



The Reformation Herald

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Vol. XLV, NO. 3

- **The Family Altar**
- **The Love of God Revealed**
- **PENDING: Your Case in Court (3)**
- **The Sealing of God's People (14)—Objections Answered**
- **Our Covenant With God in Action**

Who Will Finish the Work?

3 Editorial

A High Calling.

4 The Family Altar

The world tries to tear down this altar. God calls us to restore it!

7 The Love of God Revealed

God has written for us a transcript of His character of love.

10 Our Covenant With God in Action

The new covenant provides power and self-discipline.

13 PENDING: Your Case in Court (3)

A sobering thought—a time to reform.

16 The Sealing of God's People (14)

Objections Answered (3).

19 Who Will Finish the Work?

The time is ripe. Are we ready to work together?

22 Worldwide Pictorial News

A picture is worth a thousand words.

24 Children's Corner

The Creator of Clouds.



"Nature is the servant of her Creator. God does not annul His laws or work contrary to them; but He is continually using them as His instruments. Nature testifies of an intelligence, a presence, an active energy, that works in and through her laws. There is in nature the continual working of the Father and the Son. Christ says, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work' (John 5:17)."

—Christian Education, pp. 194, 195.

the Reformation Herald

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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."

—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 488.

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A High Calling

A soldier in the army of Alexander the Great was also named Alexander. He was not as brave as Alexander the Great, but rather was accused of cowardly actions. He was brought before Alexander the Great, who asked him what was his name. To this the man replied softly, "Alexander." The ruler roared, "I cannot hear you." The man repeated his name a little louder now. The monarch thundered, "I cannot hear you." The process was repeated one more time, after which Alexander the Great commanded, "Either you change your name or your conduct."

We are not in a dreamland of inaction. We are soldiers of Christ, enlisted in the work of showing our loyalty to Him who has redeemed us. We who are called and are made partakers of His salvation must reflect Christ. Are we following Christ with unwavering loyalty, keeping His life of perfect obedience, of purity and self-sacrifice ever before us that by beholding we may become changed into His image? Do we strive to imitate His fidelity? We are not to follow Christ erratically or impulsively, only when it is for our benefit. We must choose to follow Him. In our daily life we must follow His example, as a flock trustfully follows its shepherd.

The apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians, Chapter 3 verses 13, 14, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Our high calling is an upward call from God to Christlikeness. In the process of becoming Christlike

(Romans 8:28), we acknowledge every good thing that results in us as coming through Him (Philemon 1:6). Our obedience in this process causes in our life an outflow of works and fruits of righteousness to the glory of God. Christ says, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16).

We are called by Christ to be sons and daughters of God, to reveal a Christlike character. It is wonderful that He wants us to be His children. We are called to do His will for our lives, and He says for us not to be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17). We are called to be holy, and to be representatives of Christ, to carefully avoid giving the impression that it is of little significance whether or not we retain the peculiar features of our faith. We have a very serious responsibility to take a firmer stand for truth and righteousness. We ought to make the line of delineation highlighted with distinctive clearness. It is sad to note that the border between the good and the evil is becoming finely thin in many places. The peculiarity once seen as noteworthy is unnoticed today. More and more common customs and social practices of the day are finding an entering wedge into the church today. As a people we must resist this evil, fight out the enemy and uplift the standard of truth and stand for the right.

"We are called to be the Lord's special people in a much higher sense than many have realized. The world lies in wickedness, and God's people are to come out of the world, and be separate. They are to be free

from worldly customs and worldly habits. They are not to accord with worldly sentiments, but are to stand out distinct, as the Lord's peculiar people, earnest in all their service. They are to have no fellowship with the works of darkness."¹

"We are to make no compromise with the habits and practices of the world. We are to stand upon the platform of eternal truth, pure, unadulterated truth. In this we may be considered singular, but this is the lot of all who make Christ their portion. Every worker in medical missionary lines is to make that work a success by living in connection with the Great Worker."²

We should not imitate that which the world does; neither should we adopt that which is not in harmony with our principle. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Elijah cried, "if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). We must put forth an influence that would bear witness to the power of heavenly principles and must present evidence of a change of principle. Unless we maintain the line of separation between the church and the world and carefully preserve principle, assimilation to the world will be the result.

Therefore, I urge you, brethren and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Be not conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and demonstrate what God's will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will, says the apostle Paul in Romans 12:1, 2. R

References:

¹ *This Day With God*, p. 248.

² *Medical Ministry*, p. 161.

THE FAMILY ALTAR

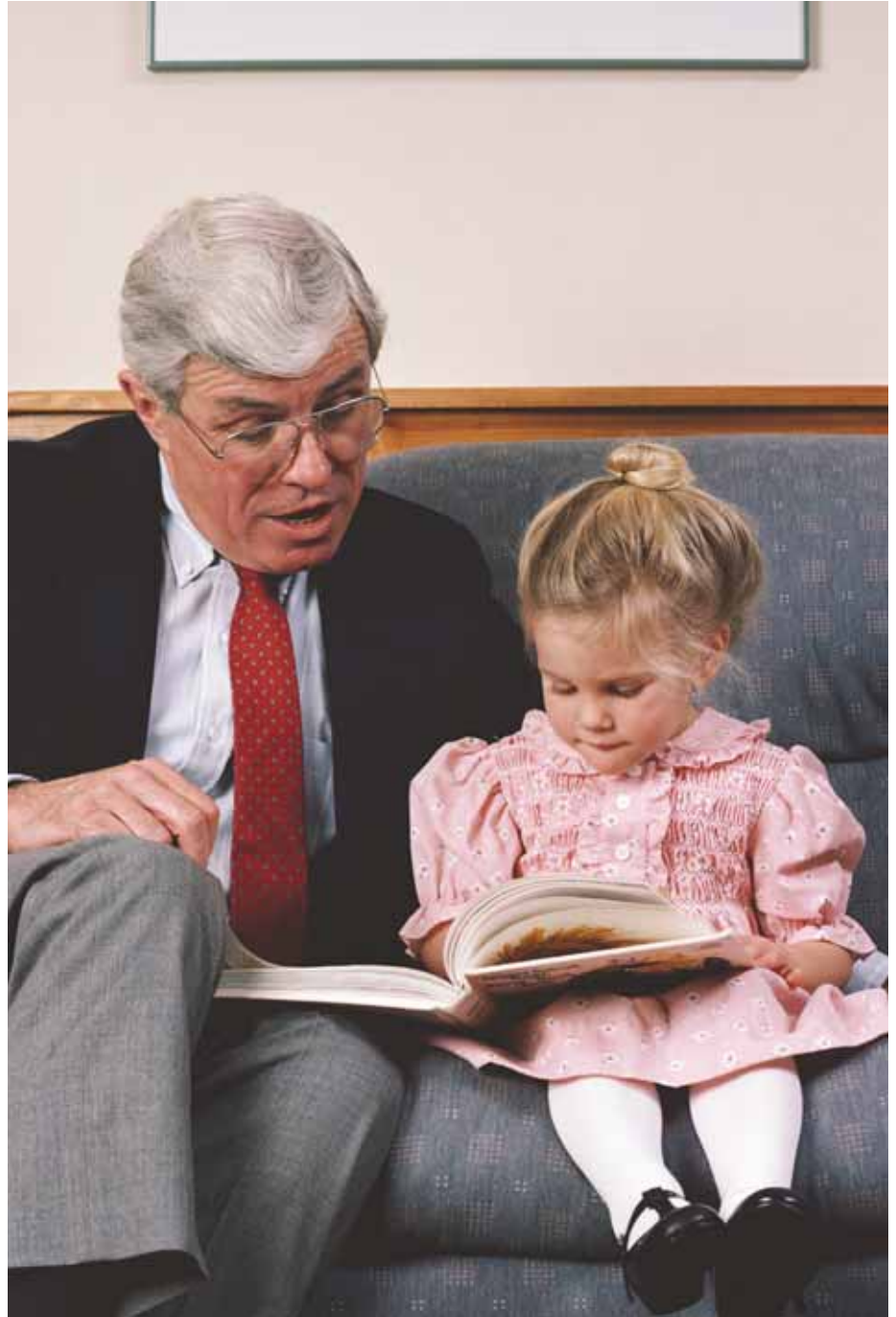
BY HOMERO PAREDES

Several years ago a minister went to visit a family that was interested in his church. Immediately after he arrived, the minister noticed on the expression of their faces that something was wrong. Within minutes and after preliminary greetings, the husband told the minister that he wanted to speak to him alone for a few minutes, which he accepted. The husband told the minister the terrible condition of his home. With tears in his eyes the husband said: "Please help us; my house is nothing but hell."

What a sad picture! How terrible it is to live in a home like that! But what is the reason for contention and division in the family? The reason is because Christ is not the center of the family. "In every family where Christ abides, a tender interest and love will be manifested for one another; not a spasmodic love expressed only in fond caresses, but a love that is deep and abiding."¹

The first family

When we read the story of the first human family and their beautiful home in Paradise, we long for the day when God will unite the family on earth with the family of heaven. When God created all things He produced so many beautiful things for enjoyment. A garden home with all that is pleasant to the eye! Then He added the finishing touch: the family unit. All that surrounded the Eden pair was tangible evidence of God's love. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and



have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

The earth was to be replenished by the multiplication of the human family through the formation of homes. The Lord said, "Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished" (Jeremiah 29:6). God wants Christian homes to be a little heaven on earth. But how can we have a heavenly life on this earth?

Heaven on earth

When our first parents were cast away from Paradise as a result of their disobedience, they took with them the divine institution of the family. Had they maintained the sacredness of this institution as it was originally designed, it would have provided for them a pure and happy home atmosphere. "The home circle should be regarded as a sacred place, a symbol of heaven, a mirror in which to reflect ourselves."²

"Tender affection should ever be cherished between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters. Every hasty word should be checked, and there should not be even the appearance of the lack of love one for another."³

"God designs that the families of earth shall be a symbol of the family in heaven. Christian homes, established and conducted in accordance with God's plan, are among His most effective agencies for the formation of Christian character and for the advancement of His work."⁴

How can we bring that heavenly sweet atmosphere to our earthly homes? "The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this [marriage] institution what God designed it should be—an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven."⁵

A sacred circle

The happiness of the home depends upon all members of the family. Parents are to share love and sympathy among themselves and their children. They are to surround their little flock with the atmosphere of heaven. The life of Jesus in His early years is a lesson for those who want to bring this sweet, heavenly fragrance into the home life. In His humble earthly home of Nazareth He set the perfect example.

"During all these secluded years His life flowed out in currents of sympathy and helpfulness. His unselfishness and patient endurance, His courage and faithfulness, His resistance of temptation, His unfailing peace and quiet joyfulness, were a constant inspiration. He brought a pure, sweet atmosphere into the home, and His life was as leaven working amidst the elements of society. None said that He had wrought a miracle; yet virtue—the healing, life-giving power of love—went out from Him to the tempted, the sick, and the disheartened. In an unobtrusive way, from His very childhood, He ministered to others, and because of this, when He began His public ministry, many heard Him gladly."⁶

The family altar

If we desire to bring to our homes the atmosphere of heaven, we must invite daily the presence of Christ. He will gladly bless us with His presence and the holy angels will be our sweet companions. But in order to have the divine presence we must build an altar. The example of Abraham in building altars whenever he went is an object lesson for all Christians. "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of

the Lord" (Genesis 12:7, 8). What was his purpose for building those altars? He built them to call upon the name of the Lord.

"Those who profess the name of Christ should not neglect to establish the family altar, where they can seek God daily with all the earnestness with which they would seek him in a religious assembly. They should make the season of family prayer a season of special interest, and in this way they will be obtaining an education that will fit them to become a benefit to the church. You may obtain a knowledge of how to serve God acceptably in the home."⁷

The family relationship

There is another important lesson we can learn from Abraham and his family. It is the relationship between parents and children. The Lord said about Abraham: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

"The best way to educate children to respect their father and mother is to give them the opportunity of seeing the father offering kindly attentions to the mother and the mother rendering respect and reverence to the father. It is by beholding love in their parents that children are led to obey the fifth commandment and to heed the injunction, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right' (Ephesians 6:1)."⁸

To have parents that fear the Lord is more precious than silver and gold, for its influence not only has an effect upon our earthly life but also on the future eternal one. "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like

olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord” (Psalm 128:1–4).

God desires that every home may be a place of rest for the soul. Parents are responsible to make of their homes a piece of heaven on earth. “Let parents devote the evenings to their families. Lay off care and perplexity with the labors of the day. The husband and father would gain much if he would make it a rule not to mar the happiness of his family by bringing his business troubles home to fret and worry over. . . .

“Let the evenings be spent as happily as possible. Let home be a place where cheerfulness, courtesy, and love exist. This will make it attractive to the children. If the parents are continually borrowing trouble, are irritable and faultfinding, the children partake of the same spirit of dissatisfaction and contention, and home is the most miserable place in the world. The children find more pleasure among strangers, in reckless company, or in the street, than at home. All this might be avoided if temperance in all things were practiced, and patience cultivated. Self-control on the part of all the members of the family will make home almost a paradise. Make your rooms as cheerful as possible. Let the children find home the most attractive place on earth. Throw about them such influences that they will not seek for street companions, nor think of the haunts of vice except with horror. If the home life is what it should be, the habits formed there will be a strong defense against the assaults of temptation when the young shall leave the shelter of home for the world.”⁹

Words and deportment

Fathers and mothers, let us obey the principles of Christianity in our homes. These principles are revealed in the word of God. “Let parents in their words and deportment give to their children an example of what they desire them to be. Let purity in speech and true Christian courtesy

be constantly maintained. Let there be no encouragement to sin, no evil speaking or evil surmising. Teach the children and youth to respect themselves, to be true to principle, true to God. Teach them to respect and obey the law of God and the rules of the home.”¹⁰

Our conversation in our homes should be such that we hurt none of the other family members. We should be polite, truthful, honest, respectful to one another—knowing that respect is not something freely given, it is something earned. The apostle Paul counseled Timothy, his son in the faith, to set a good example for the believers. He says: “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” (1 Timothy 4:12). But how can we observe a Christian attitude under all circumstances of the home life, especially when correction is necessary? “In performing the delicate duty of reproving and admonishing, there will be danger of injuring feelings, unless it be done with the greatest tenderness and care. The best models of character are liable to errors and mistakes, and great care should be exercised that too much is not made of little things.”¹¹

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Order and discipline

Inspiration tells us that the angels are not authorized to bless disorder and confusion. If we desire the company of the holy angels, we must practice strict order and discipline in our homes. This order includes: to have regular meal times, share the burdens of the home, set times for worship, regular hours to sleep, a time for personal study, for recreation, for work, and the like. By observing order and discipline we avoid strife, contention, unkind words, irritation, and many other evils. On many occasions patience is lost because an item was not where it should have been.

We must also understand that “order is Heaven’s first law.”¹²

“One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached. Such a family gives evidence that the parents have been successful in following God’s directions, and that their children will serve Him in the church.”¹³

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, we are the people that profess to believe in the restoration of the family—the people that will eventually manifest to this perishing world the fullness of God’s love! What are you doing to share this love and make of your home a piece of heaven? Please remember that the attributes of a well-disciplined Christian family do not come by accident. These come by earnest effort in following God’s blueprint of education. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and 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” (Deuteronomy 6:5–7).

When we as a people consecrate ourselves to the Lord and do the appointed work in our families, God will recognize it by the great outpouring of His Spirit upon the church. R

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- ¹ *The Review and Herald*, February 2, 1886.
- ² *The Adventist Home*, p. 177.
- ³ *The Signs of the Times*, November 14, 1892.
- ⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 430.
- ⁵ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 65.
- ⁶ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 350.
- ⁷ *The Review and Herald*, October 22, 1889.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, November 15, 1892.
- ⁹ *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, pp. 65, 66.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 186.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 55.
- ¹² *The Review and Herald*, June 10, 1902.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1899.



The Love of God Revealed

BY GAIL MOTTON

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:7, 8).

It is hard to understand why some people shun the law of God or want to do away with it, when the law is simply a transcript of God's character, and His character is love, for God is love (1 John 4:8). His law was given in love to us; therefore it is important to understand that obedience to the law of God is required from every individual, and it is designed to guide us continually along the way of life.

The character of God

"The law of God, being a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, must forever endure 'as a faithful witness in heaven. 'Not one command has been annulled; not a jot or tittle has been changed. . . . 'For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.'" "All his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever" (Psalms 119:89; 111:7, 8)."

The character of God is love.

"God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His crea-

tures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love.

*'His glory is His children's good;
His joy, His tender Fatherhood.'*

"He tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. 'In His borrowed goodness good,' we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His.

"Jesus said, Be perfect as *your Father* is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells 'all the fullness of the Godhead bodily' (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest 'in our mortal flesh' (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for 'the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul' (Psalm 19:7, margin). Through love 'the righteousness of the law' will be 'fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Romans 8:4)."

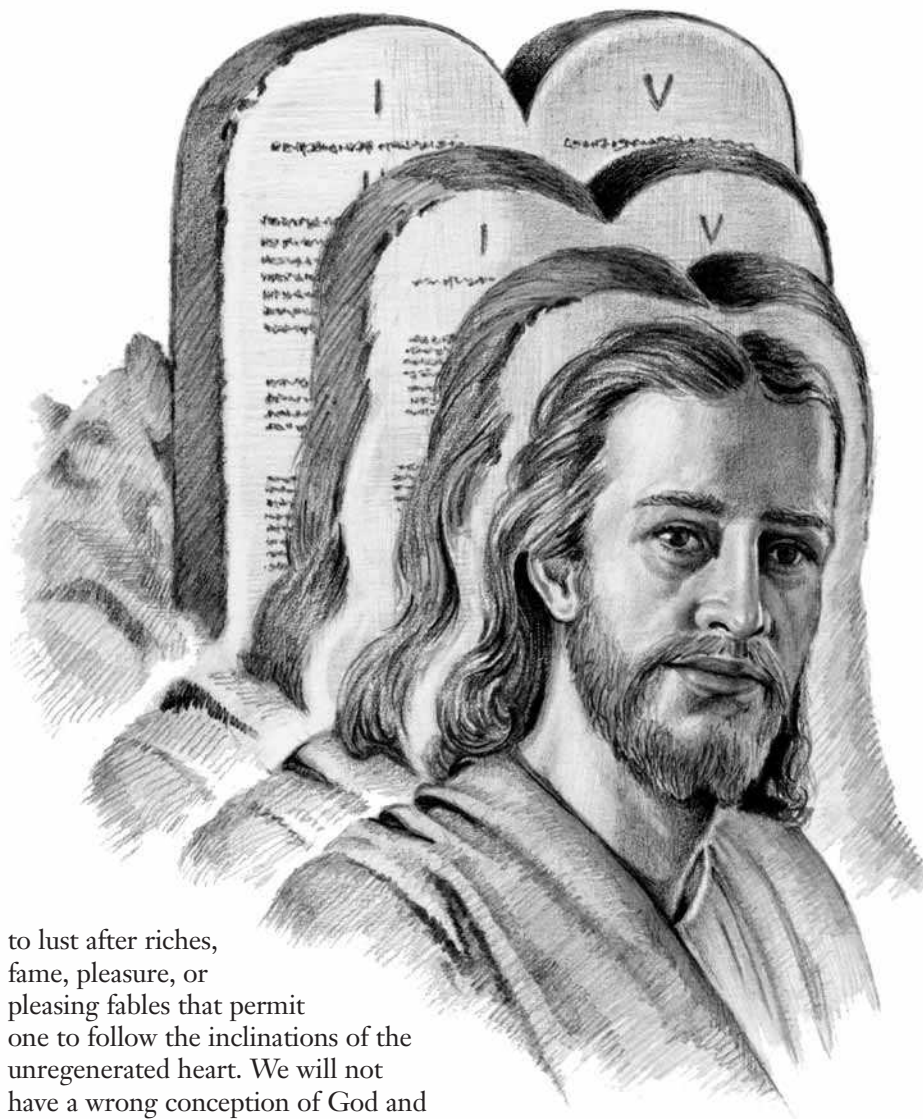
The ten commandment law is God's character in written form. It is written so that we can understand it, and that Jesus came to show us what the law looked like when made up in human form. We can see that God's character can never change, and neither can His law, for it is His character in human language.

The first four commandments (love to God)

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The love of Jesus in the soul will banish all desire to worship idols. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:37, 38). When we seriously consider this, we should allow no separation of our affection towards God. Our supreme delight should be in Him.

The first four commandments encompass love to God; and Him only are we to serve. "Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god."

When loving God supremely, graven images will have no place in our heart. Our eyes will not rest upon outward shrines. We will not choose



to lust after riches, fame, pleasure, or pleasing fables that permit one to follow the inclinations of the unregenerated heart. We will not have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, which so many have and are truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal.

“The prevailing spirit of our time is one of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of avowed illumination because of a knowledge of truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. Human theories are exalted and placed where God and His law should be. Satan tempts men and women to disobey, with the promise that in disobedience they will find liberty and freedom that will make them as gods. There is seen a spirit of opposition to the plain word of God, of idolatrous exaltation of human wisdom above divine revelation. Men have allowed their minds to become so darkened and confused by conformity to worldly customs and influences that they seem to

have lost all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error.”⁷⁴

When the love of God moves upon the heart, we will love to talk of Him and talk about Him to others. Our thoughts would be upon heavenly things. We will love to hold conversations that give reverence to God.

God forbids us to use His name “in a light or careless manner, without regard to its awful significance. By the thoughtless mention of God in common conversation, by appeals to Him in trivial matters, and by the frequent and thoughtless repetition of His name, we dishonor Him. ‘Holy and reverend is His name’ (Psalm 111:9). All should meditate upon His majesty, His purity and holiness, that the heart may be

impressed with a sense of His exalted character; and His holy name should be uttered with reverence and solemnity.”⁷⁵

When we pray in Christ’s name, “it means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works.”⁷⁶

Love to God means to be loyal to Him. The Lord says, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God” (Exodus 20:8–10). God loves us so much that He has given us the Sabbath to come aside to be with Him. Resting from the toil of the week, He speaks to our hearts, saying, “Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest a while.” “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mark 6:31; Matthew 11:28).

When we have love for God, we will honor the Sabbath. We will avoid doing things our own way, finding our own pleasure or speaking our own words. “Of the Sabbath, God said, Ye shall not defile it, but keep it holy. ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy’ (Exodus 20:8). As the tree of knowledge was the test of Adam’s obedience, so the fourth command is the test that God has given to prove the loyalty of all His people. The experience of Adam is to be a warning to us so long as time shall last. It warns us not to receive any assurance from the mouth of men or of angels that will detract one jot or tittle from the sacred law of Jehovah.”⁷⁷

The last six commandments (love to our neighbor)

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Galatians 5:14). “On the assurance of the love of God toward us, Jesus enjoins love to one another, in one comprehensive principle covering all the relations of human fellowship.”⁷⁸

To show love to our neighbor we are to “owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:8–10).

When we consider our neighbors, we need to regard how we can help them, or how much we can give. “The standard of our obligation to others is found in what we ourselves would regard as their obligation to us.”⁹

When we see our neighbors in need of clothing, we are to clothe them; when sick, to visit them; in prison, to go to them. When standing before the Lord at the great Judgment Day, “Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:37–40).

“In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. This is the true rule of honesty. It is another expression of the law. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’ (Matthew 22:39). And it is the substance of the teaching of the prophets. It is a principle of heaven, and will be developed in all who are fitted for its holy companionship.”¹⁰

When speaking to others, we should be very selective of our words, not to injure or to hurt a soul, “for out of the abundance of

the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34). For by injuring others we injure Christ, our Redeemer, as well as ourselves.

“When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings you are brought under the influence of evil angels and invite their presence and their control.”¹¹

The law shows the sinner’s need of Christ

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“When the mind is drawn to the cross of Calvary, Christ by imperfect sight is discerned on the shameful cross. Why did He die? In consequence of sin. What is sin? The transgression of the law. Then the eyes are open to see the character of sin. The law is broken but cannot pardon the transgressor. It is our schoolmaster, condemning to punishment. Where is the remedy? The law drives us to Christ, who was hanged upon the cross that He might be able to impart His righteousness to fallen, sinful man and thus present men to His Father in His righteous character.”¹²

In love for us, Christ died so that we might live in perfect obedience to His law.

The whole duty of man

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

“Our duty to obey this law is to be the burden of the last message of mercy to the world. God’s law is not a new thing. It is not holiness created, but holiness made known. It is a code of principles expressing mercy, goodness, and love. It presents to fallen humanity the character of God, and states plainly the whole duty of man.”¹³

Christ said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

“The ten holy precepts spoken by Christ upon Sinai’s mount were the revelation of the character of God, and made known to the world the fact that He had jurisdiction over the whole human heritage. That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise. ‘This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.’ There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live.”¹⁴

What is the promise to us?

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

What a wonderful promise. Don’t you want to enter in through the gates of Heaven? Jesus waits to welcome you with open arms, saying, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:23). Will you open your heart to God, and allow Him to work in you “to will and to do of his good pleasure,” for Jesus said “without me ye can do nothing” (Philippians 2:13; John 15:5)? Give your heart to God today, so that He can help you keep His commandments, that you may have right to the tree of life.

May God help us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. This is my heart’s desire and prayer for all of us. R

References:

- ¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 434.
- ² *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 77, 78 (author’s emphasis).
- ³ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.
- ⁴ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 178.
- ⁵ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 306, 307.
- ⁶ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.
- ⁷ *The Review and Herald*, August 30, 1898.
- ⁸ *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 134.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 135.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 310.
- ¹² *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 341.
- ¹³ *The Review and Herald*, April 27, 1911.
- ¹⁴ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 53.



Our Covenant With God in Action

BY M. NATARAJAN

The idea of a covenant relationship between God and a king or his people is well attested throughout the history of the ancient near East. The idea of such a covenant was not at all foreign to the Israelites. Thus it is not surprising that the Lord used this concept to depict His own relationship with His people. The plan of salvation is based on a covenant relationship between God and His people. Only those who enter into a covenant with God can be saved. This covenant is confirmed by sacrifice. The psalmist describes the second advent of Christ and cites the command given to the angelic host, the reapers of the gospel harvest: “Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Psalm 50:5).

Bound by a sacrifice

No covenant is binding until it is confirmed by a sacrifice in which each party gives and takes. God sacrificed His only Son, whose death confirmed the everlasting covenant so that “they that have been called

may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15–17, R.V.). Human beings on their part must sacrifice the present world and even forsake all that they have in order to make the covenant binding on their behalf so that they can receive the promised inheritance over which the covenant is made.

Biblical tradition mentions covenants contracted between God and Noah (Genesis 6:18; 9:8–17). These are clearly referred to as covenants, requiring a certain obligation on the part of Noah and certain promises from the Lord. This is a prelude to biblical covenants where the promise plays an important role.

The Lord contracted a covenant with Abraham, with a strong emphasis on the promise. The same God also made a covenant with Moses as mediator at Sinai. Here we can see a new covenant in which the law is read and has detailed description of the necessary stipulations. Here the reference to the Promised Land is taken up. Later, another covenant is formed with David, a covenant which is mainly promissory.

The failure of the old covenant

The scriptures speak of two covenants called the “old” and the “new,” which sustain somewhat the same relationship to each other as the old and the new birth. The outstanding text in the Old Testament that mentions these two covenants is Jeremiah 31:31–34, which is quoted in Hebrews 8:6–10. The “first” or “old” covenant is so called chiefly because it precedes the “second” or “new” experience. When Cain tried to save himself by the works of his own hands, he tried in a sense to fit unto the old covenant. However, the most outstanding example of the old covenant was the agreement between God and Israel at Mount Sinai as recorded in Exodus 19:3–8. In this covenant the Lord said to Israel: “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. . . . And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.”

God's promises constituted His part of the covenant, but they were made on condition that the people carry out their promise to keep His law. After the law was spoken from heaven in the hearing of the people, they repeated their promise to obey "all that the Lord hath said" (Exodus 24:7). The whole nation of Israel fully entered into a solemn covenant to obey God's law, but they signally failed because they attempted it in their own strength. This is the chief element in the old covenant wherever and whenever it manifests itself. It is attempting salvation by human effort. The sense of the failure of the old covenant and the reasons for the new are set forth in Hebrews 8:6-9, "Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." Here we are told that the promises of the old covenant were faulty. It is evident that God's promises were good, for "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (2 Peter 3:9). The Lord would have carried out His part of the covenant if the people had kept their promise. "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant," was the condition on which God made His promises. "For finding fault with them" indicates that the fault was with the promises of the people. A faulty promise is one that is not kept. The people did not keep their promise to obey the law, and therefore the entire covenant was made void. Within forty days the same people who so solemnly promised to

obey "all that the Lord has spoken," soon afterward made a golden calf and worshiped it as the god who had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt.

By human efforts, the attempted obedience to a law written on stone, or in the Bible, or on a chart, is the old covenant regardless of the time in the history of the reign of sin. Every person from Cain to our own day who attempts to perfect character and obtain salvation by his or her own works, depending on human promises and resolutions to obey God's law, is under the old covenant.

Better promises

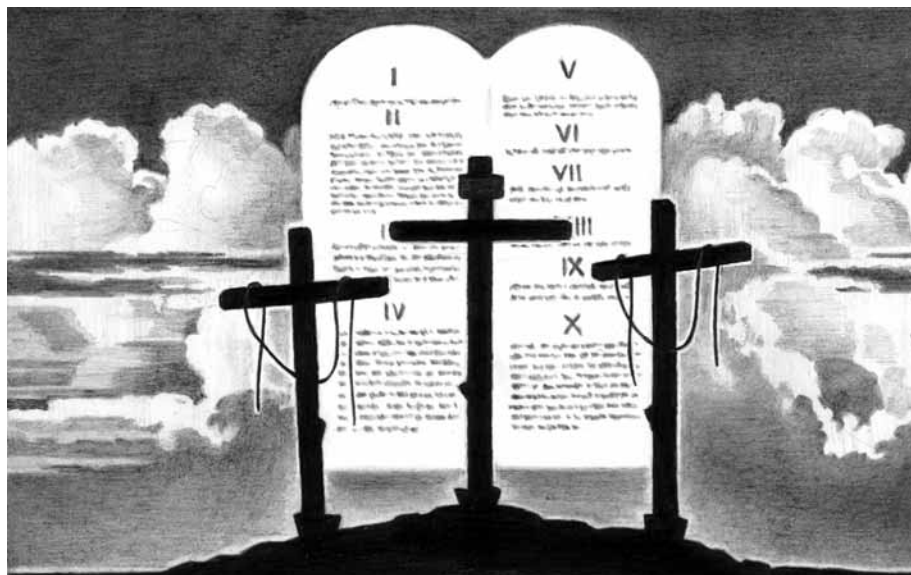
The apostle Paul sets forth the provisions of the new covenant and shows its superiority over the old: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing

as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (Hebrews 8:10; 2 Corinthians 3:2-6).

Both covenants were made with the same people, the chosen of God, called "the house of Israel," and "the house of Judah." Both have to do with the same law; in fact, the Decalogue is the letter or wording of both covenants. The failure of the old covenant has no effect whatsoever on the validity or perpetuity of the law. The only difference is in the promises regarding the keeping of the law which constituted the covenant. The new covenant is called "a better covenant," not because it had to do with a better law, but because it "was established upon better promises."

In the new covenant the Lord promises to write the law, not on tables of stone, but in the mind and heart. In this covenant, humanity makes no promises of obedience in order to obtain the fulfillment of the promises of God. It is the same law written in a different place, a place where it can be kept. It is not right to say that the old covenant was made with the Jews and the new with the Gentiles or that the old covenant was to obey the law and the new abolishes it, freeing human beings from its binding claims.

Under the new covenant, the law that was written on stone is written in the mind and heart, so that its principles become a part of our nature and we "do by nature the things contained in the law" (Romans 2:14).



The new covenant is as old as the plan of salvation. Abel accepted it when he offered the lamb as a faith offering and obtained righteousness by faith. It is therefore called “the everlasting covenant” and “the perpetual covenant,” because it has existed from the beginning and will continue to the end. It is coexistent with “the everlasting gospel.”

A promise for us today

Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is the most important part of the forming of a new covenant. The curse of the old Sinaitic covenant is removed by His crucifixion. He is the new Davidic King on the eternal throne. At once two old covenants were superseded—the curses of the Sinai covenant were removed and the promise of the Davidic covenant fulfilled.

The “new” began with the “old” promise made to Abraham, Moses, and David; and its renewal perpetuated all these promises and more. Just as the Abrahamic and Davidic promises were made directly with each of these men, so the new covenant was made with all the house of Israel and the whole house of Judah:

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I

made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:31–33).

Notice in verse 31 that this new covenant is being made “with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” Does this appear restricted to the pre-Christian era? If so, then so were the promises made to Abraham and David. But herein lies the solution for all of these passages, for the “seed” who would benefit from the Abrahamic and Davidic promises included all believers of all ages. So where the benefits of the new covenant applicable to all believers.

It need only to be noted that the new covenant also was part of that messianic era. Here then was a new footing for an old stalemate. The new covenant was indeed addressed to a revived national Israel of the future; but by virtue of its specific linkage with the Abrahamic and Davidic promises contained in them all, it was nonetheless proper to speak of a Gentile participation then in the future. The Gentiles would be

adopted and grafted into God’s covenant with national Israel.

The vital, victorious experience to crave and cherish

The covenant was broken and must be renewed to come into force again. Under the new covenant, the law that was written on stone is written in the mind and heart, so that its principles become a part of our nature and we “do by nature the things contained in the law” (Romans 2:14).

The place where the law is written constitutes the chief difference between the two covenants. The persons who are under the new covenant are the only ones who can know true righteousness. “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings” (Isaiah 51:7). Christ lived under this experience and therefore delighted to obey God’s law, for that law was within His heart. This is the secret of His life of perfect obedience. He was able to declare, “I have kept my Father’s commandments,” because, as the apostle Peter confirmed, He “did no sin” (John 15:10; 1 Peter 2:22).

“Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Corinthians 6:16).

It is through the Holy Spirit that Christ, the living law, imprints the law on our mind and makes effectual the divine promises of the new covenant. The new covenant ministers life and liberty, while the old covenant ministered bondage and death. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the “exceeding great and precious promises” of the new covenant make us “partakers of the divine nature.” Then there is liberty from the bondage and condemnation of sin, for “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17). The Holy Spirit leads to obedience, and obedience to the law is liberty.

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PENDING: Your Case in Court

Part 3 of 3

BY JEFFREY WIKTOROWSKI

We have examined the biblical evidence supporting the investigative judgment and have seen several key points in the parables of the wedding supper (Matthew 22:1–14) and of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1–13). An investigative judgment is clearly taught in the Scriptures. It has also been shown that this judgment involves those who profess to follow Christ. Those who don't know Him will be lost because they have not availed themselves of the only provision for salvation—Jesus Christ. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).



This judgment must occur before the symbolic marriage, that is before Christ receives His kingdom. Therefore, those who pass the judgment are not present at the “marriage,” but they will have the privilege of attending the marriage supper, while those who do not pass the judgment will not have a second chance.

The standard of the judgment

In the parables presented in Matthew 18:23–35; 25:14–30, Christ showed that our works are to be judged. The same picture is found also in other scriptures: “For God shall bring every work into judg-

ment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works” (Matthew 16:27). “Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12). In the light of what standard will our works be examined?

The apostle Paul says that, as far as ignorance or knowledge is concerned, sinners are divided into two categories: “As many as have sinned without law [like the heathen] shall

also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Romans 2:12). By reading from verse 13 to the end of the chapter, we clearly see that Paul refers to the law of Ten Commandments, which the early Christians inherited as a legacy from the Jews. This is the law that Christ proclaimed on Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38). James calls it “the law of liberty” (Chapter 2:12), because, when we receive Christ (John 14:23; Galatians 2:20), who comes to us with the law in His heart (Psalm 40:7, 8), we walk as He walked (1 John 2:3–6). And, if we follow Christ in obedience to all the commandments of the Decalogue (Matthew 5:17–20; 22:36–40; 23:1–3; Luke 10:25–28; 16:17), we are free from sin (John 8:31–36).

Partial obedience is not acceptable. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” (James 2:10–12). So that we may be able to identify immediately the “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25; 2:8–12; 4:11), which should not be confused with other laws, James mentions two of the commandments of the Decalogue. Christ was very specific in reference to our duty towards all the commandments of the law of God. “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19).

As Christians we should be able to see that we can be free in the proper sense of the word only if we are commandment keepers. “I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts” (Psalm 119:45). Then we will be free, not only from sin, but also from the condemnation of the law. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh,

but after the Spirit. . . . God sending his own Son, . . . condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God.” “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 8:1, 3, 4, 7; 3:31).

A serious question

How close to this standard of judgment are we required to come if we wish to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb? The Bible declares: “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22). “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). Jesus said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). With a deeper understanding of this subject there also comes the realization that man of himself cannot reach the standard of judgment. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). And “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Therefore, “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20).

What is to be done? Where is our hope to endure this judgment? How can we be found blameless when “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6)?

The blotting out of sins in the sanctuary

God provides the assurance that we can be blameless in the judgment even though we have sinned. How? He declares that He will remove our sins from the record in heaven. “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”

(Isaiah 43:25). It is in this way that we can be found sinless.

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith.”¹

Christ imputes His righteousness to the penitent sinner. But though the sinner is forgiven, his sins will not be forgotten until they are blotted out.

The apostle Paul describes the daily sacrifices, which pointed to the forgiveness of sins, and to the yearly service, which pointed to the final blotting out of sins. “Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people” (Hebrews 9:6, 7).

In the daily service the transgressors of the law would enter the courtyard of the temple, place a flawless lamb upon the altar, confess their sins over it, and slay the animal with their own hand. Depending on the class of sin, the priest would either sprinkle the blood in the first apartment of the sanctuary or eat a piece of the flesh. In either case the priest became the sin bearer for the people, and their sins were transferred through the priest into the sanctuary through the sprinkled blood. In this way forgiveness for their transgressions was secured. The lamb represented Jesus and their participation emphasized their faith in His forgiveness.

Once a year there was a special service on the Day of Atonement. “And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atone-

ment for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. . . . And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation” (Leviticus 16:29, 30, 33).

This solemn service represented a work of cleansing in behalf of those who had obtained forgiveness. In other words, the blotting out of sins is promised only to those who have previously gone through an experience of genuine repentance and thorough conversion. This is how, with our consent and cooperation, Christ’s righteousness—justification (righteousness imputed) and sanctification (righteousness imparted)—can become ours.

The message for today is:

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out [in the investigative judgment], so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ” (Acts 3:19, 20, NKJ).

Prior to the second advent

The work of judgment and blotting out of sins must take place prior to the second advent of our Lord, for, when He returns, He brings the reward with Him. He says: “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

Paul writes: “It was . . . necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these [animal sacrifices]; but the heavenly things themselves [are to be purified] with better sacrifices than these. . . . As the high priest entereth into the [most] holy place every year . . . now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to

bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:23, 25, 26–28).

We read in Revelation 11:19: “The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.”

“The announcement that the temple of God was opened in heaven and the ark of His testament was seen points to the opening of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 as Christ entered there to perform the closing work of the atonement.”²

“The announcement, ‘The hour of His judgment is come,’ points to the closing work of Christ’s ministration for the salvation of men.”³

Reformation: a necessity

While the cleansing is going on in the sanctuary above, we need to be cleansed from sin here on earth. Let us give careful consideration to the scripture quoted before—Acts 3:19, 20.

“The lives of all who have believed on Jesus pass in solemn review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate examines the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. From age to age, all who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon written against their names in the books of heaven, and in the closing work of Judgment their sins are blotted out, and they themselves are accounted worthy of eternal life.”⁴

Dear reader, has the thought of the judgment, where you may be found wanting, led you to examine your experience?

Since our works can be no better than filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), how can our heart be cleansed from every defilement? And how can we be assured to have a place among the redeemed whose sins will be blotted

out of the records in the heavenly sanctuary? It is only through surrendering our heart to Jesus and allowing Him to work a thorough reformation in our life with our cooperation. All heaven is interested in our restoration. Therefore, let us look “unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

“There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, ‘These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous’ (1 John 2:1). And do not forget the words of Christ, ‘The Father Himself loveth you’ (John 16:27). He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance.”⁵

Won’t you give your heart to Him today and let Him accomplish this work in your life?

R

References:

¹ *The Faith I Live By*, p. 116.

² *The Great Controversy*, p. 433.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

⁴ *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 309.

⁵ *Steps to Christ*, p. 64.

The Sealing of God's People (14)

Objections Answered (3)

BY A. C. SAS

OBJECTION No. 11

The 144,000 are made up of the Jewish people, because the Bible says that they are from the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (Revelation 7:4-8).

ANSWER

Because the prophecy says that the 144,000 are made up of all the tribes of the children of Israel, we should not understand that they are the literal tribes. Notice the following reasons:

a) In the list of the twelve tribes of Israel in Revelation 7, the tribe of Dan is left out.

b) Of the tribe of Joseph two are included: Joseph and his son Manasseh.

c) The clear distinctions between the original twelve tribes have ceased long ago.

When the apostle James wrote his epistle to the Christians he addressed it to the twelve tribes:

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting" (James 1:1).

To whom did James send his letter? If he sent it to the literal tribes of Israel, we have nothing to do with that letter; it is not for us. But all Christians recognize and accept his epistle as being sent to the Christians, even to us in the end of time, to the spiritual tribes of Israel.

If we keep in mind that by rejecting the Messiah, the literal Jewish nation was rejected, and the Gentiles were grafted in the true olive tree, we will understand that in

Revelation 7, John is speaking of spiritual Israel.

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28, 29). (Read also Romans 9:6-8; Galatians 3:7, 27-29.)

The holy city has twelve foundations and twelve gates, and on the gates are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Revelation 21:12). The twelve tribes are used to represent the whole Israel of God, and the repetition of 12 x 12,000 suggests the distinguishing characteristics of the tribes of Israel. S. N. Haskell explains this as follows:

"The redeemed of the Lord are an innumerable company, which no man can number; but among that multitude is one separate company, who are numbered and are designated by their number—one hundred and forty-four thousand. This company is composed of twelve different divisions, each containing twelve thousand redeemed souls; and each division bears the name of the twelve tribes of Israel. The list given in Revelation varies somewhat from the list of the twelve sons of Jacob, as Dan is omitted, and the extra division is given the name of Manasseh, Joseph's eldest son."¹

OBJECTION No. 12

The 144,000 recognize their friends at the first general resurrec-

tion. Who are these friends? If they live contemporarily, can some of them be in the great multitude and the others in the number of 144,000?

ANSWER

The above objection is based on the following quotation:

"The 144,000 shouted, 'Alleluia!' as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air" (EW 16).

We have seen in previous chapters that the remnant of the period of Philadelphia are sealed and counted as members of the 144,000. It is remarkable that the 144,000 do not recognize "their friends" at the partial resurrection, but at the first general resurrection.

Sister White knew many who were preaching the gospel of the kingdom before 1844. She knew William Miller personally:

"At the age of thirteen I heard William Miller deliver his second course of lectures in Portland, Maine."²

We understand from our study that those who are resurrected at the partial resurrection are those who have died in the faith of the third angel's message (GC 637). It is obvious that Sister White, Bro. and Sis. Nichols, Sister Hastings mentioned in 2SM 263, and others, are expected to be resurrected in the partial resurrection at the voice of God. But when will W. Miller be resurrected? We read thus:

“So also, I saw that William Miller erred as he was soon to enter the heavenly Canaan, in suffering his influence to go against the truth. Others led him to this; others must account for it. But angels watch the precious dust of this servant of God, and he will come forth at the sound of the last trump.”³

Those who died in the faith of the third angel’s message who had known William Miller and are resurrected at the voice of God, being included in the 144,000, will recognize him when he comes forth from the grave at the sound of Jesus’ silver trumpet (*EW* 16).

Besides W. Miller, the names of two other persons are mentioned in *Early Writings*. They were known to the early Adventists. Of them we read:

“We all went under the tree and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping.”⁴

“In the account of her first vision Mrs. White makes reference to ‘Brethren Fitch and Stockman’ as men she met and conversed with in the New Jerusalem. Both were ministers with whom Ellen White had been acquainted and who had taken an active part in proclaiming the message of the expected advent of Christ, but who had died shortly before the disappointment of October 22, 1844.”⁵

These two ministers could not be sealed with the seal of the living God, the Sabbath, because they died before the Sabbath truth came. The sealing work had not yet started. Therefore they are not resurrected at the partial resurrection but at the first general resurrection. And then it is that the 144,000 recognize them.

There may be some in our day who have never heard the Sabbath truth or do not understand it, but who sincerely keep Sunday believing that they keep the true Sabbath. These cannot be sealed with the seal

of the living God (the Sabbath) but they can be saved in the great multitude. We mentioned the case of W. Miller who died in 1849, and the *Testimonies* say that he rests in hope. He will not be sealed, but will be saved. The Spirit of Prophecy speaks about others as follows:

“But Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him.”⁶

In our days it is possible for two friends to be saved, one in the 144,000, and the other in the great multitude. For example:

Two Christian friends of any church who had not yet accepted the Sabbath, live near each other. They are very faithful to their beliefs. We call them conventionally Peter and Paul. Peter dies without the knowledge of the Sabbath and, because he was faithful to what he knew, he will be saved (*GC* 449). After Peter’s death, Paul accepts the Sabbath truth. So, he dies also, being faithful in the third angel’s message. Both of them will be resurrected, but on different occasions. Paul is resurrected in the partial resurrection (*GC* 637) and Peter in the first general resurrection (*GC* 644). When Peter is resurrected Paul will surely recognize him. In our days two friends may be saved, belonging to different companies, under the circumstances we just explained.

OBJECTION NO. 13

Uriah Smith’s writings are not inspired. If this is so, Elder Smith’s book *Daniel and the Revelation* and other publications by him should not be used to substantiate our doctrines.

ANSWER

We, the SDA Reform Movement, have never claimed that the

book *Daniel and the Revelation* by U. Smith is inspired. We all know that U. Smith was not a prophet. But this does not mean that his writings cannot be used. We have many other books written by people who are not prophets, and their writings are not inspired, but we still read them and believe in them because they are in harmony with the Bible and the *Testimonies*. All writings should be tested by the “Law and the Testimony.”

We do not need the book of U. Smith to explain the sealing message. We have enough evidence in the Bible and in the *Testimonies* about the subject. But we can use it and we do use it because what it says is truth. Were U. Smith’s writings wrong on this subject? If so, Sister White would not have recommended them. She wrote:

“Instruction has been given me that the important books containing the light that God has given regarding Satan’s apostasy in heaven should be given a wide circulation just now; for through them the truth will reach many minds. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Daniel and the Revelation*, and *The Great Controversy*, are needed now as never before. They should be widely circulated because the truths they emphasize will open many blind eyes.

“The light given was that *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*, *The Great Controversy*, and *Patriarchs and Prophets* would make their way. They contain the very message the people must have, the special light God had given His people. The angels of God would prepare the way for these books in the hearts of the people.”⁷

“In *The Desire of Ages*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *The Great Controversy*, and in *Daniel and the Revelation*, there is precious instruction. These books must be regarded as of special importance, and every effort should be made to get them before the people.”⁸

“Especially should the book *Daniel and the Revelation* be brought before the people as the very book for this time. This book contains the

144,000 is composed of twelve different divisions, each containing twelve thousand redeemed souls; and each division bears the name of the twelve tribes of Israel.

message which all need to read and understand. Translated into many different languages, it will be a power to enlighten the world. This book has had a large sale in Australia and New Zealand. By reading it many souls have come to a knowledge of the truth. I have received many letters expressing appreciation of this book.

“Let our canvassers urge this book upon the attention of all. The Lord has shown me that this book will do a great work in enlightening those who become interested in the truth for this time. Those who embrace the truth now, who have not shared in the experiences of those who entered the work in the early history of the message, should study the instruction given in *Daniel and the Revelation*, becoming familiar with the truth it presents.

“Those who are preparing to enter the ministry, who desire to become successful students of the prophecies, will find *Daniel and the Revelation* an invaluable help. They need to understand this book. It speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein. Those who will diligently study this book will have no relish for the cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God. The rebuke of God is upon all such teachers. They need that one teach them what is meant by godliness and truth. The great, essential questions which God would have presented to the people are found in *Daniel and the Revelation*. There is found solid, eternal truth

for this time. Everyone needs the light and information it contains. . . .

“The truth for this time has been brought out in many books. Let those who have been dealing in cheap sentiments and foolish tests, cease this work and study *Daniel and the Revelation*. They will then have something to talk about that will help the mind. As they receive the knowledge contained in this book, they will have in the treasure house of the mind a store from which they continually draw as they communicate to others the great, essential truth of God’s Word.

“The interest in *Daniel and the Revelation* is to continue as long as probationary time shall last. God used the author of this book as a channel through which to communicate light to direct minds to the truth. Shall we not appreciate this light, which points us to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, our King? . . .

“Young men, take up the work of canvassing for *Daniel and the Revelation*. Do all you possibly can to sell this book. Enter upon the work with as much earnestness as if it were a new book. And remember that as you canvass for it, you are to become familiar with the truths it contains. As you ponder these truths, you will receive ideas that will enable you not only to receive light, but to let light shine forth to others in clear, bright rays.

“Now is come the time of the revelation of the grace of God. Now is the gospel of Jesus Christ to be proclaimed. Satan will seek to divert the minds of those who should be established, strengthened, and settled in the truths of the first, second,

and third angels’ messages. . . . I speak of this book because it is a means of educating those who need to understand the truth of the Word. This book should be highly appreciated. It covers much of the ground we have been over in our experience. If the youth will study this book and learn for themselves what is truth, they will be saved from many perils.”⁹

“I feel very tender toward Elder Smith. My life interest in the publishing work is bound up with his. He came to us as a young man, possessing talents that qualified him to stand in his lot and place as an editor. How I rejoice as I read his articles in the *Review*—so excellent, so full of spiritual truth. I thank God for them. I feel strong sympathy for Elder Smith, and I believe that his name should always appear in the *Review* as the name of the leading editor. Thus God would have it. When, some years ago, his name was placed second, I felt hurt. When it was again placed first, I wept, and said, ‘Thank God.’ May it always be there, as God designs it shall be, while Elder Smith’s right hand can hold a pen. And when the power of his hand fails, let his sons write at his dictation.”¹⁰

Besides all that has been said, we read this statement in the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the teachings of Uriah Smith:

“The plan that has been adopted, to have Elder Smith hold Biblical institutes in different states, is approved of God.”¹¹

See U. Smith’s article on the 144,000 published in *Synopsis of the Present Truth*.

References:

- ¹ Stephen N. Haskell, *The Cross and Its Shadow*, pp. 358, 359.
- ² *Early Writings*, p. 11.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 258.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 298 (Appendix).
- ⁶ *The Great Controversy*, p. 449.
- ⁷ *Colporteur Ministry*, pp. 123, 124.
- ⁸ *Evangelism*, p. 366.
- ⁹ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, pp. 60–64.
- ¹⁰ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 225.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 407.

Who Will Finish the Work?

BY NATHAN TYLER

The Work.” This phrase has become synonymous with the task of preaching the gospel to all the world, as Jesus commanded the church: “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19, margin). Finishing “the work” is a topic of conversation all around. Haven’t you heard it lately?

Just whose work is “the work”? Who will be responsible for finishing it? Is this the job only of workers paid by the church? Or, on the other hand, will it be only the faithful lay members in the last days who will finish the work?

Gifts

When the early church traversed the world proclaiming the “power of God unto salvation,” they understood whose duty it was to preach the gospel. “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher” (Romans 1:16; 10:14)? Someone must be sent to preach! This is what Jesus meant when He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

When Jesus sent out His disciples, He gave them one important condition first. “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem,” He said, “until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Paul spoke of this same power when he wrote: “When he ascended up on high, he . . . gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8).

What were these gifts? When the Holy Spirit descended in power on the day of Pentecost, He

imparted special abilities to the disciples to aid them in their work. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Not only did the gifts serve to aid in preaching the gospel, but they helped nurture the growing church: “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” And this purpose is still being carried out by the gifts today, as we grow together to come into “the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12, 13).

“I want YOU!”

With such an abundance of aid from the Holy Spirit, can we limit the work of preaching the gospel to only the apostles? Or just the prophets? Or the pastors or teachers?

A U.S. Army recruiting poster from the World War I era features a gray-bearded man with a white star-studded top hat and pointing finger. The caption reads, “I want YOU.” It is an individual call, to whomever might be ready and willing.

In the same way the Lord says to all disciples, “Ye are my witnesses . . . and my servant whom I have chosen” (Isaiah 43:10). “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.”¹ “Whatever our position—whether presidents of conferences, ministers, teachers, students, or lay members—we are held accountable by the Lord for making

the most of our opportunities to enlighten those in need of present truth.”²

Are those who work for God doing so because they are paid and given an area of labor? The apostle made clear his motivation when he exclaimed, “necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16). Therefore none of us works because it is his or her “job,” but because his or her commission is from God, and he or she must fulfill it.

Many brethren and sisters have lost sight of this fact. At one time the servant of the Lord wrote, “The lay members of the church especially are not doing one fiftieth part of what they might and ought to do.”³ We could readily say that the same is true among us today. “The work does not depend alone upon the ministers. The church—the lay members—must feel their individual responsibility and be working members.”⁴

This is a matter of spiritual life, for “those who have received the light should seek to enlighten those who have it not. If the church members do not individually take hold of this work, then they show that they have no living connection with God.”⁵

But if everyone is supposed to actively participate in this work, what is the job of the minister and of the Bible worker?

Cooperation

To the elders, the apostle Peter wrote, “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a

ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2, 3).

From this passage we understand that "the minister should not feel that it is his duty to do all the talking and all the laboring and all the praying; he should educate helpers in every church. Let different ones take turns in leading the meetings, and in giving Bible readings; in so doing they will be calling into use the talents which God has given them, and at the same time be receiving a training as workers."⁶ This means that the minister is like a supervisor—his job is to help the lay members be more effective in the gospel work.

Sometimes we let the workers do everything, but "it is often impossible for the laborers to look after the interest awakened, and they fail to discern that they must enlist the lay members of the church, and teach them to work, that they may hold all that has been gained, and continue to advance. The plan of labor has been such as to lead the people to feel that they could do very little themselves; if anything was to be accomplished, they must have a minister."⁷

Instead of this arrangement, lay members can realize their opportunity and begin to work. "It is not alone those who labor in word and doctrine who are responsible for souls. Every man and every woman who has a knowledge of the truth should be a coworker with Christ. . . . He requires the lay members to act as missionaries. Brethren, go out with your Bibles, visit the people at their firesides, read the word of God to the family, and as many more as will come in. Go with a contrite heart and an abiding trust in God's grace and mercy, and do what you can."⁸

A task for all

An important lesson is contained in the parable of the talents. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto

them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" (Matthew 25:14, 15). We note from these verses that everyone was given something to work with for the Master.

Some might feel excused because they are not able to preach. Does the work of God consist only of this? "Why is it that many more do not respond to the call? Is it because they think themselves excused in that they do not stand in the pulpit? Let them understand that there is a large work to be done outside the pulpit by thousands of consecrated lay members."⁹

What is this work outside the pulpit? We have the answer: "By means of missionary visits and by a wise distribution of our literature, many who have never been warned may be reached. Let companies be organized to search for souls. Let the church members visit their neighbors and open to them the Scriptures. Some may be set to work in the hedges, and thus, by wise planning, the truth may be preached in all districts."¹⁰

Often it is lay members who open up new mission fields. "Where there is an opening to obtain a livelihood, let families that are well grounded in the truth enter, one or two families in a place, to work as missionaries."¹¹ "In fields where the conditions are so objectionable and disheartening that many workers refuse to go to them, most remarkable changes for the better may be brought about by the efforts of self-sacrificing lay members. . . . The amount of good that these workers accomplish will never be known in this world."¹²

When the Lord comes, He will ask of each of us, "where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" (Jeremiah 13:20). When all is placed in the balances to be weighed, "the real character of the church is measured, not by the high profession she makes, not by the names enrolled on her books, but by what she is

actually doing for the Master, by the number of her persevering, faithful workers. . . .

"Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them—the burden of leading souls into the truth."¹³

Who, then, will finish the work? Only the church workers, or only the lay members? No! The church as a whole must arise and do its duty. "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers."¹⁴ Only as we unite in the work will it be accomplished.

Are you alive?

The story is told of a man, traveling on foot, who was forced to walk through a blizzard to reach his destination. The wind ripped fiercely at his clothing, while the driving snow blinded his eyes and chilled him to the core. The way was hard to follow, frostbite nibbled at his fingers and toes, and as the minutes turned into hours, he began to despair. At last, he sank to his knees in the cold, unfeeling whiteness, and lost all desire to go on. But suddenly, as he was about to give himself up to freeze to death, he heard something. Someone was moaning for help! Springing to his feet and stumbling in the direction of the sound, he found a fellow traveler in worse shape than himself. Forgetting his own condition, he lay the man on his shoulder, and summoning every bit of strength remaining, made his way to a place of warmth and safety.

Many people will find when they have reached heaven that they are saved because of working for others. "Every member of the body should feel that the salvation of his own soul depends upon his own individual effort. Souls cannot be saved without exertion. The minister cannot save the people. He can be a channel through which God will impart light

to His people; but after the light is given, it is left with the people to appropriate that light, and in their turn to let it shine forth to others.”¹⁵

What does the church need in order to be alive? Jesus said, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). With us, “there is great need of zealous, disinterested workers in God’s cause. One Christ-loving, devoted member will do more good in a church than one hundred half-converted, unsanctified, self-sufficient workers. It is impossible for the church to be a living, active church unless its members shall be willing to bear burdens and assume responsibilities.”¹⁶

What does working do for us? “A working church is a growing church. The members find a stimulus and a tonic in helping others. . . . The lesson that in helping others we ourselves receive help, must be urged upon young believers continually, be precept and example, that in their Christian experience they may gain the best results.”¹⁷

Those familiar with exercise in the gym or in manual labor understand that strength comes by exercise. So in spiritual life, our strength will develop as we exercise our powers in study, practice, and sharing of the truth.

How to start?

How do we start? Well, “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). Can you explain the major points of your faith? Begin today your study to establish yourself and to be able to give an answer.

As the ministers and workers of the church are to guide the work, they also are to lead out in preparation and training. “The forces for good among the lay members of the church cannot be developed and brought into proper working order without careful planning and systematic training.”¹⁸

We should especially make efforts to prepare the youth among us, for “with such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin!”¹⁹

The latter rain

What came before the early rain in the time of the early disciples? “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1). Unity in the truth is an essential element for success in our work today.

However, not only doctrinal unity is important. Did you ever notice upon whom the early rain actually came? In the upper room were gathered all those “who were fully identified as disciples of Christ and associated with the apostles as evangelists.”²⁰ From this we can definitely conclude that the latter rain, the Holy Spirit’s power, will be poured out only on a working church.

The Spirit of Prophecy confirms this conclusion in the following statement: “The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God.”²¹

Then, should we wait for the latter rain to make us ready to work for the Lord? Not if “the latter rain will never refresh and invigorate indolent souls, that are not using the power God has already given them.”²²

Ask yourself the question, am I using the power God has given me, in working for Him?

Marching orders

Knowing the times we live in and the importance of the work the Lord has given us, we should echo with the apostle, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:12).

The following story from *Gospel Workers* helps each of us to see our duty. “The Duke of Wellington was once present where a party of Christian men were discussing the possibility of success in missionary effort among the heathen. They appealed to the duke to say whether in his judgment such efforts were likely to prove a success commensurate to the cost. The old soldier replied:

“ ‘Gentlemen, what are your marching orders? Success is not the question for you to discuss. If I read your orders aright, they run thus, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Gentlemen, obey your marching orders.’

“My brethren, the Lord is coming, and we need to bend every energy to the accomplishment of the work before us. I appeal to you to give yourselves wholly to the work.”²³

Who will finish the work in your part of the vineyard, dear reader? Will you? **R**

References:

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- ² *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 86, 87.
- ³ *The Review and Herald*, August 18, 1885.
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- ⁸ *Ibid.*, November 13, 1883.
- ⁹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 111.
- ¹⁰ *Medical Ministry*, p. 313.
- ¹¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 245.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 22, 23.
- ¹³ *Gospel Workers*, p. 200.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 352.
- ¹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 121.
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- ¹⁸ *The Review and Herald*, October 22, 1914.
- ¹⁹ *Education*, p. 271.
- ²⁰ *The Signs of the Times*, March 31, 1890.
- ²¹ *The Review and Herald*, July 21, 1896.
- ²² *The Signs of the Times*, December 9, 1886.
- ²³ *Gospel Workers*, p. 115.



Top: Youth Convention in
Phoenix, Arizona,
February 2004



Left: Delegation session of
Ecuador, June 2004



Top: South East US Field Tennessee camp meeting at Pickett State Park, May 2004

Right: Baptism in Tennessee camp meeting, May 2004

Right bottom: New officers in Central American Union, July 2004

Left bottom: New officers in East European Union, July 2004



MOVING? Please let us know.



The Creator of Clouds

“Hath the rain a father?

or who hath begotten the drops of dew?” (Job 38:28).

Clouds. There are many kinds of them—and they’re so beautiful! Here are the main types:

1. There are **fluffy, white clouds** that look almost like cotton balls. These are called “cumulus” clouds. The word “cumulus” means “pile” or “heap.” They are formed when warm, moist air rises high into the sky where the air is cooler. As the air pushes up higher and higher, these white, fluffy clouds form.

Cumulus clouds can thicken to look darker. Often this happens in the afternoon. Later, when the sun finally sets and the earth cools, they may disappear, because as the earth cools, there is no warm air rising.

2. Nimbus clouds are **dark gray clouds** which can bring rain or snow. “Nimbus” means “rain.”

3. Sometimes the sky appears as if just one **huge, gray blanket** is over the whole earth. These are “stratus” clouds. “Stratus” means “layer” or “sheet.” When snow comes, you may notice that the sky can seem to look almost as white as the snow itself.

4. What about those **thin, wispy, feathery clouds** so high in the sky, often on a clear day? These are “cirrus” clouds. “Cirrus” means “curl.” These clouds are thin and curl up at one end. They are made of ice crystals. Cirrus clouds usually move very fast across

the sky, but since they are so high you may not be able to see how fast they’re really moving. With all the wind up there, a storm may be coming.

God makes all the clouds and sends us rain because He knows we need these precious drops of water to refresh the earth. How loving He is to do this! How kind He is to show us all the different shapes and interesting types of clouds! The most glorious, colorful sunsets formed by sun and clouds in the western sky look as if they’ve been hand-painted by the Master Artist.

“Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?” (Job 38:34, 35). These and other questions are asked in Scripture that we might pause to think about how much greater is God than we are.

Can we control the clouds? Scientists try sometimes, but the results do not always come out exactly as expected. The most successful man in history to have had an effect on the clouds was Elijah, the prophet of God. He prayed for the Lord to do something to wake up His people who had fallen so badly in sin, lest they bring



upon themselves sure destruction. God answered by stopping all rain and dew for three and a half years. Then, after the people had repented of their sins, Elijah “prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit” (James 5:18).

“Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven?” (Job 38:37). God, the Creator of clouds, can. And He hears the prayers of His faithful people! **R**