The Reformation Herald

July–September 2002

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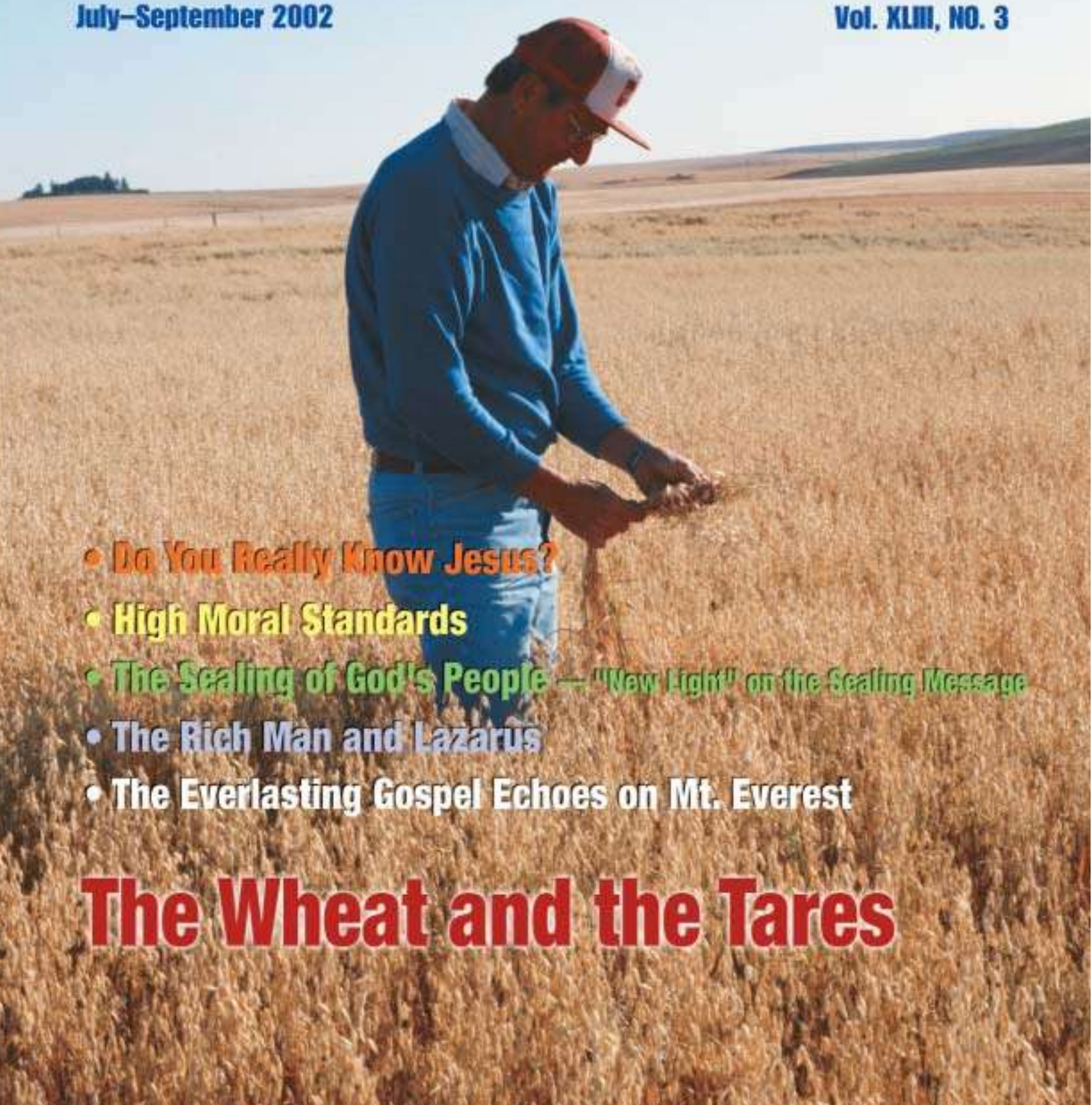

- Do You Really Know Jesus?
- High Moral Standards
- The Sealing of God's People — "New Light" on the Sealing Message
- The Rich Man and Lazarus
- The Everlasting Gospel Echoes on Mt. Everest

The Wheat and the Tares

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GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT JULY–SEPTEMBER 2002, VOL. XLIII, NO. 3

3 **Editorial**
Cultivating faith rather than its counterfeit—presumption.

4 **Do You Really Know Jesus?**
Contemplating Christ as our Best Friend and Saviour.

9 **High Moral Standards**
Let us beware: "Licentiousness is the special sin of this age" (The Adventist Home, p. 328).

12 **The Sealing of God's People (7)**
"New Light" on the Sealing Message.

13 **The Wheat and the Tares**
A well-known parable, yet too often misunderstood.

16 **The Rich Man and Lazarus**
Is this a commentary on the state of the dead? If not, why not?

19 **The Everlasting Gospel Echoes on Mt. Everest**
Lofty truths radiating in high altitudes— a missionary report.

22 **Worldwide Pictorial News**
A picture is worth a thousand words.

24 **Children's Corner**
Growing as golden corn, resisting decay through God's power.

"In the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unerring certainty. The reaping will testify as to what the sowing has been. The slothful worker is condemned by his work. The harvest bears witness against him. So in spiritual things: the faithfulness of every worker is measured by the results of his work. The character of his work, whether diligent or slothful, is revealed by the harvest. It is thus that his destiny for eternity is decided."

—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 84.

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

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Faith vs. Presumption

Faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. For presumption is Satan's counterfeit of faith." [1]

God wants us to exercise genuine faith, which has nothing to do with presumption. The Bible affirms that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. . . . Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:1, 6).

As we come before God early in the morning and ask His protection upon us and our families, we should believe that He will do it. When we get out of the house and drive a car, even if we prayed before, we pray again for the protection of the angels. If as I drive, I run at full speed against the power pole, thinking, "I prayed to God to protect me, and now nothing will happen to me," I may be seriously injured or even killed. Would that have been an act of faith? No, it was not faith at all; it was presumption.

If I climb up on the roof of the house and accidentally fall down to the ground, the Lord may protect me. But if I jump down willingly, saying, "I prayed to God to protect me, and I believe that no harm will happen to me," I may break my leg or arm, or even be killed. It was presumption, not faith that prompted me to jump.

This is how Satan tempted Christ. "And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Luke 4:9–12).

"The sin of presumption lies close beside the virtue of perfect faith and confidence in God. Satan flattered himself that he could take advantage of the humanity of Christ to urge Him over the line of trust to presumption. Upon this point many souls are wrecked. Satan tried to deceive Christ through flattery. He admitted that Christ was right in the wilderness in His faith and confidence that God was His Father, under the most trying circumstances. He then urged Christ to give him one more proof of His entire dependence upon God, one more evidence of His faith that He was the Son of God, by casting Himself from the Temple. He told Christ that if He was indeed the Son of God He had nothing to fear; for angels were at hand to uphold Him. . . .

"Satan's object in tempting Christ was to lead Him to daring presumption, and to show human weakness that would not make Him a perfect pattern for His people. Satan thought that should Christ fail to bear the test of his temptations, there could be no redemption for the race, and his power over them would be complete." [2]

"There are many who fail to distinguish between the rashness of presumption and the intelligent confidence of faith. Satan thought that by his temptations he could delude the world's Redeemer to make one bold move in manifesting His divine power, to create a sensation, and to surprise all by the wonderful display of the power of His Father in preserving Him from injury. He suggested that Christ should appear in His real character, and by this masterpiece of power, establish His right to the confidence and faith of the people, that He was indeed the Saviour of the world. If Christ had been deceived by Satan's temptations, and had exercised His miraculous power to relieve Himself from difficulty, He would have broken the contract made with His Father, to be a probationer in behalf of the race." [3]

How can we recognize when one has genuine faith or acts presumptiously? The Spirit of Prophecy tells us:

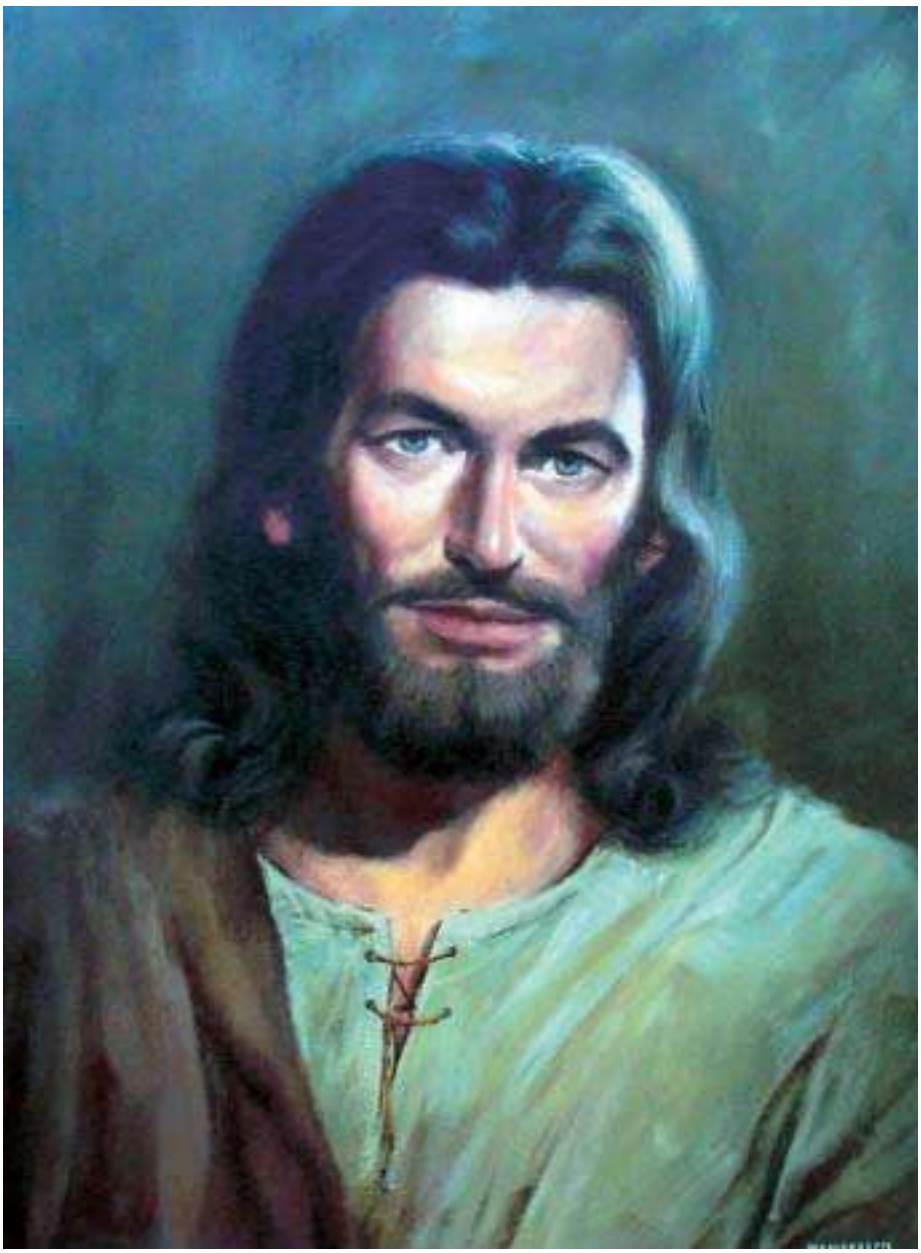
"Faith claims God's promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God, and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions on which mercy is to be granted. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures." [4]

References:

1 *The Desire of Ages*, p. 126.
2 *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 282, 283.
3 *Confrontation*, pp. 84, 85.
4 *The Desire of Ages*, p. 126.

Do You Really Know Jesus?

BY WON JUN CHANG



Joe Maniscalco

Eternal life begins by knowing Jesus Christ (John 17:3). Many Christians today are professing to know Jesus but really do not know Him. In other words, they know about Him but they do not know HIM. "While we know Christ in one sense, that He is the Saviour of the world, it means more than this. We must have a personal knowledge and experience in Christ Jesus, an experimental knowledge of Christ, what He is to us, and what we are to Christ. That is the experience that everyone wants. Now, I cannot have it for any of you, nor can you have it for me. The work that is to be done for us is to be through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God upon human minds and human hearts. The heart must be purified and sanctified." [1]

Every child believes, trusts, and depends on his or her father and mother regardless of time or circumstances—however healthy, ill, strong, weak, happy or sad they may be. Do you know why? It is because the child KNOWS his or her father and mother.

What about our Christian experience? Are you really a child of God? Do you really believe, trust and depend on Jesus, whatever the circumstances may be? Are you successful in your efforts to separate yourself from sin and its influence? Or are the world and its pleasures

fascinating you? How is your Christian walk? Do you have confidence in Jesus without a single doubt that He will take you home when He comes again? Are you sure that Jesus is your Saviour and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4)?

A satisfactory answer to all these questions comes by knowing Jesus, and through our relationship with Him. When we really know Jesus, believing, trusting, and depending on Him will not be difficult, just as a child trusts his or her mother and father. Also, our conscience will not and cannot permit sinning! "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). "The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe." [2]

Yes, every little child, youth, father and mother, student and teacher, lay member and minister really needs to know who Jesus is. And knowing Him is our greatest privilege. "When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us." [3] "Every one who knows Christ by experimental knowledge will copy His example. They will constantly endeavor to rise higher and still higher, not seeking the friendship of the world, but possessing a high and sanctified ambition to copy the example of Christ, in perfection of Christian character and be colaborers together with God." [4] "Because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Timothy 4:10). The Bible emphasizes the past, present, and future of Jesus' work of salvation. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8).

Yes! We really need to know Jesus and His work of redemption in our behalf, especially about His *yesterday's* sacrifice, *today's* intercession and *tomorrow's* second coming! Let us remember the precious promise found in Hosea 6:1–3, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know (in Hebrew *yada`* {yaw-dah'} learn to know, to know by experience, be acquainted with), if we follow (*radaph* {raw-daf'} to be behind, follow after, pursue, run after) on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

Yesterday's Saviour, Jesus Christ

What do you think of the value of human life? It is very important to properly understand its true value. There are various standards in this world by which people think to estimate the worth of themselves and one another. Many try to measure the worth of a man by such things as class, nationality, educational level, occupation, wealth, or even age. But God created man as one who is inherently worthy and valuable. The Bible tells us that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. And God blessed them" (Genesis 1:27, 28). "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10).

But what happened to this man who was the crowning work of God's creation? He became weaker and prone to disease, with no other destiny than to end up in death. His condition became really regrettable and miserable. Why? God declares that it is because of sin. And the Bible confirms it by declaring that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

People now boast that society has developed very much and has become very comfortable to live in. The days have passed when you could only look at some rare food wistfully but could not taste it. If you wish, you can now try all kinds of food from all over the world in all seasons. In fact, you can even take innumerable kinds of nutrients and tonics if you wish, or find all kinds of clothes. The days when you shivered in winter and wiped your sweat in summer are past, because now you can purchase and enjoy warm summer breezes in winter—and cool, winter winds in summer, or maybe autumn or spring according to your desire. And the days have passed when there was no other way to travel than to walk. Now you can travel by car, bus, train, or fly by plane. You can even arrange your trip just as you wish, according to where and when you want to go. Today, educational and reference books are overflowing everywhere, and human science has developed so much that it seems to reach even to the heavens.

The Bible summarizes the human passion to fulfill one's desires in this way: God "gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106:15). Yes! Truly something is missing today even though everything is so abundant. You feel like a snail even though you run, you feel hungry regardless of how much food you eat, and more than ever human bodies are becoming weaker and weaker in spite of taking energy drinks and supplements. Human hearts have reached the condition where they never seem to be satisfied.

Today as never before, the competition for life has become so severe that to many it requires someone's death in order to allow the other to live; and this is continuing day after day. The breakdown of the family is seen everywhere. More than ever before, the wreckage of collapsed homes broken into pieces is piled upon the rock of selfishness. Yes! Selfishness is sin.

Crimes, wars, illness, and the rate of death will continue to increase until someone solves the problem of sin. Regarding the condition of this world, the Bible says that "evil men . . . shall wax worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13).

Although medical science is so developed and various kinds of medicines are abundant, hospitals are still full of patients, and the life force of many who were hoping for future success is becoming weaker and weaker. Only when God solves this acute and chronic problem, the problem of sin, "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Isaiah 33:24).

Yes, sin, sin, sin—any violation of God's holy law of Ten Commandments—is the very thing to be hated. Does this problem in some way affect you and your family's life, which should be filled with joy and happiness? If indeed it casts its dismal shadow upon you, then the problem must be solved immediately.

Yes, sin is the greatest human problem. God wants to have happy communion with us, but sin has become the barrier between God and man, therefore He must remove it in order to restore close fellowship with you and me. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1, 2). Since sin is a universal problem, how will it be fixed? It is to be blotted out, but why hasn't this happened yet?

Let us consider the problem of sin from God's viewpoint. Unfortunately, this virus of death infects many whom He loves. The only solution that can satisfy the heart of God, because of His infinite love, is to separate sin from sinners. Do you think it is possible? God says it is. But the devil, who is the enemy of God, insists that it is impossible. Whom will you believe? God is able to solve this problem of sin. "I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isaiah 43:11). What means does He have to separate sin from man?

"When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience."

Do you know how cruel that murder was, which happened in the spring of A.D. 31? This is a case when the King, the Creator of heaven and earth, was crucified on the cross by man—man who was created by Him. It is really shocking news to hear whenever a parent has been murdered by his or her own child. Yet, it is an even greater shock to hear of the sin which men committed by killing the loving Creator. This is one page in human history that should make people of reason and conscience to tremble.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ guarantees redemption to repentant sinners who are eager to return to close communion with God. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). The innocent One must have borne sufferings for the sake of the wicked. The One without sin suffered instead of sinners. God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us. . . . Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9, 10).

This love is not impulsive, sentimental, or emotional. It is genuine love, which makes us live. And it is the expression of the Saviour's unconditional love. God has revealed His amazing plan ever since man committed his first sin. We find the plan of salvation in the Old Testament. Whenever anyone committed sin, he had to take a lamb with him to the sanctuary. "And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering," "that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing" "and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering" (Leviticus 4:33; 5:5). Through this ceremony, the sin confessed was transferred to the victim, and then the victim was killed. Who killed this sacrificial animal? The repentant sinner, who confessed his sin, killed with his own hands the animal, which represented Jesus Christ. "Day by day the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. The animal was then slain." [5]

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ who died as a true sacrifice at the cross of Calvary is the only hope of every sinner in all ages. The Bible says in Mark 15:17–25, "they clothed him with purple, and plaited a crown of thorns, and put it about his head. . . . And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, . . . and when they had mocked him, . . . led him out to crucify him. . . . And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is,

being interpreted, The place of a skull . . . and they crucified him." In consequence of this, the message given to every sinner is "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This message is "the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6). It is the good news. Many people are indifferent regarding His sacrifice. But the Bible tells of Him as follows, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:3–10).

Joe Maniscalco

Jesus Christ is the Saviour, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. If we come to Jesus and "confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Anyone can come to Calvary as a repentant sinner, as in ancient times when one took an animal to be killed instead of himself. And beholding the Son of God, who was nailed to the cross, he may say "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10). Who is the One they have pierced? Who is the bleeding One nailed to the cross? He is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away our sin. His hands and feet were nailed, and a crown of thorns was put on His head. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." Who is going to look upon Him? Of course, those who pierced Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. As a result of looking upon Him, what will they feel? "As one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." The one who beholds Jesus, the Lamb of God who died on the cross, may see the cruel figure and realize this crucifixion was caused by his sin. He cannot restrain his tears for the earnest love of Jesus Christ who has become a sacrifice for his sake.

The cross! The meaningful first step of Christian faith is beholding Jesus Christ who became a sacrifice for man. "Jesus died as a sacrifice for man because the fallen race can do nothing to recommend themselves to God. The merits of a crucified and risen Saviour are the foundation of the Christian's faith." [6]

When you and I come to Calvary, then we come to face the grief. There we see Jesus Christ who was crucified. He was not killed by happenstance, but by your and my sins. Our wrong thoughts, words, and lives killed Him. When we see that the innocent and righteous One died for sinful you and me, we begin to see more and more the cruelty of sin. Then you and I come to know the love which is so vast and deep that it constrained God to lay our sins upon the innocent soul of Jesus Christ. When a sinner looks upon the cross, he finds the way of salvation. He also comes to find the spring of true love, and understand the reality of sin. It is then that God creates in us enmity against sin and its originator. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt

bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). When we come closer to the cross, we will see the great love, which is incomparable to human love. Even though Jesus was so cruelly treated, He prayed for you and me saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

"The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father's face—speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life—offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself." [7]

When through faith you and I meditate upon the significance of this sacrifice, we come to understand that we are sinners condemned by the law which we have transgressed. It is thus that we are led to repentance. When we come with a humble heart to the cross of Jesus Christ our Saviour, acknowledging our sinfulness, our loving heavenly Father willingly forgives us.

We all have heard stories of fathers who have paid a tremendous amount of money as ransom for a kidnapped child. Suppose that God is this father and you are this kidnapped child. Do you think your life is worth the sacrifice of the life of Jesus Christ, who is King of the universe? Does God know the value of your life? Does the One who created you know your value? If He says you are worth the price (sacrifice) paid for you, then will you deny it? Oh yes, let us thank God. He says that you are worthy enough to be ransomed.

"[Jesus] speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise."

What makes you and me so worthy to God? God regards us as His sons and daughters who were originally created in His own image. Every individual on this earth is different from every other. Have you ever seen anyone who is exactly the same as you? No, it is not possible! It is really wonderful that there is no one in this world who is exactly the same as you are. If you would find one who is exactly the same as you are, then your value would decrease to 50%, if you would find two, then it would go down to 33.3%, if three, 25% and so on . . . but this is impossible, so we do not have to worry about it. You are the one and only YOU.

The only way for us to feel happiness and to experience it is to know that we are needed by someone else. The essence of true fellowship is that you satisfy someone's need whom you love, and you are also satisfied by him or her. And to recognize this satisfaction is also very important. "The consciousness of being appreciated is a wonderful stimulus and satisfaction." [8]

God needs you!

Yes, He needs you!

"We were brought into existence because we were needed." [9]

There is a space in God's infinite heart, which can be filled only by you. God is willing to have you as His friend. God is eager to have fellowship with you, your love. You are a very precious being to Him. He hates sin because it has separated you from Him. Therefore God wants to extinguish sin from our life so that we may be united with Him forever. Are you willing to cooperate with your Creator and Redeemer in this process?

God has designed the marvelous plan which only destroys sin but not you and I who are infected with it, and does not allow sin to continue to exist forever, but saves sinners. This is the precious plan, which was carried out with the infinite investment. The price has already been paid at the cross. You are very precious to God. This is why Jesus Christ, your Saviour, has paid His life as a ransom to save you. This is the sacrifice made on the cross of Calvary by Him who is the heavenly King, and this is the perfect work of redemption performed in behalf of your salvation.

References:

1 *This Day With God*, p. 213.
2 *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 114.
3 *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.
4 *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 860.
5 *The Great Controversy*, p. 418.
6 Ibid., p. 73.
7 *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 755, 756.
8 *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 361.
9 *The Signs of the Times*, April 22, 1903.

High Moral Standards

Beware of licentiousness—which Inspiration warns is "the special sin of this age."

BY A. KAUSHI

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25–27).

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

It has always been God's will that His people should have high moral standards in order to be holy and spotless. For this reason, He included in His law commandments which talk about maintaining good morals in our daily life. The seventh and tenth commandments well illustrate what our attitude should be, especially toward the opposite sex.

Since the fall, man's nature is always inclined to immoral practices. In many beings, in most homes, in societies, in institutions, and in organizations, we find immoral acts occurring, and God is displeased. Even the churches of professed Christians are affected by this evil. God's clear word is not regarded by most who profess His name.

"But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Ephesians 5:3).

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Colossians 3:5, 6).

Therefore, it is our duty as a church to lift the moral standards high among God's people, so that God's blessings can attend our efforts.

"Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people" (Isaiah 62:10).

"The most valuable rules for social and family intercourse are to be found in the Bible. There is not only the best and purest standard of morality but the most valuable code of politeness." [1]

"Is there not enough taking place around us to show the need for this caution? Everywhere are seen wrecks of humanity, broken-down family altars, ruined homes. There is a strange abandonment of principle, the standard of morality is lowered, and the earth is fast becoming a Sodom. The practices which brought the judgment of God upon the antediluvian world, and which caused Sodom to be destroyed by fire, are fast increasing. We are nearing the end, when the earth is to be purified by fire." [2]

The moral integrity of Joseph

"And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, . . . how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Genesis 39:7–9.

"Joseph's faith and integrity were to be tested by fiery trials. His master's wife endeavored to entice the young man to transgress the law of God. Heretofore he had remained untainted by the corruption teeming in that heathen land; but this temptation, so sudden, so strong, so seductive—how should it be met? Joseph knew well what would be the consequence of resistance. On the one hand were concealment, favor, and rewards; on the other, disgrace, imprisonment, perhaps death. His whole future life depended upon the decision of the moment. Would principle triumph? Would Joseph still be true to God? With inexpressible anxiety, angels looked upon the scene.

"Joseph's answer reveals the power of religious principle. He would not betray the confidence of his master on earth, and, whatever the consequences, he would be true to his Master in heaven. Under the inspecting eye of God and holy angels many take liberties of which they would not be guilty in the presence of their fellow men, but Joseph's first thought was of God. 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' he said." [3]

"Women are too often tempters. On one pretense or another they

engage the attention of men, married or unmarried, and lead them on till they transgress the law of God, till their usefulness is ruined, and their souls are in jeopardy. The history of Joseph is left on record for the benefit of all who, like him, are tempted. In principle he was firm as a rock, and he answered the tempter: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Moral power like his is what is needed now." [4]

Moral integrity among ministers and workers

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isaiah 52:11).

"Satan's special temptations are directed against the ministry. He knows that ministers are but human, possessing no grace or holiness of their own; that the treasures of the gospel have been placed in earthen vessels, which divine power alone can make vessels unto honor. He knows that God has ordained ministers to be a powerful means for the salvation of souls, and that they can be successful in their work only as they allow the eternal Father to rule their lives. Therefore he tries with all his ingenuity to lead them into sin, knowing that their office makes sin in them more exceeding sinful; for in committing sin, they make themselves ministers of evil. . . .

"The subject of purity and propriety of deportment is one to which we must give heed. We must guard against the sins of this degenerate age. Let not Christ's ambassadors descend to trifling conversation, to familiarity with women, married or single. Let them keep their proper place with becoming dignity; yet at the same time they may be sociable, kind, and courteous to all. They must stand aloof from everything that savors of commonness and familiarity. This is forbidden ground, upon which it is unsafe to set the feet. Every word, every act, should tend to elevate, to refine, to ennoble. There is sin in thoughtlessness about such matters." [5]

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:12–16).

"The usefulness of young ministers, married or unmarried, is often destroyed by the attachment shown to them by young women. Such women do not realize that other eyes are upon them, and that the course pursued by them may have a tendency to injure the influence of the minister to whom they give so much attention. If they would strictly regard the rules of propriety, it would be much better for them and much better for the minister. Their failure to do this places him in a disagreeable position, and causes others to look upon him in a wrong light.

"But the burden of this matter rests upon the ministers themselves. They should show a distaste for such attention; and if they take the course which God would have them, they will not long be troubled. They should shun every appearance of evil; and when young women are very sociable, it is the ministers' duty to let them know that this is not pleasing. They must repulse forwardness, even if they are thought to be rude, in order to save the cause from reproach." [6]

Among professed commandment keepers

"Seventh-day Adventists, who profess to be looking for and loving the appearing of Christ, should not follow the course of worldlings. These are no criterion for commandment keepers. Neither should they pattern after first-day Adventists, who refuse to acknowledge the claims of the law of God and trample it under their feet. This class should be no criterion for them. Commandment-keeping Adventists occupy a peculiar, exalted position. . . .

"Not all who profess to keep the commandments of God possess their bodies in sanctification and honor. The most solemn message ever committed to mortals has been entrusted to this people, and they can have a powerful influence if they will be sanctified by it. They profess to be standing upon the elevated platform of eternal truth, keeping all of God's commandments; therefore, if they indulge in sin, if they commit fornication and adultery, their crime is of tenfold greater magnitude than is that of the classes I have named, who do not acknowledge the law of God as binding upon them. In a peculiar sense do those who profess to keep God's law dishonor Him and reproach the truth by transgressing its precepts." [7]

"We are nearing the judgment, and those who bear the message of warning to the world must have clean hands and pure hearts. They must have a living connection with God. The thoughts must be pure and holy, the soul untainted, the body, soul, and spirit be a pure, clean offering to God, or He will not accept it. . . .

"The youth, for misdemeanors of a comparatively light character, are treated with much severity; but when men and women of large experience, who have been considered patterns of piety, are revealed in their true character—unsanctified, unholy, impure in thought, debased in conduct— then it is time for such to be dealt with in a decided manner. The greater forbearance that is exercised toward them has only had, as far as my knowledge extends, the influence to cause them to regard their fornication and adultery as a very light matter, and all their pretense has proved to be like morning dew when the sun shines upon it. . . .

"Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption, if it takes the highest men in the highest positions. God will not be trifled with." [8]

The danger of hiding sin

"If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity."

"For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?" (Job 10:14; 14:16).

"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Psalm 90:8).

"For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Ephesians 5:12).

"For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts" (2 Timothy 3:6).

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2).

"But if ye will not do so, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

"If we were to cherish an habitual impression that God sees and hears all that we do and say and keeps a faithful record of our words and actions, and that we must meet it all, we would fear to sin. Let the young ever remember that wherever they are, and whatever they do, they are in the presence of God. No part of our conduct escapes observation." [9]

Our only hope

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

"Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God. He may have committed his evil deeds in the light of day or in the darkness of night; but they were open and manifest before Him with whom we have to do. Angels of God witnessed each sin and registered it in the unerring records. Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. The darkness of the darkest night, the secrecy of all deceptive arts, is not sufficient to veil one thought from the knowledge of the Eternal. God has an exact record of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. He is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes no mistakes in His estimation of character. Men may be deceived by those who are corrupt in heart, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life." [10]

"Brother R, you are now in danger of making total shipwreck of your faith. You have sinned greatly. But your sin in seeking to cover up, and blind the eyes of those who have suspected you of wrong, has been tenfold greater. . . . You have thought that if you should confess your sin you would lose your honor—your life, as it were. You thought that your brethren would have no confidence in you. You have not viewed matters in the right light. It is a shame to sin, but always an honor to confess sin." [11]

"The Saviour urges the erring ones to repent. Those who humble their hearts and confess their sins will be pardoned. Their transgressions will be forgiven. But the man who thinks that should he confess his sins he would show weakness, will not find pardon, will not see Christ as his Redeemer, but will go on and on in transgression, making blunder after blunder and adding sin to sin. What will such a one do in the day that the books are opened and every man is judged according to the things written in the books?" [12]

Conclusion

"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:18–20).

"I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1).

"But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away" (Proverbs 6:32, 33).

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

May the Lord help us to be pure in thought and action. He gives us power to live the life of Christ. We must resist temptation by contemplating moment by moment on the life of Christ and His sacrifice.

To those who may be hiding sins under the pretense of godliness, let them repent now before it is too late, and confess and forsake their sins before God.

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19).

Let us all arise and close the door to the enemy's temptations, and let us pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to lift up a standard of truth against the flood of sin permeating our world in these last days.

References:

1 *The Adventist Home*, p. 423.
2 *Gospel Workers*, pp. 125, 126.
3 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 217.
4 *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 596.
5 *Gospel Workers*, pp. 124, 125.
6 Ibid., p. 129.
7 *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 450, 451.
8 *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 426–428.
9 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 217.
10 *The Great Controversy*, p. 486.
11 *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 300.
12 Ibid., vol. 9, p. 266.

The Sealing of God's People (7)

"New Light" on the Sealing Message

BY A. C. SAS

By the year 1894 there was no doubt as to whether the sealing work was going on or not. The sealing of the 144,000 was a very well-established doctrine among Seventh-day Adventists. It was understood that all who were sealed under the third angel's message would be included in the 144,000 because, according to the message of Revelation 7:1-4, only those of that number are sealed.

Around that time a brother claimed to have "new light" on this question. One of the pioneers, J. N. Loughborough, commented:

"In reference to the subject matter of this book—the *sealed 144,000* —I have been greatly moved by the Spirit of God to write and publish the facts as to how the *sealing message* was obtained—not only from the Bible, but by direct instruction in visions of Sister E. G. White; also as to how the message was received and taught by our ministers, and people down to the year 1894, when the 'new light' theory found its advocate in one who afterwards apostatized from the faith, and died without seeing the fulfillment of his expectation that he would live to the end of time, and hence be one of the 144,000. His claim was that later testimonies of Sister White taught that all the 144,000 would be made up of those who had never died.

"When I found that some were teaching that 'all of the 144,000 who will be *sealed* are now living,' I thought it time that someone should speak, and show that it is not the manner of God's prophets to make positive statements at one time, and afterwards teach entirely contrary to them. Such surely was not the course of Bible prophets. The whole of this 'new light' is produced by taking words out of their connection, and away from the things of which they are spoken, and giving them a general application."—*Questions on the Sealing Message*, pp. 3, 4 (author's italic).

Sister White was concerned about this "new light" and she gave the following testimony:

"The hardest task I ever had to do in this line was in dealing with one who, I knew, wanted to follow the Lord. For some time he had thought he was obtaining new light. He was very ill, and must soon die. And oh, how my heart hoped he would not make it necessary for me to tell him just what he was doing. Those to whom he presented his views listened to him eagerly, and some thought him inspired. He had a chart made, and reasoned from the Scriptures to show that the Lord would come at a certain date, in 1894, I think. To many his reasoning seemed to be without a flaw. They told of his powerful exhortations in his sickroom. Most wonderful views passed before him. But what was the source of his inspiration? It was the morphine given him to relieve his pain.

"At our camp meeting at Lansing, Michigan, just before I came to Australia, I had to speak plainly in regard to this new light. I told the people that the words they had heard were not the truth of inspiration. The wonderful light, which presented such a show of truth, was the result of a misapplication of Scripture. The Lord's work would not close up in 1894. The word of the Lord to me was, 'This is not truth, but will lead into strange paths, and some will become confused over this representation, and will give up the faith.' " *2SM* 113.

This "new light" was not accepted by the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1905 Elder H. R. Johnson published a long article in the *Review and Herald* on the 144,000 which contains the original doctrine.

A few years later this very teaching was published again in the German edition of the Sabbath School Quarterly, August 1, 1908, as follows:

"From this we may recognize that, at the coming of the Lord, all of the 144,000, as living saints, will be composed of those who have never seen death and those who have died during the preaching of the last message but have resurrected before the appearing of the Lord."

In his book *Los Videntes y lo Porvenir*, Elder L. R. Conradi also stated that the 144,000 will be made up of those who have never died and those who will be raised before the coming of Jesus:

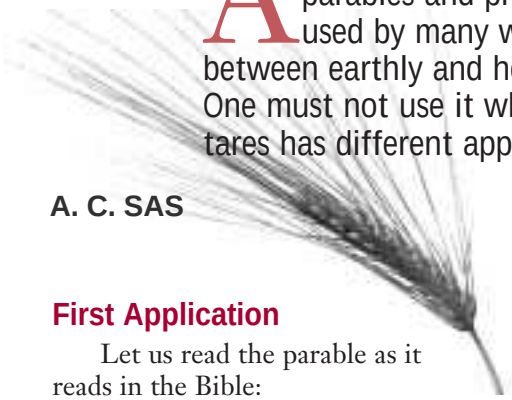
"In the same way, some will be resurrected from among the sleeping righteous who will complete the number of Israel according to Revelation 7."—Page 271.

However, part of the "new light" which claims that the 144,000 will never die is now widely accepted, especially because the number of professed Sabbathkeepers is counted in the millions.

The Wheat and the Tares

OBJECTION: It is true that there is apostasy in the SDA Church; but the apostates are the tares which will remain in the church until the end of the world, the time of harvest.

ANSWER: The parable of the wheat and tares, as well as some other parables and prophecies, is misunderstood, misinterpreted and misused by many well-meaning SDAs. A parable is only a comparison between earthly and heavenly things, and it can be used wherever it fits. One must not use it where it does not apply. The parable of the wheat and tares has different applications. We will consider them one by one.



A. C. SAS

First Application

Let us read the parable as it reads in the Bible:

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. . . . Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that soweth them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels" (Matthew 13:24–30, 36–39).

It is not difficult to understand the explanation of Jesus, is it? Let us review it:

a) The wheat represents: The children of God.

b) The sower of the wheat represents: Jesus Christ.

c) The field represents: The world.

d) The tares represent: The wicked (Satan's children).

e) The sower of the tares represents: The devil.

f) The harvest represents: The end of the world.

g) The harvesters represent: The angels.

In this first application of the parable, God's children (the wheat) are in this world, and cannot get out of this field before the end, when Jesus comes. The angels will then gather the tares to be burned, and take the wheat to the heavenly garner. The Spirit of Prophecy says:

"The day is just upon us when the righteous shall be bound like precious grain in bundles for the heavenly garner, while the wicked are, like the tares, gathered for the fires of the last great day. But the wheat and tares 'grow together until the harvest.' In the discharge of life's duties the righteous will to the last be brought in contact with the ungodly. The children of light are scattered among the children of darkness, that the contrast may be seen by all. Thus are the children of God to 'show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.'" [1]

Second application

We read in the Spirit of Prophecy these statements:

" 'The field,' Christ said, 'is the world.' But we must understand this as signifying the church of Christ in the world." [2]

Here we have another field—the church. In this field there are both wheat and tares:

"While the Lord brings into the church those who are truly converted, Satan at the same time brings persons who are not converted into its fellowship. While Christ is sowing the good seed, Satan is sowing the tares. There are two opposing influences continually exerted on the members of the church. One influence is working for the purification of the church, and the other for the corrupting of the people of God." [3]

"The good seed represents those who are born of the word of God, the truth. The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles. 'The enemy that sowed them is the devil.' Neither God nor His angels ever sowed a seed that would produce a tare. The tares are always sown by Satan, the enemy of God and man. . . .

"Christ's servants are grieved as they see true and false believers mingled in the church. . . .The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. . . .

"The world has no right to doubt the truth of Christianity because there are unworthy members in the church, nor should Christians become disheartened because of these false brethren. How was it with the early church? Ananias and Sapphira joined themselves to the disciples. Simon Magus was baptized. Demas, who forsook Paul, had been counted a believer. Judas Iscariot was numbered with the apostles. . . . [The Redeemer] has said that false brethren will be found in the church till the close of time." [4]

"Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. . . . Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time." [5]

In this second application of the parable, the picture is changed completely. The wheat and the tares will not remain in this field, the church, until Jesus' coming. How does the Testimony read? Let us review the above paragraphs:

a) The wheat represents: Converted souls, born of the word of God, true believers.

b) The sower of the wheat represents: Jesus Christ.

c) The field represents: The church.

d) The tares represent: Unconverted members, pretended believers, false brethren, unworthy members.

e) The sower of the tares represents: Satan.

f) The harvest represents: The end of probationary time.

When will be the harvest in this field? When should the tares be rooted out? We must understand that the tares represent those who are not truehearted, and their real character is not revealed. Therefore Jesus said that we must not judge character and motives. But when the fruit is ripe, what is to be done with the tare? Should we still leave the evil plant in the church? Definitely not. It must be rooted up or eradicated. "There is much we will never know; but that which is revealed makes the church responsible and guilty unless they show a determined effort to eradicate the evil. Cleanse the camp, for there is an accursed thing in it." [6]

To eradicate or root out means the same thing. When a person produces bad fruit (open sin), and the fruit matures, he or she must be dealt with promptly. The tare must be harvested, rooted out. The time of the harvest in this case is at any time when such fruit is ripe. We cannot simply leave him or her in the church until the coming of Jesus. The last chance for the harvest, in the church, is the end of probationary time, as mentioned above (COL 72). Even today there is a harvest, both of wheat and tares, according to the following Testimony:

"A train of cars was shown me, going with the speed of lightning. The angel bade me look carefully. I fixed my eyes upon the train. It seemed that the whole world was on board, that there could not be one left. Said the angel, 'They are binding in bundles ready to burn.' . . .

"I asked the angel if there were none left. He bade me look in an opposite direction, and I saw a little company traveling a narrow pathway. All seemed to be firmly united, bound together by the truth, in bundles, or companies. Said the angel, 'The third angel is binding, or sealing, them in bundles for the heavenly garner.' " [7]

These companies are bound together in bundles, some to be burned and the rest to be taken to the heavenly garner. In common life the harvesting of grain occurs some time before being taken to the barn. The grain is bound in bundles or sheaves and left in the field for awhile. Likewise in the spiritual realm, when Jesus comes, the wheat and the tares are already distinctly bound in their respective bundles; He will then take the wheat to the heavenly garner, the kingdom of the Father, and the tares will be burned up.

Let us remember that in the early Christian church there were tares, and the Spirit of Prophecy mentions a few of them by name: Ananias, Sapphira, Simon Magus, Demas, Judas. Opportunities were given them to repent and change their lives, and they would become precious wheat. But because they loved self and this world more than God, they were separated from the church. The Bible and the Spirit of

Prophecy do not say that all tares will be converted:

"The Saviour does not point forward to a time when all the tares become wheat." [8]

Even in the world not all the wicked (tares) will be converted, but some will leave the ranks of Satan and become children of the kingdom of God.

Third application

Besides the world and the church there is still another field, according to the following:

"If faithfulness and vigilance had been preserved, if there had been no sleeping or negligence upon the part of any, the enemy would not have had so favorable an opportunity to sow tares among the wheat. Satan never sleeps. He is watching, and he improves every opportunity to set his agents to scatter error, which finds good soil in many unsanctified hearts." [9]

" 'The sower soweth the word.' Christ came to sow the world with truth. Ever since the fall of man, Satan has been sowing the seeds of error. . . . Ever since the fall of man, Christ had been the Revealer of truth to the world. By Him the incorruptible seed, 'the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever,' is communicated to men (1 Peter 1:23)." [10]

"The seed sown by the wayside represents the word of God as it falls upon the heart of an inattentive hearer." [11]

Here we have another field — the heart. Let us review again the above statements:

a) The wheat represents: The word of God; the truth.

b) The sower of the wheat represents: Jesus Christ.

c) The field represents: The heart.

d) The tares represent: Error.

e) The sower of the tares represents: Satan.

When will the harvest take place in this field? Should the tares (error) be left in this field until Jesus comes at the end of the world? Certainly not! If the tares (error, sin, and the like) are left in men's hearts until the close of probationary time, they will be lost forever. When should these evils be uprooted? Without any doubt, they should be harvested precisely now, before the close of probation.

"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 had 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**." [12]

Another important point which should be considered in the parable of the wheat and tares is the tolerance that we must have with those whom we suspect to be tares. We cannot judge the motives and know the hearts. Even if we are convinced that a member should be disciplined, we must be cautious because there will be those who sympathize with the person, instead of standing for the right. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us:

"If persons are as deserving of being separated from the church as Satan was of being cast out of heaven, they will have sympathizers. There is always a class who are more influenced by individuals than they are by the Spirit of God and sound principles; and, in their unconsecrated state, these are ever ready to take sides with the wrong and give their pity and sympathy to the very ones who least deserve it. These sympathizers have a powerful influence with others; things are seen in a perverted light, great harm is done, and many souls are ruined." [13]

On the other hand, if the church knows that a member is in open sin and does not take decided measures to root out the evil, the church itself becomes guilty before God:

"He would teach His people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to Him and are not to be lightly regarded. He shows us that when His people are found in sin they should at once take decided measures to put that sin from them, that His frown may not rest upon them all. But if the sins of the people are passed over by those in responsible positions, His frown will be upon them, and the people of God, as a body, will be held responsible for those sins. In His dealings with His people in the past the Lord shows the necessity of purifying the church from wrongs. One sinner may diffuse darkness that will exclude the light of God from the entire congregation. . . .

"God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins." [14]

To use the parable of the wheat and tares to justify sin and sinners in the church is improper, wrong and deceiving. Let us not be lulled in the cradle of a wrong interpretation of this parable.

References:

1 *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 100.
2 *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 70.
3 *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 46.
4 *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 70–73.
5 Ibid., pp. 71, 72.
6 *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 428.
7 *Early Writings*, pp. 88, 89.
8 *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 75.
9 *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 113.
10 *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 37, 38.
11 Ibid., p. 44.
12 *The Great Controversy*, p. 623 (emphasis added).
13 *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 114, 115.
14 Ibid., pp. 265, 269.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

A. C. SAS

It is believed by many that the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus supports the teaching of the immortality of the soul. They believe that at death the righteous go to heaven, to an eternal bliss, and the wicked go to hell, to suffer everlasting torment in a lake of fire. Because Jesus began the parable with the words "there was," some believe that it was a real event, and that the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus cannot be just an allegory.

If we consider the different parables of Jesus where the words "there was" were used, we will understand that Jesus used them, on many occasions, to represent things which did not exist in reality. In the same chapter (Luke 16:1), Jesus used the same words "there was" referring to a rich man who had an unfaithful steward. Most of us realize that it was only a parable and not a real event. The same rule should be applied to the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

A close analysis of this parable will show that it was not a literal event but only an allegory. If all the details of the parable should be literal, then the saved would recognize their relatives in hell, in terrible agony, and hell and heaven would be next to each other, and the saints could talk to the wicked in torment. Parents would see their wicked children who had rejected the free offer of salvation groaning in the eternal torment, and they would hear their anguishing cries. Such condition in heaven could never be a happy condition.

If the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is to be understood as

being a literal event, then the souls of those who are condemned to be tormented in the fires of hell would have physical tongues which could be cooled with some water on the tip of one's finger. Yet those who believe in the immortality of the soul, and affirm that this parable is to be understood as a literal incident, also believe that the souls in heaven or in hell are immaterial. These two theories are inconsistent, because in the parable the rich man has a tongue, a mouth to speak, and Lazarus has fingers, arms and so on. Would the immaterial souls have material lips, tongues, fingers, hands, mouths?

The Bible tells us that the rich man died and he was buried. This affirmation is sufficient to prove that the dead do not go to hell, but to the grave. All dead are buried, as the rich man of the parable. Later it is said of the rich man that he was in hell. Therefore the hell where he was and where all who die go at death is the grave. The Bible makes it clear that the dead do not know anything:

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6).

The rich man in the parable was talking to Abraham, and asked him to send messengers to his relatives with a message of salvation. He showed his love towards his relatives. But the Bible says that when man dies his love, his hatred, and his envy perish, and they have not any more a portion under the sun. It is evident that the parable here is allegorical, the same way as the one in Judges 9:8–15, where the trees wanted to anoint a king, and many of the trees answered negatively. We all know that trees do not speak words. This must be allegorical language.

The Bible clearly says that at death there is no advantage of man over a dumb animal. They all breathe the same air, and when they die they all go to the same place: to the dust. From the moment they die, their thoughts perish; that is, they think not any longer.

"Lazarus represents the suffering poor who believe in Christ." The rich man represents those who seek all things of this world and expect that the kingdom of God be added unto them.

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20).

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:3, 4).

There are many illustrations in the parables of Jesus which are used just to complete the illustration which the parables are to teach us. For example: The parable of the Unjust Judge. This judge would not listen to the complaints of the poor widow, but because of the insistent pleading he decided to vindicate her case. Through this parable Jesus wanted to emphasize the need of perseverance in prayer. The judge of the parable was unjust (Luke 18:6). whereas the heavenly Judge is righteous and just. This judge would not listen to the widow, but the heavenly Father listens to us whenever we pray in the name of Jesus. We see here that the expression "unjust" was used by Jesus just to complete the illustration, but it can never be used to represent the real fact.

Another parable of the same nature is the one of the Unfaithful Steward. The steward in this parable (Luke 16:1–9) was unfaithful and dishonest in the sight of his lord in making no provision for the future. What does this parable teach us? Does it suggest for us to be unfaithful and dishonest? Not at all. Jesus wanted to teach us that we should make provision for the future, and that after doing our part we may be received in "everlasting habitations" (verse 9). The expression "unfaithful" is used just to complete the illustration, but it never teaches us to be dishonest or unfaithful. The specific expression has nothing to do with the main point which the parable teaches us, i.e, to make provision for the future. The same way, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus contains certain details which do not represent the main point. This parable does not teach the immortality of the soul.

Through the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus aimed to teach us that the Jewish people were in an advantageous position over the Gentiles. While these were despised in the Old Dispensation and the Jews exalted, in the New Dispensation things would be reversed. In the Old Dispensation the Jews were the ones compared to the rich man who "fared sumptuously" (see Romans 9:4, 5), and the Gentiles were considered as dogs who had to be content with the

"Christ represented the hopelessness of looking for a second probation. This life is the only time given to man in which to prepare for eternity."

spiritual crumbs left by the Jews. In the New Dispensation a complete change took place. The Gentiles who accepted the Messiah as their personal Saviour are symbolically enjoying themselves in Abraham's bosom. Paul says: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). At the same time the Jews are (in allegorical language) in torment, because they have completely rejected the Messiah. Prophecy has foretold their lot: "And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you" (Leviticus 26:33). Therefore a gulf separates them from each other, and this gulf is unbelief and disobedience (see Romans 11:20, 23).

The main reason why Jesus used allegorical language as He presented His object lesson in this parable was because in those days some of the pagan ideas about the state of the dead were believed by some. The heathen believed in the consciousness of the soul after death, and also believed in the existence of a burning hell. Therefore Jesus used these beliefs of His time to illustrate His object lesson. One of the sects of the Jews did not believe in the resurrection, neither in the existence of angels, nor in the future life. They inclined their hearts to their cherished ideas, the doctrines of the heathen, and the Lord answered them according to the multitude of their idols (see Ezekiel 14:4). Jesus met them on their own ground. This is what the Spirit of Prophecy says:

"In this parable Christ was meeting the people on their own ground. The doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection was held by many of those who were listening to Christ's words. The Saviour knew of their ideas, and He framed His parable so as to inculcate important truths through these preconceived opinions." [1]

These two men, the rich man and Lazarus, represent two classes of people on earth.

"Lazarus represents the suffering poor who believe in Christ." [2]

The rich man represents those who seek all things of this world and expect that the kingdom of God be added unto them. "The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus shows how the two classes represented by these men are estimated in the unseen world." [3]

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus clearly teaches us that no change takes place in man after death. This is why the wise king Solomon said: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). There can be no activity whatsoever in the grave, and no communication between the living and the dead.

"Christ desires His hearers to understand that it is impossible for men to secure the salvation of the soul after death. 'Son', Abraham is represented as answering, 'remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you can not; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.' Thus Christ represented the hopelessness of looking for a second probation. This life is the only time given to man in which to prepare for eternity." [4]

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus made reference to the words of Moses and the other prophets which ought to be heard. They tell us what we should do in order to be saved. There is no other way of salvation but to hear the words of the prophets, because they point us to Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. If one does not listen to the words of the prophets, there is no hope for him. He would not listen even to an angel, nor to one who would come from the dead.

In seances the dead appear and claim to be deceased relatives or friends. We know that this is witchcraft. Satan and his angels do appear, personifying the dead, to deceive the people. But the faithful, obedient people of God will not be deceived.

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:19, 20).

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus teaches us also that we should be patient, suffer all things on this earth, and look forward to the time when all our earthly troubles will be over. If we stand every test and wait patiently, the Lord will give us the reward at His coming. Then, and not before, will all receive their reward according to their deeds. R

References:

1 *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 263.
2 Ibid., p. 262.
3 Ibid., p. 266.
4 Ibid., p. 263.

The Everlasting Gospel Echoes on Mt. Everest

BY M. NATHARAJAN

Most of us have at some time experienced a feeling of anxiety at the perils of entering a new area. As missionaries, we enter new areas to obey the word of our Master who declares: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Matthew 24:14). When this responsibility is resting on us, we realize that no corner of the world is to be left without a chance to receive the present truth.

In the east, one of the countries yet untouched by the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement message was Nepal. The light of the angel of Revelation 18 is to go to the remotest parts of the earth. As far as the living Truth is concerned, Nepal is in a very remote area of the east. Though the highest mountain peak of the world is in Nepal, spiritual darkness continues to cover the people of this country and keeps out the light. Hinduism is recognized as the state religion, and the spreading of other faiths is prohibited by law. Since the ancient past, Buddhism has also been simultaneously practiced by a sect of people here, but its development has been diminished by Hindu domination. The Hindus have temples for worship in each and every street of their towns. The people from other religions are not respected or treated well by the Hindu masses. My observation in this country made me come to the conclusion that even more than older people, the young people are very particular in basing their life on Hindu principles. They are very vigorous in their religious actions and reactions.

Machapuchare Peak in the Himalayas

Country men

A common means of transportation

Except for an old Roman Catholic Church building in the capital city of Kathmandu, we found no other church building. Since Nepal became a democratic country in 1991, the Christians are entitled to practice their faith in the name of religious freedom, but they are not allowed to convert others nor to construct church buildings.

A few Christians are having their Sabbath services underground. A pastor who conducted a baptismal service in a remote village was arrested by the police when the young people of that area complained about his activities.

I myself was threatened by a group of young people when I was going for a walk one evening. Since they were speaking in the Nepali language, I could not understand more than half of what they said to me. They tried to force me not to utter any Bible verses in Nepali. As a long silence was my answer, they put a Tilak (a red mark) on my forehead and left me there. Though the Nepalis have been keeping Saturday as their holiday, they knew nothing about the holiness of this day. To

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them the last day of the week is just a work holiday. Sunday is a working day for them throughout this country.

In the midst of this situation, the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement's message was carried to these people. The Lord blessed me with wisdom and energy which could be fully used here for His cause. There are forests everywhere. It is very dangerous for us to travel through these dense jungles. If anyone does, he may be robbed of his valuables or harmed by wild beasts. There are few good roads and few modes of transportation in this forest area. But in these forests I saw humble, simple and innocent souls who knew nothing about the truth. Since they are living in darkness, their souls are longing to have light. The living light shown to them is eagerly accepted.

I stayed in a corner of this jungle and prayed earnestly. This prayer was answered by the Saviour by speaking in a young man's heart to accompany me to go around to meet the longing ones and translate the message carried to them in the Nepali language. From that day on we joined together and worked for our Master.

Satan tried to discourage us by causing an incident before we even began our work in the jungle. A tiger entered into the house of our neighbor and charged on the eleven people who were living there. They all were fighting with the beast for their life. Though they were able to chase the beast away, all were very badly wounded, most of them lost parts of their bodies. But even after witnessing this scene, we entered the jungle with prayer and the power of the Word.

We observed even in the forest many seats of Satan's resting place, which are nothing but the worshiping places of idols. We visited many villages where we could find fertile soil in which we could plant the Living Tree. We recalled what our beloved prophetess declared: "The churches must arouse, and not sit down at ease, merely enjoying the sermons. Light is beaming all around them; let this light shine forth as a lamp that burneth. Let men enter the work, and let the money God has lent His stewards be invested. Those who can work for God's cause should break loose from their home attachments, sell their farms, and give themselves either to home or foreign missions. You have no time to spend in contention over little matters. Go to work, and that which may now seem obscure, will become clear. There are fields close to your own doors and also in foreign lands, that are ripening for the harvest. The Lord calls for volunteers now. Go forth, workers for God, weeping, bearing precious seed; for doubtless you will return with rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you. Your prayers and tears must accompany your labors, that the unholy traits of your own character may not mar the sacred work of God. Depend less upon what you can do, even through your best efforts, and more on what God can do for you in every effort for His name's glory." [1]

"The Lord calls for volunteers now. Go forth, workers for God, weeping, bearing precious seed; for doubtless you will return with rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you."

This statement encouraged and comforted us in our efforts to yield, by God's grace, what is soon to amount to a dozen good fruits. We opened the Word and gradually fed the people with the spiritual food their longing souls needed. This was received with joy and happiness. "Let us rejoice that work which God can approve has been done in foreign fields. Let us lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving for the results of the work abroad. And still our General, who never makes a mistake, says to us, 'Advance; enter new territory; lift the standard in every land. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:1).' " [2]

The Hindu brothers started to instigate the police to watch over our activities. But the Lord put an iron curtain between these police officers and His servants and kept His children undisturbed in their efforts. Then another incident was sent to try and discouraged us a little. Some Christian brothers from another denomination tried to show a film about the life of Jesus Christ to the village people. The people of that area immediately informed the police about this film. The police officers came and arrested ten of them and put them behind bars. Their machines and other equipment were confiscated by the officers. But we continued to do our work without any hindrance from anyone.

Under such conditions we have to remember the counsel of Paul to the Ephesians: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt

about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:10–18).

Slowly we have been giving Bible studies to a small group of twelve persons longing for light. We are sure the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement's message is now reaching the hearts of these humble souls that are high in the Himalayan Mountains. This small group will be ready for baptism within a few weeks of my writing this. God calls everyone of us and says, "Son, go work to day in my vineyard" (Matthew 21: 28). Our work is to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God.

"But while we trust in God, no one should be presumptuous; and that we may not take an unwise course, we should pray constantly. We should not rush into danger unless God sends us there; nor should we call our brethren cowards because they are cautious in their plans that they may not unnecessarily provoke the rulers and powers of the earth. What was the strength of those who in the past have suffered imprisonment and death for Christ's sake?—It was union with God, union with the Holy Spirit, union with Christ. They had fellowship with God and with His Son, and the multitude that believed were of one mind and one soul. We may safely seek to be of one accord in doctrine and spirit, and if this were done, we would be in harmony with God's will. If selfishness and pride and vanity and evil surmising were put away, we would become strong in God, and the door of our heart would be open for the entrance of Christ; the baptism of the Holy Ghost would fall upon us, and we should be filled with all the fullness of God." [3]

With the same trust, we are continuing our work in Nepal with the guidance of our Lord. Though we are not permitted to construct a building for worship, we as temples of God can carry the living truth to every corner of Nepal so that the people longing for light can receive it fully in order for them to obtain salvation. Nepal is divided thus: Kathmandu, Pokhra, and Surkhet Valleys. These valleys are filled with satanic influence, which is the shadow of death. But the Lord is encouraging us by His word: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

We are thankful to the Lord that the message of reformation has reached this Himalayan range. The highest Truth has been echoing on the highest mountain peak of this world. May God bless our efforts and missionary zeal.

References:

1 *The Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885.
2 *Gospel Workers*, p. 470.
3 *The Review and Herald*, April 22, 1890.

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North American Region & Others

Baptism of eight souls, Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A., May 2002

Bible Workers' Seminar, Luanda, Angola, February 2002

Chapel in Stratham, Australia, December 2001

Brethren in Providence, RI, U.S.A, August 2001

Chapel in San Fernando, El Salvador, March 2002

European Region & Others

Baptism, Madrid, Spain, June 2001

Brethren in Malaga, Spain, May 2002

Brethren in Barcelona, Spain, May 2002

Delegates, Philippines, May 2002

Delegates, Indonesia, May 2002

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Growing as Golden Corn

A healthy plant and a Christian child alike will thrive in the life-giving power of God.

Have you ever planted corn? How beautiful it is to see the tiny green shoots spring forth from the sprouting seeds! How sad you feel if big, black crows come and snatch some away before they even have a chance to grow up. It's even sadder than finding a few little white worms wiggling around in the corn when it is ready to eat. Instead, how joyous it is to reap a good ear of fresh, sweet corn—blessed by God and saved from all the problems that destroyers can bring!

Jesus understood these things, and used the corn plant to teach us of His own life: "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28).

"In both His physical and His spiritual nature [Jesus] followed the divine order of growth illustrated by the plant, as He wishes all youth to do. Although He was the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, He became a babe in Bethlehem, and for a time represented the helpless infant in its mother's care. In childhood He did the works of an obedient child. He spoke and acted with the wisdom of a child and not of a man, honoring His parents and carrying out their wishes in helpful ways, according to the ability of a child. But at each stage of His development He was perfect, with the simple, natural grace of a sinless

life. The sacred record says of His childhood, 'The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.' And of His youth it is recorded, 'Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man' (Luke 2:40, 52)." [1]

Do you want to be a healthy, fruitful plant as the young Jesus was? Stay on your guard, because Satan is standing by like a squawking crow, ready to stop you from growing in grace. Like an insect pest, he tries to eat away at your faith by making little things bother and discourage you. Don't let his temptations crowd out the sunshine of God's presence or block the refreshing dew of Jesus' love from keeping you in good cheer!

"When the sister is tempted to break out into a fretful, fault-finding strain, I would say, Stop, ask yourself what good result will your words produce? Will they make the little brother or sister any better? or will they plant in their little breasts bitter, unhappy feelings? Then say to yourself, I will try to speak just as sweetly and pleasantly as I can. It will act like a charm. You may not see the good results in a moment, but every time you check this fretful, fault-finding spirit, it will give you grace to stand against the next temptation. Persevere. Don't be discouraged if you do fail at first. If the tongue goes in its wonted course a few times when you are not on your guard, do not give up the battle. Go to God, and often plead with Him for strength. It will be given. Jesus has promised to hear the needy when they cry. Claim the promise; it will be verified. Try in the strength of the Lord to cast a sunshine in the family. There are no shadows in heaven. All is happiness. There will be no fretful ones there; no unhappy looks; no unkind words; but every countenance will be radiant with joy. In heaven there will be an eternal sunshine." [2]

References:

[1] *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 83.
[2] *The Youth's Instructor*, May 1, 1859.