiplying the talents entrusted to them, they have brought upon themselves the doom pronounced upon the unprofitable servant. . . .

"Wills should be made in a manner to stand the test of law. After they are drawn they may remain for years and do no harm, if donations continue to be made from time to time as the cause has need. Death will not come one day sooner, brethren, because you have made your will. In disposing of your property by will to your relatives, be sure that you do not forget God's cause. . . .

"I call upon our brethren to cease their robbery of God. Some are so situated that wills must be made. But in doing this, care should be taken not to give to sons and daughters means which should flow into the treasury of God. These wills often become the subject of quarrels and dissensions. It is recorded to the praise of God's ancient people that He was not ashamed to be called their God; and the reason assigned is that instead of selfishly seeking for and coveting earthly possessions, or seeking their happiness in worldly pleasures, they placed themselves and all that they had in the hands of God. They lived only for His glory, declaring plainly that they sought a better country, even a heavenly. Of such a people God was not ashamed. They did not disgrace Him in the eyes of the world. The Majesty of heaven was not ashamed to call them brethren.

"There are many who urge that

they cannot do more for God's cause than they now do; but they do not give according to their ability. The Lord sometimes opens the eyes blinded by selfishness by simply reducing their income to the amount they are willing to give. Horses are found dead in the field or stable, houses or barns are destroyed by fire, or crops fail. In many cases God tests man with blessings, and if unfaithfulness is manifested in rendering to Him tithes and offerings, His blessing is withdrawn. 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.' By the mercies of Christ and the riches of His goodness, and for the honor of truth and religion, we beseech you who are followers of Christ to dedicate yourselves and your property anew to God. . . .

"In determining the proportion to be given to the cause of God, be sure to exceed, rather than fall short, of the requirements of duty. Consider for whom the offering is to be made. This recollection will put covetousness to flight. Only consider the great love wherewith Christ has loved us, and our richest offerings will seem unworthy of His acceptance. When Christ is the object of our affections, those who have received His pardoning love will not stop to calculate the value of the alabaster box of precious ointment. Covetous Judas could do this; but the receiver of the gift of salvation will only regret that the offering has not a richer perfume and greater value. Christians must look upon themselves only as channels through which mercies and blessings are to flow from the Fountain of all goodness to their fellow men, by whose conversion they may send to heaven waves of glory in praise and offerings from those who thus become partakers with them of the heavenly gift."¹

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 479-485.



Historic Adventism

Part 17

Music in the Advent Hope

B. Monteiro

MUSIC began in heaven. When the foundations of the earth were laid, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). Especially was Lucifer, the covering cherub in God’s presence, supremely entrusted with the gift of music. Of him it is declared that “the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created” (Ezekiel 28:13).

After Lucifer’s fall, a loss was felt. But God’s boundless resources were in no way crippled, and He is ever worthy to be praised by the angelic host. Inspiration describes a heavenly vision of “companies of angels, who stood in a hollow square, everyone having a harp of gold. At the end of the harp was an instrument to turn to set the harp or change the tunes. Their fingers did not sweep over the strings carelessly, but they touched different strings to produce different sounds. There

is one angel who always leads, who first touches the harp and strikes the note, then all join in the rich, perfect music of heaven. It cannot be described. It is melody, heavenly, divine, while from every countenance beams the image of Jesus, shining with glory unspeakable.”¹

As a faith-boosting tonic in our pilgrimage here on earth, the apostle Paul mentions “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). Likewise, from the early years of Adventism, in a letter of 1850, Ellen White states how she was specifically shown the benefit of music for God’s people in the spiritual battles of our time: “I saw we must be daily rising, and keep the ascendancy above the powers of darkness. Our God is mighty. I saw singing to the glory of God often drove [off] the enemy, and praising God would beat him back and give us the victory.”²

In that same year (1850), one of the earliest publications of the

Advent people was printed. It was a hymnbook compiled by James White, entitled *Hymns for God’s Peculiar People Who Keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus*. This collection of 48 hymns was chosen as being especially applicable to the distinctive faith and hope of Adventism, and some hymns we still enjoy today.

Music in the Advent experience

Over the years, vital instructions were given to E. G. White regarding the potential value and appropriate use of music. As mentioned by Paul, the first place for melody to thrive is in our hearts. The second place is in our homes. We are bidden: “Evening and morning join with your children in God’s worship, reading His Word and singing His praise. Teach them to repeat God’s law. Concerning the commandments the Israelites were instructed: ‘Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in

thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' Accordingly, Moses directed the Israelites to set the words of the law to music. While the older children played on instruments, the younger ones marched, singing in concert the song of God's commandments. In later years they retained in their minds the words of the law which they learned during childhood.

"If it was essential for Moses to embody the commandments in sacred song, so that as they marched in the wilderness, the children could learn to sing the law verse by verse, how essential it is at this time to teach our children God's Word! Let us come up to the help of the Lord, instructing our children to keep the commandments to the letter. Let us do everything in our power to make music in our homes, that God may come in."³

"Let all take time to cultivate the voice so that God's praise can be sung in clear, soft tones, not with harshness and shrillness that offend the ear. The ability to sing is the gift of God; let it be used to His glory."⁴

Music for worship and evangelism

"Music can be a great power for good; yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. The singing is generally done from impulse or to meet special cases, and at other times those who sing are left to blunder along, and the music loses its proper effect upon the minds of those present. Music should have **beauty, pathos, and power**. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering."⁵

"Those who make singing a part of divine worship should select hymns with music appropriate to the occasion, not funeral notes, but **cheerful, yet solemn** melodies. The voice can and should be modulated, softened, and subdued."⁶

"Display is not religion nor sanctification. There is nothing more

offensive in God's sight than a display of instrumental music when those taking part are not consecrated, are not making melody in their hearts to the Lord. The offering most sweet and acceptable in God's sight is a heart made humble by self-denial, by lifting the cross and following Jesus. . . .

"Great improvement can be made in singing. Some think that the louder they sing the more music they make; but noise is not music. Good singing is like the music of the birds—**subdued and melodious**.

"In some of our churches I have heard solos that were altogether unsuitable for the service of the Lord's house. The long-drawn-out notes and the peculiar sounds common in operatic singing are not pleasing to the angels. They delight to hear the simple songs of praise sung in a natural tone. The songs in which every word is uttered clearly, in a musical tone, are the songs that they join us in singing."⁷

"Music is acceptable to God only when the heart is sanctified and made soft and holy by its facilities."⁸

Popular "everyday" music

As mentioned earlier, the fallen angel who became Satan, the enemy of souls, was a master musician. Even now, he still retains much of that musical skill and employs it to incite men to fulfill his purposes of evil. In early Adventism, he was already using music to unsettle the faith of the youth. Sister White warned:

"I feel alarmed as I witness everywhere the frivolity of young men and young women who profess to believe the truth. God does not seem to be in their thoughts. Their minds are filled with nonsense. Their conversation is only empty, vain talk. They have a keen ear for music, and Satan knows what organs to excite to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired. The spiritual longings of the soul for divine knowledge, for a growth in grace, are wanting. . . .

"The introduction of music into their homes, instead of inciting to

holiness and spirituality, has been the means of diverting their minds from the truth. Frivolous songs and the popular sheet music of the day seem congenial to their taste. The instruments of music have taken time which should have been devoted to prayer. Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse. It excites, but does not impart that strength and courage which the Christian can find only at the throne of grace while humbly making known his wants and with strong cries and tears pleading for heavenly strength to be fortified against the powerful temptations of the evil one."⁹

"Angels of God are in tears as they write in the roll the words and acts of professed Christians. Angels are hovering around yonder dwelling. The young are there assembled; there is the sound of vocal and instrumental music. Christians are gathered there, but what is that you hear? It is a song, a frivolous ditty, fit for the dance hall. Behold the pure angels gather their light closer around them, and darkness envelops those in that dwelling. The angels are moving from the scene. Sadness is upon their countenances. Behold, they are weeping. This I saw repeated a number of times all through the ranks of Sabbathkeepers, and especially in ——. Music has occupied the hours which should have been devoted to prayer. Music is the idol which many professed Sabbath-keeping Christians worship. Satan has no objection to music if he can make that a channel through which to gain access to the minds of the youth. Anything will suit his purpose that will divert the mind from God and engage the time which should be devoted to His service. He works through the means which will exert the strongest influence to hold the largest numbers in a pleasing infatuation, while they are paralyzed by his power. When turned to good account, music is a blessing; but it is often made one of Satan's most attractive agencies to ensnare souls. When abused, it leads the

unconsecrated to pride, vanity, and folly. When allowed to take the place of devotion and prayer, it is a terrible curse. Young persons assemble to sing, and, although professed Christians, frequently dishonor God and their faith by their frivolous conversation and their choice of music. Sacred music is not congenial to their taste. I was directed to the plain teachings of God's word, which have been passed by unnoticed. In the judgment all these words of inspiration will condemn those who have not heeded them."¹⁰

Warnings about much of today's "gospel" music

Just as most worldly music can subtly eat away our reverence for God, how much more dangerous is music which bears Satan's fingerprints under a cloak of religion! In Sister White's day, such music crept into an SDA camp meeting in Muncie, Indiana, to promote a deadly mixture of error mingled with truth. We read in an 1890 letter of S. N. Haskell:

"There is a great power that goes with the [deceitful 'holy flesh'] movement that is on foot there. **It would almost bring anybody within its scope**, if they are at all conscientious, and sit and listen with the least degree of favor, **because of the music** that is brought to play in the ceremony."¹¹ From this we can see the tremendous influence that music can have in swaying people to believe a lie as readily as the truth! From Haskell's further description of the Indiana music, it appears to have been heavy in bass and drums, and terribly loud (and that was without the electronic amplifiers of today!) Sister White warned that such music would increase:

"The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of

rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use

"Music, when not abused, is a great blessing."

musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working. . . .

"The Lord showed me that erroneous theories and methods would be brought into our camp meetings, and that the history of the past would be repeated. I felt greatly distressed. I was instructed to say that at these demonstrations demons in the form of men are present, working with all the ingenuity that Satan can employ to make the truth disgusting to sensible people; that the enemy was trying to arrange matters so that the camp meetings, which have been the means of bringing the truth of the third angel's message before multitudes, should lose their force and influence."¹²

Indeed, today we see this prophecy being blatantly fulfilled in

the modern "celebration" movement. But besides the heavy drumbeat and rhythmic "rock" styles, there are now even more types of supposedly "Christian" or "gospel" music to avoid. These days we are confronted with jazz, country, "blues," and hypnotic "rap" styles of songs being set to sacred words, as well as songs with Hollywood-style tonalities reeking of cheap, love-sick sentimentalism—all in the name of Jesus. It is difficult to explain these subtleties in writing, but suffice to say that we each need to seriously pray for spiritual discernment in determining the actual "flavor" and underlying message of the music we hear. Regardless of the words, if the sound is somehow mesmerizing, or if it makes you think of a disco, night club, or sensuous romance movie, something is wrong. If it makes you inclined to relax your moral standards in any way, beware. The only music which can truly honor the God of heaven is that which bears His noble and majestic characteristics, free from all that is "earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15).

Godly music in the final crisis—and in eternity

The Adventist era, as in all other periods of history, has seen music to be either a curse or a blessing. When blessed by pure, wholesome music, the remnant who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will enjoy an experience similar to Christ when He was on earth: "With a song, Jesus in His earthly life met temptation. Often when sharp, stinging words were spoken, often when the atmosphere about Him was heavy with gloom, with dissatisfaction, distrust, or oppressive fear, was heard His song of faith and holy cheer."¹³ In the lives of God's faithful few, even "amidst the deepening shadows of earth's last great crisis, God's light will shine brightest, and the song of hope and trust will be heard in clearest and loftiest strains."¹⁴

(Continued on page 23)

A Prophet Among You

Part 17

Characteristics of False Prophets

by A. C. Sas



MUCH has been written against Ellen G. White, and some have declared her to be a false prophetess. She was a prophet, a messenger, and very few that read her writings can doubt this fact. But we must examine whether she was a true or false prophetess. Hereunder we will show ten points which identify the characteristics of false prophets. None of these apply to E. G. White. In fact, we will include some of her own statements on the matter simply because she herself gave such clear warnings on how to discern the difference between the true and the false.

1. False prophets run without being sent

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 29:8, 9).

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s cloth-

ing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before” (Matthew 24:24, 25).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1).

“Warnings have been given to me in reference to [so-called visions], that they will most certainly mislead. Woven in them will be statements that will lead to extremes, and to wrong actions on the part of those who accept them. It would be well for our brethren and sisters to move more cautiously, in accordance with the light given them. They should test these so-called visions before accepting them, and presenting them in connection with the light God has given me. I see that our people are in danger of making grave blunders and premature movements. God says of these prophets that are

springing up, ‘I have not sent them, and yet they ran. Believe them not.’”¹

2. False prophets boast of their claim to be true prophets

“Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an

angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers” (1 Kings 13:11–22).

“While traveling homeward by another route, he was overtaken by an aged man who claimed to be a prophet and who made false representations to the man of God, declaring, ‘I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water.’ Again and again the lie was repeated and the invitation urged until the man of God was persuaded to return.

“Because the true prophet allowed himself to take a course contrary to the line of duty, God permitted him to suffer the penalty of transgression. While he and the one who had invited him to return to Bethel were sitting together at the table, the inspiration of the Almighty came upon the false prophet, ‘and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, . . . thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.’”²

3. They teach much truth, but mingle it with error

“They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering

lips and with a double heart do they speak” (Psalm 12:2).

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Isaiah 29:13).

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Matthew 15:8).

“Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God” (Micah 3:5–7).

“There are wandering stars professing to be ministers sent of God who are preaching the Sabbath from place to place, but who have truth mixed up with error and are throwing out their mass of discordant views to the people. Satan has pushed them in to disgust intelligent and sensible unbelievers. Some of these have much to say upon the gifts and are often especially exercised. They give themselves up to wild, excitable feelings and make unintelligible sounds which they call the gift of tongues, and a certain class seem to be charmed with these strange manifestations. A strange spirit rules with this class, which would bear down and run over anyone who would reprove them. God’s Spirit is not in the work and does not attend such workmen. They have another spirit.”³

4. They bring forth ungodly fruits

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their

fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:15–20).

“[Christ] will instruct those who come to Him for knowledge. There are multitudes of false teachers in the world. The apostle declares that in the last days men will ‘heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears,’ because they desire to hear smooth things. Against these Christ has warned us: ‘Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.’ The class of religious teachers here described profess to be Christians. They have the form of godliness and appear to be laboring for the good of souls, while they are at heart avaricious, selfish, ease-loving, following the promptings of their own unconsecrated hearts. They are in conflict with Christ and His teachings, and are destitute of His meek and lowly spirit.”⁴

5. False prophets teach the people to depart from God

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spo-

ken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee” (Deuteronomy 13:1–5).

“But in these days of peril we are not to accept everything that men bring to us as truth. As professed teachers from God come to us declaring that they have a message from God, it is proper to inquire carefully, How do we know that this is truth? Jesus has told us that ‘false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many.’ But we need not be deceived; for the word of God gives us a test whereby we may know what is truth. The prophet 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.’”⁵

“There are many false prophets in these days, to whom sin does not appear specially repulsive. They complain that the peace of the people is unnecessarily disturbed by the reproofs and warnings of God’s messengers. As for them, they lull the souls of sinners into a fatal ease by their smooth and deceitful teachings.”⁶

6. Some predictions of false prophets do not come true

“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him” (Deuteronomy 18:20–22).

“Although Jehoshaphat in a moment of weakness had rashly promised to join the king of Israel in his war against the Syrians, yet his

better judgment led him to seek to learn the will of God concerning the undertaking. ‘Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today,’ he suggested to Ahab. In response, Ahab called together four hundred of the false prophets of Samaria, and asked of them, ‘Shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear?’ And they answered, ‘Go up; for God will deliver it into the king’s hand’ (2 Chronicles 18:4, 5).

“Unsatisfied, Jehoshaphat sought to learn for a certainty the will of God. ‘Is there not here a

*“Even so every
good tree bringeth
forth good fruit; but a
corrupt tree bringeth
forth evil fruit. . . .
Wherefore by their
fruits ye shall know
them.”*

prophet of the Lord,’ he asked, ‘that we might inquire of him?’ (Verse 6). ‘There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord,’ Ahab answered; ‘but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil’ (1 Kings 22:8). Jehoshaphat was firm in his request that the man of God be called; and upon appearing before them and being adjured by Ahab to tell ‘nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord,’ Micaiah said: ‘I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace’ (Verses 16, 17).

“The words of the prophet should have been enough to show

the kings that their project was not favored by Heaven, but neither ruler felt inclined to heed the warning. Ahab had marked out his course, and he was determined to follow it. Jehoshaphat had given his word of honor, ‘We will be with thee in the war;’ and after making such a promise, he was reluctant to withdraw his forces (2 Chronicles 18:3). ‘So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead’ (1 Kings 22:29).

“During the battle that followed, Ahab was shot by an arrow, and at eventide he died. ‘About the going down of the sun,’ ‘there went a proclamation throughout the host,’ ‘Every man to his city, and every man to his own country’ (Verse 36). Thus was fulfilled the word of the prophet.”⁷

7. False prophets oppose the truth of God

“And when [Barnabas and Saul] had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand” (Acts 13:6–11).

“The truth always involves a cross. Those who will not believe, oppose and deride those who do believe. The fact that its presentation creates a storm of opposition, is no evidence against the truth. The

prophets and apostles imperiled their lives because they would conscientiously obey God.”⁸

8. They are used by Satan, pretending to be God’s servants

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15).

“Men may come in the garb of holiness, having error and truth mixed together, and many be deceived. Satan quoted Scripture to Christ, showing that he could use Scripture to work his deception upon minds. Those who are acquainted with their own hearts know the necessity of being closely connected with God in order to have divine wisdom to discern the wiles of Satan and to cling, with firm, unyielding grasp to Jesus.”⁹

“Satan has come down in these last days to work with all deceptableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ Himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah. The Lord tells us if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. The sheep’s clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf can be discerned only as we go to God’s great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah.”¹⁰

9. False prophets are liars and deceivers

“And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade

him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so” (1 Kings 22:20–22).

“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:11).

“Those who pursue a course of rebellion against the Lord can always find false prophets who will justify

“Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah.”

them in their acts and flatter them to their destruction. Lying words often make many friends, as is illustrated in the case of these false teachers among the Israelites. These so-called prophets, in their pretended zeal for God, found many more believers and followers than the true prophet who delivered the simple message of the Lord.”¹¹

10. False prophets may perform miracles to deceive

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had

received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image” (Revelation 19:20).

“For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect” (Mark 13:22).

“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live” (Revelation 13:13, 14).

“It is fully time that every responsible worker should take his stand firmly on the word of God. This word is to be our defense when Satan works with such lying wonders that if it were possible he would deceive the very elect. It is then that those who have not stood firmly for the truth will unite with the unbelieving who love and make a lie. When these wonders are performed, when the sick are healed and other marvels are wrought, they will be deceived. Are we prepared for the perilous times that are right upon us? or are we standing where we will fall an easy prey to the wiles of the devil? . . .

“I was shown the heresies which are to arise, the delusions that will prevail, the miracle-working power of Satan—the false Christs that will appear—that will deceive the greater part even of the religious world, and that would, if it were possible, draw away even the elect.”¹²

¹ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 90.

² *Prophets and Kings*, p. 106.

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 414.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 376, 377.

⁵ *The Review and Herald*, February 23, 1892.

⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 185.

⁷ *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 195, 196.

⁸ *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, p. 279.

⁹ *The Review and Herald*, December 2, 1875.

¹⁰ *Faith and Works*, p. 45.

¹¹ *The Review and Herald*, March 14, 1907.

¹² *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 352.

Two Classes of Worshipers

by Isaias Siqueira Lima

S EVEN days after the beginning of the splendid work of creation, a wondrous spectacle could be seen. The whole earth was exceedingly beautiful. There was no such thing as a crater, rugged rock, cave, desert, swamp, volcano, flood, drought, hailstorm, tornado, cyclone, snowstorm, earthquake, noxious weed, thorn, thistle, dry leaf, shriveled flower, ecological imbalance, physical deformity in man or animal, tendency to evil, or knowledge of sin. There was nothing there which could dangerously threaten man, animal or vegetation. Different colors, tastes and flavors, as well different forms and shapes of created things brought complete satisfaction, and deep gratitude to God was awakened. Endless happiness was the precious gift given to Adam and Eve, who were the crowning work of creation. Majestic physical beauty, matchless intelligence and noble character, were all to be perpetuated in them and in their offspring throughout the centuries and millennia. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Besides the beautiful, exuberant flora and fauna, the Lord gave mankind still another magnificent present, the beautiful Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8–15). Language is inadequate to give an appropriate name to that garden. Let us be content with calling it "Paradise." Indeed, this was paradise *par excellence*.

The two youngest members of God's family were there in the presence of God and unfallen angels, in holy estate and happiness. Their powerful minds were able to register immediately any and all information

given (Genesis 2:19, 20).

"The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. . . . The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude."¹

The first congregation

The new congregation of the family of God was established on earth, made up of only two members at that time. Their worship exercises were performed daily. We go today by faith to the place where God meets with His children, but Adam and Eve were blessed with a personal visit from their heavenly Father in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). What a privilege was theirs!

We are not sure how long this beautiful relationship between man and God lasted, but we know that it ended when Eve disregarded the divine prohibition, and together with Adam, fell into sin. What a sad picture! All the inhabitants of heaven wept with indescribable sorrow. But in the kingdom of Satan there was a devilish glee.

The earthly family fell. But they were not to remain in a fallen condition. The Creator Himself made provision for their uplifting (Genesis 3:15). In the first innocent lamb slain by Adam's hands and burned upon the altar, Adam and Eve had seen the pledge of their salvation, and the hope of returning to Eden from whence they had been banished (Genesis 3:23).

"The Garden of Eden remained upon the earth long after man had become an outcast from its pleasant paths. The fallen race were long permitted to gaze upon the home of innocence, their entrance barred only by the watching angels. At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the divine glory was revealed. Hither came Adam and his sons to worship God. Here they renewed their vows of obedience to that law the transgression of which had banished them from Eden. When the tide of iniquity overspread the world, and the wickedness of men determined their destruction by a flood of waters, the hand that had planted Eden withdrew it from the earth. But in the final restitution, when there shall be 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Revelation 21:1), it is to be restored more gloriously adorned than at the beginning."² What a wonderful Father!

Cain and Abel

At some point, Adam's first son, Cain, was born. It was wonderful. The family now had three members. The second boy, Abel, was born afterwards. Four persons made up the little company of worshipers. In a short time the number of inhabitants on earth had doubled. What a success!

The boys grew. They became two mighty intelligences that quickly absorbed all knowledge. They became men—two giants, physically and mentally. But marked differences determined the spiritual character of each (Genesis 4:3, 4).

"Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, differed widely in character. Abel had a spirit of loyalty to God; he saw justice and mercy in the Creator's dealings with the fallen race, and gratefully accepted the hope of redemption. But Cain cherished feelings of rebellion, and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon the earth and upon the human race for Adam's sin. He permitted his mind to run in the same channel that led to Satan's fall—indulging the desire for self-exaltation and questioning the divine justice and authority. . . .

“Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin; and they were to show their faith in the blood of Christ as the promised atonement by offering the firstlings of the flock in sacrifice. Besides this, the first fruits of the earth were to be presented before the Lord as a thank offering.

“The two brothers erected their altars alike, and each brought an offering. Abel presented a sacrifice from the flock, in accordance with the Lord’s directions. ‘And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.’ Fire flashed from heaven and consumed the sacrifice. But Cain, disregarding the Lord’s direct and explicit command, presented only an offering of fruit. There was no token from heaven to show that it was accepted. Abel pleaded with his brother to approach God in the divinely prescribed way, but his entreaties only made Cain the more determined to follow his own will. As the eldest, he felt above being admonished by his brother, and despised his counsel.

“Cain came before God with murmuring and infidelity in his heart in regard to the promised sacrifice and the necessity of the sacrificial offerings. His gift expressed no penitence for sin. He felt, as many now feel, that it would be an acknowledgment of weakness to follow the exact plan marked out by God, of trusting his salvation wholly to the atonement of the promised Saviour. He chose the course of self-dependence. He would come in his own merits. He would not bring the lamb, and mingle its blood with his offering, but would present *his* fruits, the products of *his* labor. He presented his offering as a favor done to God, through which he expected to secure the divine approval. Cain obeyed in building an altar, obeyed in bringing a sacrifice; but he rendered only a partial obedience. The essential part, the recognition of the need of a Redeemer, was left out.”³

In contrast to the attitude of Cain, Abel’s soul was filled with gratitude to God for His mercy and endless love.

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain’

(Hebrews 11:4). Abel grasped the great principles of redemption. He saw himself a sinner, and he saw sin and its penalty, death, standing between his soul and communion with God. He brought the slain victim, the sacrificed life, thus acknowledging the claims of the law that had been transgressed. Through the shed blood he looked to the future sacrifice, Christ dying on the cross of Calvary; and trusting in the atonement that was there to be made, he had the witness that he was righteous, and his offering accepted.

Cain presumed to worship God in his own way, without obedience.

“Cain had the same opportunity of learning and accepting these truths as had Abel. He was not the victim of an arbitrary purpose. One brother was not elected to be accepted of God, and the other to be rejected. Abel chose faith and obedience; Cain, unbelief and rebellion. Here the whole matter rested.”⁴

These two brothers represent two classes of worshipers. There are only two classes: those who, through their presumptuous attitude, think to worship the eternal God in a false way as Cain did—and others who genuinely worship Him as Abel did. Cain outlined his own way of worship; he brought to God an offering which was different from that which God required. He presumed to worship Him in his own way. He was not an atheist, but he did not love his heavenly Father. Therefore, he did not obey Him. Abel accepted the requirements of God with full love. He believed, and this was accounted unto him for righteousness.

These two classes of worshipers, so diverse from one another, cannot co-exist peacefully. There was war on earth, the same which had its beginning in heaven. Cain

was moved by the spirit of the evil one. On the part of Abel, God’s ambassador, there were counsels, admonitions, and pleas to Cain to present the required sacrifice. Christ Himself appealed to him (see Genesis 4:6, 7).

“But instead of acknowledging his sin, Cain continued to complain of the injustice of God and to cherish jealousy and hatred of Abel. He angrily reproached his brother, and attempted to draw him into controversy concerning God’s dealings with them. In meekness, yet fearlessly and firmly, Abel defended the justice and goodness of God. He pointed out Cain’s error, and tried to convince him that the wrong was in himself. He pointed to the compassion of God in sparing the life of their parents when He might have punished them with instant death, and urged that God loved them, or He would not have given His Son, innocent and holy, to suffer the penalty which they had incurred. All this caused Cain’s anger to burn the hotter. Reason and conscience told him that Abel was in the right; but he was enraged that one who had been wont to heed his counsel should now presume to disagree with him, and that he could gain no sympathy in his rebellion. In the fury of his passion he slew his brother.”⁵

Thus the wicked stroke of religious intolerance slew the first martyr of the Gospel, and this took place when the world was still in its infancy. Who would be the second victim? “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:10–12).

God’s family was shaken by the apostasy of Cain and suffered a decrease in number. Although Abel’s righteous life was cut short by Cain’s murderous action, the Bible states that even though he is dead, his

righteous life is nonetheless a living testimony still and an example to all that have lived on the earth from that time until today (Hebrews 11:4).

The family of God had now decreased. One son (Abel) was lost by death, and the other (Cain) by apostasy (Genesis 4:14, 16). The almost unbearable pain of losing two of their sons was a terrible experience and a great discouragement to Adam and Eve.

Years passed. The Bible tells us that Adam was 130 years old when his son Seth was born (Genesis 5:3). Seth was to be the heir of the spiritual birthright. "He was a worthy character, following in the steps of Abel. Yet he inherited no more natural goodness than did Cain. . . . Seth, like Cain, inherited the fallen nature of his parents. But he received also the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness. By divine grace he served and honored God; and he labored, as Abel would have done, had he lived, to turn the minds of sinful men to revere and obey their Creator."⁶

A pattern throughout the patriarchal age

The two classes of people advanced in parallel lines, despite the astonishing difference between them. The class represented by Abel and Seth, are those who strongly fight against the pernicious influence of false worshipers. It finally will triumph. Abel is the noble symbol of God's church which now is militant, but in the future will become triumphant.

"To Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.' The faithful had worshiped God before; but as men increased, the distinction between the two classes became more marked. There was an open profession of loyalty to God on the part of one, as there was of contempt and disobedience on the part of the other."⁷

Other generations came into existence: Cainan, Maleleel, Jared, Enoch, Mathusalah, Lamech. These (father, son, grandson, great-grand-

son, and so on) heard Adam's story from his own lips and kept the torch of truth continually burning before the gate of "Eden."

Noah's mission

The tenth patriarch was born, Noah. When he was 480 years old God told him that after 120 years the world was to be destroyed with water. Noah was bidden to make provision for escape by building an ark of refuge. Meanwhile his voice of warning to the world in his day was given repeatedly, in order to save them from the coming catastrophe. But because they did not heed the warning, the world was

Abel accepted the requirements of God with full love.

condemned to destruction (Hebrews 11:7). One hundred and twenty years of intense missionary work of preaching, warning, working on the ark, and pleading with the people to repent, resulted in the repentance of only a few souls, and these died before the flood commenced. Others of Noah's converts apostatized, so only 8 persons entered the ark—Noah and his immediate family. What an apparent defeat for the messenger of righteousness! But this defeat of the church militant resulted in its purification as well as that of the earth. She was freed from the incorrigible apostates.

The family of God was reduced to eight souls (1 Peter 3:20), but they all were children of the faith, the pure gold free from the dross, the church purified from the spurious believers. Where then were the people of that other class represented by Cain? They had disappeared in the turbulent waters of the Flood. Root and branches were destroyed. Cain's sophistry would never again gain ground. Or would it?

Cain had died centuries before, and all his descendants perished outside Noah's ark. However, Satan, the one who inspired Cain, remains up to this day. This is why the church of the apostates represented by Cain still exists today. It was reborn soon after the Flood, even among the descendants of Noah. Though Christians living today are all descendants of Noah and profess to belong to God's church, we might say that Cain's class today is stronger and larger in number than ever. And because they have turned away from the truth, it is the same class as in the past. Religious intolerance against the faithful has continued in all ages. Those who are like Abel are not tolerated by those who are like Cain, who have never left off the merciless axe. They have never stopped smiting Abel.

The faith of Abraham and Moses

Eventually, Abraham was born. Upon the earth rested the heavy load of 2,000 years of stubborn conflict between good and evil. By then, no one lived over two centuries. Isaac and Israel, the son and grandson of Abraham, constituted the triad upon whom was inscribed the title: "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." That was Abraham's family. Then the most important experiences of faith took place in the church, and Abraham received the title of "father of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11).

A few centuries later the family increased like the stars of heaven, all of them descendants of Abraham. This was exactly what God had promised him, even before he had a child (Genesis 15:5, 6). But where was God's family at that time? They were in Egypt, not in Canaan, the promised land. They were now a nation of slaves. They suffered under the tyranny of various Pharaohs, each one more severe than his predecessor. There was an uninterrupted line of dynasties in the passing of time, riding on the heads of their vassals, the Israelites. Where was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob then? . . . someone may wonder.

God's great power of deliverance would soon be manifested. This was a miniature sample of the future, the Lord's perfect salvation for His people. He commanded Moses, an 80-year-old shepherd in the desert of Midian, to guide more than a million Israelites out of the land of the pyramids. A great victory was then achieved at the Red Sea.

But ahead, there still remained another 1,500 years before the actual birth of the Deliverer from sin. What an apparent eternity! What a long story, and oftentimes a very sad one! How long would the family of God be bitten by the serpent? The Bible gives us only a few glimpses of the long dark story, which includes the Babylonian captivity that was both painful and profitable. God's family was then healed from idolatry, which had been their chronic spiritual disease.

The last four centuries just before the appearing of the star of Bethlehem are immersed in obscurity. Only the hereafter will reveal to us what happened to God's church during that era.

The Redeemer

The time had come for the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. This miracle would be the most important event in history. But it was not long before the great dragon quickly appeared for to devour the Child-God (Revelation 12:3-5). Because of his cruel jealousy, Herod, who wore on the finger of his right hand the Roman ring, and held in his right hand the scepter, was used by Satan as an instrument of torture. Many innocent children were slain in Bethlehem. But Joseph and Mary were instructed to flee with the Christ-child to Egypt. What a relief!

The Son of man grew up and went out to fulfill His redeeming mission. When He was 33 years of age He received the same stroke that destroyed Abel. He was not exempt from the hatred of Cain! In reality, all of Satan's hatred was centered on one Person. No human being ever faced such a mortal blow as that inflicted upon the Son of

God. He was neither understood, neither loved, nor respected, except by a few members of His church. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

When Christ will be asked in the future kingdom of glory, He will explain to those who lived and died before His suffering and death, and to the faithful from among the heathen, that the wounds in His hands and feet are "those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zechariah 13:6). What kindness! What matchless love!

The mortal blow inflicted upon Jesus was the result of the greatest religious intolerance ever recorded. In the ecclesiastical circle at that time, they believed that His death would be for the benefit of the whole nation (John 11:49, 50). Ironically, the death of Christ actually benefitted not only Israel, but also repentant souls in all ages and in every nation of earth who would accept God's remedy for their salvation. When Christ arose from the grave, a number of saints were also resurrected with Him. These were the "firstfruits" representing all who had died—and were yet to die—in the faith, from the time of Adam and Eve until the close of probation (see Matthew 27:52, 53). It was a foretaste of the resurrection of the just to take place as a trophy of Christ's victory over the prince of darkness, sin and death (Revelation 20:5, 6).

At the time of Christ's resurrection, the church was still not ready to enter into her rest. God waited a little more to grant redemption to His people.

Final triumph

Now we are soon to enter the third millennium since the birth of the Messiah, and the church is still here as if she would be condemned to stay here for eternity. "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:10). This is the cry of protest of God's church on earth, which has been resounding through the air for over 6,000 years. It has

reached the ears of God and we can hear the steps of Him who is approaching for the deliverance of His church. He will translate us with His mighty hand into His kingdom. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in" (Isaiah 26:1, 2). This will be the condition of the church triumphant after she will have finished her task of giving the final warning to a perishing world, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the "latter rain." From the lips of the Saviour, the church will hear the response, like soft music: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away" (Song of Solomon 2:10).

Yes, everything will then be different. There never again will exist such things as the cudgel, sling, sword, spear, whip, hatchet, hemlock, hangman, crown of thorns, dagger, pistol, bayonet, submarine, mine, gun, rifle, missile, bomb. The guillotine, the gallows, the dungeon, the prison, the handcuffs, the iron point, and the like will never be used again. There will never be instituted a "Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition." Cain and his successors will exist no longer. Abel and his fellow believers will live for ever and ever.

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 25:9, 8).

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). ✠

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 50, 51.

² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 72.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁷ *Ibid.*

A Reformatory Movement in Prophecy

by A. Balbach

GOD has honest souls everywhere and the Holy Spirit is working with them, but apart from Seventh-day Adventists, no other religious group has been called to carry out a special commission in these last days.

Those who understand the threefold message of Revelation 14:6–12, which includes the whole present truth for today, have a great responsibility before God and the world. The bearers of this message are to have a good understanding of a number of doctrinal points which they hold in common with Christians in general, but they must also be well-grounded in the peculiar doctrines which cluster around the threefold message and which distinguish them from the rest of the Christian world.

But there is a problem: We cannot give a clear message to the world if we ourselves are not clear on a number of issues. Unfortunately, Adventists are divided even over an essential doctrinal point which is directly related to our salvation, the question of whether victory over sin and perfection of character is possible and necessary before the close of probation. Erwin L. Gane, Union College in Nebraska, U.S.A., writes:

“There are two conflicting points of view currently held on the question of the relationship between the spiritual perfection of Christ and that of believers. One view is that character perfection is impossible for the people of God this side of heaven. The other view

is that before Jesus comes God’s people will become, by the grace of the Lord, as perfect in spiritual nature and character as was Jesus Christ in His humanity.”¹ This key issue is clearly brought to view in the *Ministry* of October, 1969.

New Adventism vs. Historic Adventism

Dr. Desmond Ford, who seems to be the main patron of the new theology, has been teaching that perfect obedience to the law of God is impossible and that the saints will keep on sinning until the coming of Christ. Therefore, the “experience of justification and sanctification continues until glorification,”² according to a declaration made by Dr. Ford and a group of Adventist theologians.

Firm believers in the Spirit of Prophecy cannot accept this new teaching. Even if we did not have EGW’s writings, we would understand, by the Bible alone, that the saints must reach perfection of character now, while probation lasts, and that they must “be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” so that, at His coming, He may “find” them (not “make” them) blameless. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Peter 3:14. Therefore, we are in great danger if we overlook the unique or distinctive Adventist belief concerning the close of probation. Read Luke



13:23–25. This should be our great concern now, while the door of mercy is still open:

“Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: ‘The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me’ (John 14:30). Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.”³

And this is the condition in which Christ will “find” (not “make” but “find”) the saints at His coming. Historic Adventists will always bear in mind that (a) character perfection must be reached before the coming of Jesus, and even (b) before the latter rain can be poured out.

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement.

Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.”⁴

“When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.”⁵

If we are perfectly aware of these things, there may still be a second problem: A theoretical belief of the truth is not enough. We must be sanctified by the truth that we profess. Unless we live up to the whole present truth that God has revealed to us, He cannot use us.

Two distinct parties

It is not enough for us to be SDAs, and to believe the truth and nothing but the truth, and to proclaim the threefold message enthusiastically through the mass media. We need an experience which we often overlook.

“God calls for a work to be done by Seventh-day Adventists that I need not define. Unless the work is first done in their own hearts, all the specific directions that might be given to point out their course of action will be labor in vain. Read the second chapter of James. Practice the truth in your daily life and you will know the work that the Lord has given you to do.”⁶

The rebuke of the True Witness to the Laodiceans has to do more with our works than with our doctrines. Read Revelation 3:14–18 and *Testimonies*, vol 1, p. 128.

If we come short of meeting the conditions. . . .

“Christ longs to work mightily by His Spirit for the conviction and conversion of sinners. But, according to His divine plan, the work must be performed through the instrumentality of His church; and her members have so far departed from Him that He cannot accomplish His will through them. He chooses to work by means, yet the means employed must be in harmony with His character.”⁷

To remedy this situation, the Lord sent a precious message to His people in 1888 (*TM* 91, 92). It was a message of reformation. If it

had been received, Sister White would not have written three years later:

“The church has long been contented with little of the blessing of God; they have not felt the need of reaching up to the exalted privileges purchased for them at infinite cost. Their spiritual strength has been feeble, their experience of a dwarfed and crippled character, and they are disqualified for the work the Lord would have them to do.”⁸

Should we expect the large SDA Church to call a halt to her steady retreat toward Egypt (5T 217), make a U-turn, and follow Christ toward heavenly Canaan? The prophetic picture does not permit such a conclusion.

It grieves us very much to read that, to the very end, apostasy and deception of almost every kind proliferate “in the church.” “The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled underfoot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect.”⁹ Ezekiel 9 shows what will happen when the seven last plagues are poured out.

“Here [in Ezekiel 9] we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. . . . The abominations for which the faithful ones were sighing and crying were all that could be discerned by finite eyes, but by far the worst sins, those which provoked the jealousy of the pure and holy God, were unrevealed. . . . Their wicked course [God] will tolerate no longer, and in His wrath He deals with them without mercy.”¹⁰

This prophetic statement shows that, until the very end of probation, the large SDA church organization remains unreformed. Not a few good Adventists hope to see the church, i.e., the large body of Advent believers, purified during the Sunday law crisis, but we can see no such thing in the prophetic picture. Here is another Spirit of Prophecy explanation of Ezekiel 9:

“**The true people of God**, who have the spirit of the work of the Lord and the salvation of souls at

heart, will ever view sin in its real, sinful character. They will . . . feel most deeply the wrongs of **God’s professed people**. This is forcibly set forth by the prophet’s illustration of the last work under the figure of the men each having a slaughtering weapon in his hand. . . . Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those ‘that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done’ in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in agony, even sighing and crying. Read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel.

“But the general slaughter of all those who do not thus see the wide contrast between sin and righteousness, and do not feel as those do who stand in the counsel of God and receive the mark, is described in the order to the five men with slaughtering weapons.”¹¹

Again we must say that, in the main denomination, by the way that her condition at the close of probation is described, we cannot see the needed reformation that many believers hope to see.

God uses a faithful remnant

There is to be a reformation in answer to God’s call, not in the main body of Adventists, but among a faithful remnant (2SM 380), where the tares are separated from the wheat. The distinction between these two groups, the church and the remnant, is clearly shown in the two statements that we just read. This distinction comes to view, again, in a parallel description of the two classes when the door of probation is about to close:

“The days will come when the righteous will be stirred to zeal for God because of the abounding iniquity. . . . But in the hour of the church’s greatest danger most fervent prayer will be offered in her behalf by the

faithful remnant. . . . They will be jealous for the honor of God.”¹²

“Thank God, all will not be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There will be faithful ones who will discern the signs of the times. While a large number professing present truth will deny their faith by their works, there will be some who will endure unto the end.”¹³

The two groups are described as going in two opposite directions. Read *5T* 217 and *2T* 594–596.

Here are a few more parallel descriptions of the two classes of Advent believers:

“If we refuse to let our light shine for the Master, if we do not do the works of God [compare with *TM* 125, 175; *5T* 189], others will do that very work which we might have done and could have done, but refused to do. When we cease to fulfill our mission [compare again with *5T* 189; *TM* 125, 175], when the candlestick refuses to reflect light, and the great truths committed to us individually in trust for the world, are not given to them, then the candlestick will be removed. . . . Another will be placed in his stead and will shine.”¹⁴

“But, oh, sad picture! those who do not submit to the influence of the Holy Spirit soon lose the blessings received. . . . And Christ says unto them, ‘Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.’ He will take His Holy Spirit from the church, and give it to others who will appreciate it.”¹⁵

“The Lord will give His message to those who have walked in accordance with the light they have had, and will recognize them as true and faithful, according to the measurement of God. These men will take the place of those who, having light and knowledge, have walked not in the way of the Lord, but in the imagination of their own unsanctified hearts.”¹⁶

These are the true Seventh-day Adventists who will be qualified to give the final warning to the world.

“The world can only be warned by seeing those who believe the truth sanctified through the truth, acting upon high and holy principles, showing in a high, elevated sense, the line of demarcation between those who keep the commandments of God and those who trample them under their feet.”¹⁷

“God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and ‘receive not of her plagues.’ Hence the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: ‘Come out of her, My people.’ These announcements, uniting with the third angel’s message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth.”¹⁸

The people who will give the warning are the “others” to whom the Spirit of God is transferred, as we just read in *RH* July 16, 1895, and it is the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst that enables them, now, to carry on the work of revival and reformation (*ChS* 42), while the large class, from whom the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, remains unreformed. These “others” form the “faithful remnant” (*5T* 524) who are praying in behalf of the “church,” which, in this case, is the main denomination. This faithful remnant, at the end of the time of probation, is described as follows:

“The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy.”¹⁹

A comparison of *3T* 266, 267 and *1T* 210–212 with *5T* 472–473 and *PK* 727–728 shows that prophecy visualizes two different but coexistent churches. The unreformed church which will be the first to be

hit by the wrath of God cannot be the commandment-keeping church which will be protected against the wrath of God to be poured out in the seven last plagues. If we cannot see this evident and striking distinction, we would be inclined to think that Sister White contradicted herself.

Separation or no separation?

Not only those few statements just mentioned but many more prophetic references point out the distinction between the two coexistent Adventist companies in the last days. An important question may be asked: Will the two companies stay together, in one organization, until the door of probation is closed and the plagues begin to fall under the wrath of God? Prophecy gives a very clear answer—No! The separation must be completed before the seal of deliverance can be received.

The prophesied shaking to take place in the large SDA Church does not shake out the unfaithful or unreformed majority (see proportion in *ChS* 41); on the contrary: it removes the small, faithful remnant before the large class of professed Advent believers, still organized as a “church,” and still believing to be “the Lord’s sanctuary,” can receive the “stroke of the wrath of God” (*5T* 211). They will actually be separated even before the seal of God can be applied on their foreheads. Read again *3T* 266, 267. This is what will happen to these sighing and crying ones:

“The angel is to place a mark upon the forehead of all who are separated from sin and sinners, and [then] the destroying angel will follow, to slay utterly both old and young.”²⁰

This small minority, among the 144,000 candidates for the seal of God, can only sigh and cry “for all the abominations that be done in the church” (*3T* 266, 267); but they are powerless to disfellowship the great majority. The minority cannot put out the majority. Therefore, they must withdraw from the church that they love while the judgment is still going on.

"The time of the judgment is a most solemn period, when the Lord gathers His own from among the tares [in this case not the tares but the wheat is removed from the field]. Those who have been members of the same family are separated. A mark is placed upon the righteous. . . . The tares and wheat are now commingled, but then the one hand that alone can separate them will give to everyone his true position. . . . The obedient are called the just; they are drawn to the holy magnet, Jesus Christ. . . . The righteous are those who keep the commandments of God, and they [being a small minority] will be forever separated from the [great majority of] disobedient and unrighteous who trampled underfoot the law of God. The pure ore and the dross will no longer commingle."²¹

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross [not the dross from the gold] in the church."²²

Another important question may come up at this stage of our discussion: If there is to be a shaking which will remove the gold from the dross immediately before the seal of God is applied on the living saints, during the Sunday law crisis, why should we not all stay in the church, the main denomination, siding with the sighing and crying ones, and wait there until the final test comes and then separate?

Answer: There is a parallel between the experience of the faithful ones in Babylon (the fallen churches) and the faithful ones in the unreformed SDA Church organization. As the true followers of Christ in Babylon will leave the fallen churches before the plagues are poured out (Rev.

18:4; GC 390), so will the honest ones who are sighing and crying in the Adventist Church leave the organization before the close of probation. But this is the end, the final stage, of the shaking process. The beginning for the faithful ones in Babylon was in 1844; and for the sighing and crying ones in the unreformed SDA Church, the sifting process begins a long time before the end of probation. The beginning of the shaking process in the Adventist Church is unrelated to the Sunday-decree/final test. E. G. White writes:

"The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. . . . Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. . . . The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. . . . God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate. He will raise up and exalt among us those who are taught rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the outward training of scientific institutions. . . . The separation causes pain and bitterness to both parties. It is the variance which Christ declares that He came to bring. But the converted will feel a continual longing desire that their friends shall forsake all for Christ, knowing that, unless they do, there will be a final and eternal separation."²³

How do we know that this is an early stage, or rather the beginning, of the shaking process? Well, the text says that this separation takes place at a time when it is not too late to seek repentance and conversion. At the end of the sifting process, under the Sunday-decree/final test, we will have no more chance to search our hearts and find acceptance before God if we have neglected to do that before (COL 412; 9T 97).

For this reason, the shaking described in *EW* 271, being caused by opposition to the Laodicean message or counsel, must come at the beginning of the sifting process, not at the end, because at the end, under the final test, this counsel or message has no application among those who have known the truth (9T 97; COL 412).

Further prophetic references to the early stage of the shaking, when we can still seek repentance and conversion, read as follows:

"O that all might repent and do their first works. When the churches do this, they will love God supremely and their neighbors as themselves. Ephraim will not envy Judah, and Judah will not vex Ephraim. Divisions will then be healed."²⁴

"In these last days, there are arising strange fallacies and man-made theories which God declares shall be broken in pieces. . . . [Isa. 8:11–16] . . . Here are plainly represented two distinct parties, formed from a company that was once united. The members of one of these parties are in resistance to the will of God. They have taken themselves from the side of the loyal and true, and are now resisting the warnings of the Spirit of God. To the obedient the Lord will be 'for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel.' . . . Notwithstanding all their knowledge of the Word of God, all their light, and their position as expositors of Bible-truth, many shall 'stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.' The ruin of this class is certain."²⁵

"The time will come when it must be said of the impenitent, 'Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone.' Will the church see where she has fallen?"²⁶

Opposition to the counsel of the True Witness to Laodicea (Rev. 3:18) seems to go hand in hand with the acceptance of false teachings to cause the early prophesied shaking. Sister White writes:

"God's Spirit has illuminated every page of Holy Writ, but there are those upon whom it makes little impression, because it is imperfectly understood. When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand."²⁷

"There will arise just such ones [as mentioned in 5T 295] all along, and many more of them, claiming to have new light, which is a side issue, an entering wedge. The widening

will increase until there is a breach made between those who accept these views and those who believe the third angel's message."²⁸

We believe that we are living in the days of the early stage or stages of the prophesied shaking. The new position of the church toward the Law of God when absolute freedom of conscience to take part in war is now official, the New Theology with its doctrinal ravages, and the rejection of Christ's counsel to Laodicea is causing a consequent lowering of Christian standards. These abominations demand a strong reaction on the part of all reform-minded Adventists.

Lessons from the past

The apostasy in the Catholic Church became so outrageous that it demanded a reformation. So, God aroused men and movements in different parts of Europe.

"The Waldenses witnessed for God centuries before the birth of Luther. Scattered over many lands, they planted the seeds of the Reformation that began in the time of Wycliffe, grew broad and deep in the days of Luther, and is to be carried forward to the close of time."²⁹

Those reformers, and many others that are mentioned in *The Great Controversy*, did not form one united organization, yet God used them as instruments in His hands. They did not constitute an organic whole, but they sympathized with each other, and the Waldenses were glad to cooperate with them. They did not have a perfect understanding of the truth, and they could not see eye to eye on many issues, but they and the churches that they established were the light of the world in those days, although they were divided. Under those circumstances, each one of those reformers and each one of those reform churches was responsible for the light that each one had received. So, today, Christ's followers in Babylon are responsible for the light that they have (GC 390); the sighing and crying ones in the Adventist Church are responsible for the light that they have (3T 266, 267);

the self-supporting ministries that are trying, by the help of God, to uphold historic Adventism are responsible for the light that they have; and we, in the SDA Reform Movement, are doing our best to represent the light that we have received and for which we are responsible. This is one of the lessons that we should learn from the past. Read GC 343, first paragraph.

After we have read those prophetic statements (with reference to the shaking process, to the division among the Adventist people, and to the existence of two distinct companies or parties of Adventists,) the Reform Movement clearly sees the need to put into practice the reformatory aspects of Revelation 3:18, 19, Isaiah 58 and Joel 2.

"Though they [the people mentioned in Isa. 58:1] are called the people of God, the house of Jacob, though they profess to be linked with God in obedience and fellowship, they are far from Him. . . . With no words of flattery must the message be given them. 'Show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.' Show them where they are making a mistake. Set their danger before them. Tell them of the sins they are committing, while at the same time they pride themselves on their righteousness."³⁰

As in Revelation 3:18–20 so also in Isaiah 58. There is a clear distinction between the bearers of the message and those to whom the message must be given. The bearers of the message are described as follows:

"Here [in verses 8–14] are given the characteristics of those who shall be reformers, who will bear the banner of the third angel's message, those who avow themselves God's commandment-keeping people. . . . Their names are registered in heaven as reformers, restorers, as raising the foundations of many generations."³¹

"One fold, and one shepherd"

In our relationship with the brethren of the self-supporting ministries, perhaps we cannot now see everything in the same light, but we

hope that God will send more light to all of us, and He will certainly bring together into one fold all honest and faithful believers in the threefold message.

"Like will attract like. Those who are drinking from the same fountain of blessing will draw nearer together. Truth dwelling in the hearts of believers will lead to blessed and happy assimilation. Thus will be answered the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one even as He is one with the Father. For this oneness every truly converted heart will be striving."³²

Let us all pray that this happy day may not be far off.

¹ Supplement to *THE MINISTRY* (no date).

² *Australian Record*, May 31, 1976; *Australian Signs of the Times*, February 1978.

³ *The Great Controversy*, p. 623.

⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 214.

⁵ *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 69.

⁶ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 125.

⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 189 (1882).

⁸ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 175.

⁹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 211.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 212.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 266, 267 (emphasis added).

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 524.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴ *The Review and Herald*, June 7, 1887.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, July 16, 1895.

¹⁶ *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 422.

¹⁷ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 980.

¹⁸ *The Great Controversy*, p. 604.

¹⁹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 472, 473.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 505.

²¹ *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 234–236.

²² *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 81.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 80–83.

²⁴ *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 385.

²⁵ *The Review and Herald*, July 18, 1907.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, December 23, 1890.

²⁷ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 112.

²⁸ *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 409.

²⁹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 78.

³⁰ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1149 (author's italic).

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1151.

³² *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 100, 101.



WORLDWIDE



Workers' seminar held in Barbosa, Venezuela, Jan. 2000



Baptism in Guatemala City, Guatemala, Dec. 1999



Colporteur's training course in Sta. Fe, Argentina, Jun. 1999



Attendees of the Central American Union Convention in Guatemala City, Guatemala, Dec. 1999



Bro. Daniel Dumitru going for the Colporteur seminar in Colombia, May 1999



The arrival of the books, The History of the Reform Movement, Jul. 1999

PICTORIAL NEWS



At the stream side — Rim, Jos, Nigeria, Apr. 1999



Baptism in Angola, Jul. 1999



Some of our members and interested souls in Abomosu, Ghana, 1999



Camp meeting in Mufulira, Zambia, Aug. 1999



Combined group of Abomosu and Ashaiman, Ghana, 1999



1st baptism in Alabama, USA—Mar. 1999



“ALMOST DISCOURAGED”

I AM SO weak and have so much to overcome, that I am almost discouraged.” How often do we hear this expression in social meetings. It is the burden of some testimonies. It seems as though some people think that there is special merit in deprecating themselves. They almost take pride in their humility. Others do not seem to know that there is any better way for them to do. But however true it may be, or however often it is repeated, it cannot help but be displeasing to God. We are commanded to “exhort one another,” and to “provoke unto love and to good works,” but such language is anything but encouraging. Its effect is seen on the individual who uses it. It soon becomes habitual, for each time it is uttered the discouragement increases. It grows by repetition, but it is withering to the soul.

It is the language of unbelief. Although the individual may be unconscious of the fact, the spirit which prompts it is the same as that

possessed by the ten spies who brought back an evil report. God had said: “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” Having this promise, it was exceedingly wicked for them to say they could not possess the land. On this occasion, as well as at other times of murmuring, God showed His great displeasure. In this instance we see the natural result of such distrust. They did not enter the promised land. “And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long, shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness” (Numbers 14:26–29). They said they could not go, and they did not; but Caleb and Joshua, who said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are able to overcome it,” did enter the promised land.

Distrust and faint-heartedness are as displeasing to God now as then. His promises are abundant. Listen to a few: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was tempted in all points like is we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15, 16). “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1: 5). God does not upbraid us, does Not taunt us with our weakness. A child has not the strength of a man, and no father will ridicule his infant child because of its weakness. Its very helplessness appeals to his sympathy. So God says, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103:13, 14). But it is necessary to “ask in faith, nothing wavering,” for “without faith it is

impossible to please him" (James 1:6; Hebrews 11:6). Again we are exhorted: "Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). And yet again, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). One more passage ought forever to stop all our murmurings and doubtings: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Read also Hebrews 2:18; 12:1-4; 13:8; Philippians 4:4, 13 and especially Psalm 139:17, 18, and Lamentations 3:22-33.

Do we really believe these promises? If we did, would we not appropriate them to ourselves? We read them, and say we believe them, and yet to very many they seem vague and unreal. But if they are to be of any benefit to us we must consider them as real, and make our requests accordingly. Our belief is measured by our actions, not by our words. Is it not as much infidelity to disbelieve a promise that God has given as it is to disbelieve any other portion of his word? Let us take heed lest there be found in any of us "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

But ought we not to be sensible of our weakness? Certainly; the more so the better. But we are not to think of it in such a way as to become discouraged. There are two ways of looking at our own frailties: One is to brood over them, lose sight of God's willingness to help, and become discouraged. This pleases Satan. If we are prone to doubt and become faint-hearted, he will assist us to see more lions in the way than really exist. And such a course is really a form of selfishness. The individual becomes so intensely self-conscious that he can take cognizance of nothing else. He thinks of himself so much that he loses sight of Christ. He imagines

that he himself must do the great work that is to be done. After a few attempts show him the impossibility of it, he becomes discouraged. Another way to consider them is in the light of the promises of God. When we do this we have every reason to be encouraged, and God is pleased with us. The more we distrust ourselves while trusting God, the stronger we will be, for God has said: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And in view of this, Paul was led to say: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12: 9, 10). No man ever had more trials than Paul had, or felt less confidence in himself; but he believed God's promises, and it was no vain boast for him to say: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Thus it was with Caleb and Joshua. It was not vain self-confidence which led them to say, "We are well able to overcome it." Hear them: "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not" (Numbers 14:8, 9). So the Lord is with us; His promises are multiplied to us. We have the accumulated proofs of His power and goodness through thousands of years past. It is far more sinful for us to distrust God now, than it was for ancient Israel. Then "let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)."—*Author unknown, from The Signs of the Times*, November 30, 1888.



(Continued from page 6)

John the Revelator was shown in vision the final triumph of this remnant: "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:2-4).

In eternity, "Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as 'from one Sabbath to another' (Isaiah 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb."¹⁵ "As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise."¹⁶

May the Lord help us prepare our voices—but especially our hearts—to join in that glorious rendition! Amen.

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 146.

² *The Voice in Speech and Song*, pp. 409, 410.

³ *The Review and Herald*, September 8, 1904.

⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 144.

⁵ *Evangelism*, p. 505. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 508. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 510. [Emphasis supplied.]

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 512.

⁹ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 496, 497.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 505, 506.

¹¹ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years*, vol. 5, p. 102. [Emphasis supplied.]

¹² *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 36, 37.

¹³ *Education*, p. 166.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 770.

¹⁶ *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

Is the Lord Your Shepherd?

Most of us know very well Psalm 23 which begins, "The Lord is my shepherd." Have you ever thought about what it means to be Christ's lamb? A shepherd cares very much for his sheep. He faces many dangers to protect the creatures in his care.

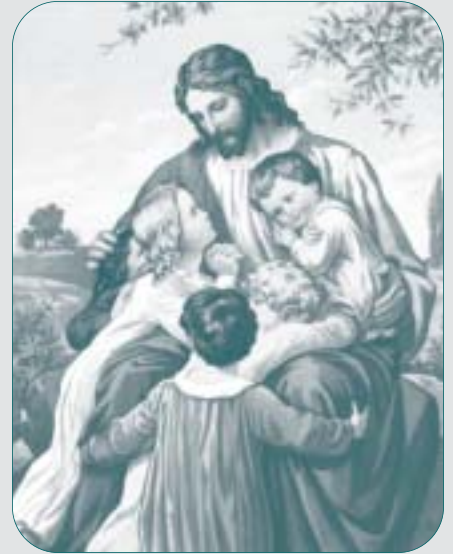
Sheep do not always have an easy life. They do not see dangers, and often get lost and cannot find their way home. They get sick more easily than goats do, and must have very clean water and nice, fluffy green grass to stay healthy. They need to be protected from wolves who would sneak up and eat them. So, the shepherd's care is important. The sheep come to trust their shepherd because they learn that he always watches out for their good. When they hear his voice, they gladly come, since they know it is best for them.

Jesus used this scene to show His care for us: "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. . . . The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. . . . I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10:2-5, 14).

So, if you are one of Jesus' sheep, you will trust Him because you know He is looking out for your good. You will know His voice and follow Him rather than going with a stranger. How can you tell when He is speaking to you? The Bible is one way that

He speaks. It is easy to tell what Jesus is saying in the Bible because it is written out plainly. So is the Spirit of Prophecy. What about when your parents speak to you? Surely you know by now that they care about you very much. So, as they teach you God's ways, you can trust that by obeying, the results will be good.

At times you will hear other things from different people telling you what to do. It may be some children at school, or ideas that come around on the street or from people on television or radio. How can you tell if it is something all right or if it is the voice of a "stranger"? Stop and ask Jesus, your good Shepherd, if He agrees with it. Read and obey His word and talk with your parents. Christ will speak to your heart to let you know deep down if something is right or wrong. And if He warns you of a "wolf" hiding in the bushes, stay away! But don't be sad—if He guides you away from something, it is only to lead you to green pastures of fresher grass and clearer water. Remember, He is always looking out for your best good. Trust Him.



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