

the  
**REFORMATION**  
*herald*

Vol. 50, No. 6



*The Test of Time*

Week of Prayer, December 4–13, 2009

# the REFORMATION herald

Volume 50, Number 6

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**H**ow valuable it is to be ahead of things! Having information in advance is a big help in preparing for any momentous event. And what greater event could the world ever experience than to behold the second coming of Jesus Christ in the clouds of glory? The Lord has graciously provided light on this matter for our instruction and admonition. How important it is that we study this present truth, savor it, and apply it to our life!

The Week of Prayer for this year is based on “The Test of Time,” a series of readings on end-time events preparatory to our Lord’s return. This is a very solemn and powerful subject. Besides holding meetings in the churches this week, please make a special effort to share the material with isolated believers, encouraging them with your prayers and visitation.

Please keep in mind also:

- **SABBATH, DECEMBER 12:** A day of prayer with fasting.
- **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13:** An offering will be gathered for new missions.

We trust that this Week of Prayer will be a blessed opportunity to foster deeper faith and consecration in our heart, preparatory to the hour soon to come.

Official Church Publication of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement

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

Editor D. Sureshkumar  
 Assistant to the Editor B. Monteiro  
 Creative Services D. Lee

THE REFORMATION HERALD® (ISSN 0482-0843) features articles on Bible doctrine that will enrich the spiritual life of those who seek to know more about God. It is published bimonthly by the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference, P. O. Box 7240, Roanoke, VA 24019-0240, U.S.A.

Web: <http://www.sdarm.org>  
 e-mail: [info@sdarm.org](mailto:info@sdarm.org)

Printed and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing Association. Manuscripts, inquiries, address changes, subscriptions, payments, and donations should be mailed to the address below. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, Virginia 24022.

**Subscription rates:**  
 United States U.S. \$14.95  
 Foreign (air mail) U.S. \$20.00  
 Single issue U.S. \$ 3.50

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Reformation Herald, P. O. Box 7240, ROANOKE, VA 24019.

Vol. 50, No. 6; Copyright © 2009 November–December Issue.  
**Illustrations:** Design Pix on p. 21; Dreamstime.com on pp. 4, 7, 8, 25; Good Salt on pp. 2, 29; Higher Clips on p. 20; istockphoto.com on pp. 10, 32; Joe Maniscalco on p. 26; Sermonview.com on the front cover and on pp. 3, 6, 12, 13, 16, 28.

# “Such a Time as This”

The word “advent” refers to the arrival of an important person, event, or development and, in the highest sense, it calls to mind the glorious return of the Master of the universe, Jesus Christ.

The successful planning of any significant event involves quite a comprehensive process—the more important the person and the more exalted the event, the greater the preparation needed. The inauguration of the presidents of nations, the coronation of kings of monarchies, and the installation of new governments are all examples of momentous events of great magnitude. Yet their majesty is pale when compared to the eternal glory surrounding the Lord’s great second advent.

As a people whose name makes direct reference to the most eagerly awaited event in history, how significant it is that our entire experience revolves around preparing for this uniquely singular moment. Proper preparation for the Master’s advent requires not only outward demonstration—it calls for thorough inward transformation. The Lord is not merely concerned that good actions be carried out by obedient children; His penetrating eyes actually see whether our inner thought patterns are truly reflecting the purest of motives based on the eternal principle of love. The deep spiritual change that needs to take firm root in beings naturally afflicted by the plague of sin is remarkable indeed.

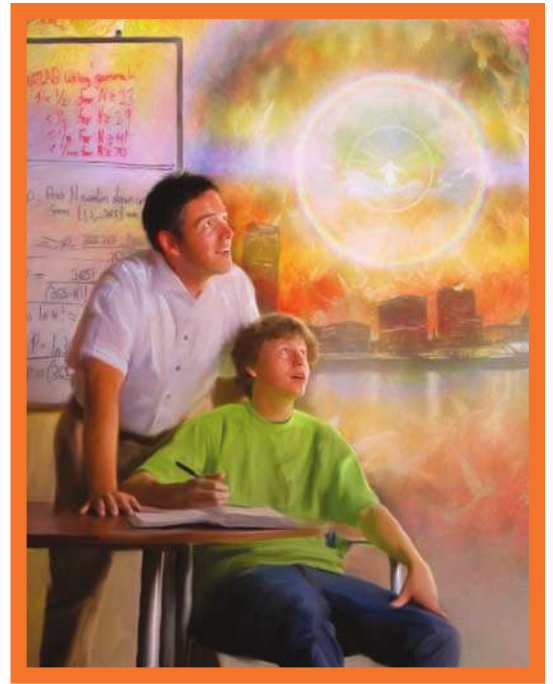
Prophecy is the scheduled unfolding of human history. It maps out key

landmarks along the path of time, that we may gain a proper perspective as to where we currently stand.

Without this compass, how readily we could end up floating into uncharted waters, adrift without anchor in a sea of Babylonian confusion!

## What characterizes the scepter of God’s authority?

“Unto the Son [the Father] saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom” (Hebrews 1:8). “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face” (Psalm 89:14). The kingdom of grace is soon to be eclipsed by the kingdom of glory. Our just God will arise to vindicate His downtrodden law and will execute judgment upon the violators of it. Prophecy points to that; we are familiar with those texts. Yet it is also true that God’s justice has a twin sister, mercy. This vital quality of God’s character also flourishes within the veil of the Most Holy: “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps” (Psalm 85:10–13).



## Where do we fit into the picture?

In considering the more alarming aspects of prophecy—the sharp curves and dangerous cliffs in the road ahead—it is tempting to get bogged down in the negative and feel overwhelmed. Just as traffic engineers assign caution signs to mark out the upcoming perils in the pathway, the Lord in His wisdom has graciously issued informative flags of warning. These are designed to help us but not to stifle our joy in the Lord. Our task is a vibrant, tremendously positive one; our opportunities in the Lord’s vineyard are virtually numberless.

Let us view with eager anticipation the advent of our Lord and allow that imminent fact to sustain us in the mounting battles of life. Wonderful experiences await us if we take active, eager part in the glorious scenes to conclude earth’s history. The spirit of service can animate and energize us when we focus wholeheartedly on the glory of our Master’s business. “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength” (Isaiah 40:29). Every one of us has the privilege of a unique place and calling—and “who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14)? *R*



# “Lo, I Come: in the Volume of the Book It Is Written of Me”

*Compiled from the writings of E. G. White*

**T**he Word of God covers a period of history reaching from the Creation to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. Yea, more; it carries the mind forward to the future life, and opens before it the glories of Paradise restored. Through all these centuries the truth of God has remained the same. That which was truth in the beginning is truth now. Although new and important truths appropriate for succeeding generations have been opened to the understanding, the present revealings do not contradict those of the past. Every new truth understood only makes more significant the old.

With the broader, clearer light that shines upon us, we can see with greater distinctness the glory of the former dispensation. We can hold converse with the patriarchs of old; we can listen to Moses as he legislates for Israel, to the prophets as they look down through future ages and foretell coming events, and to the apostles as they lay open the mysteries of the new dispensation, and relate their personal experience and the wonderful words of Him that spake as never man spake. As we see the prediction of the prophets fulfilling around us, we are brought nearer to them, and we read them with a deeper and more intelligent interest. And as

time rolls on and we near the close of earth's history, we shall, if humble learners in the school of Christ, be able to comprehend still more clearly divine wisdom.

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the patriarchs and prophets, heard the gospel through Christ; they saw the salvation of the race through the substitute and surety, Jesus, the world's Redeemer. They saw a Saviour to come to the world in human flesh, and communed with Him in His divine majesty. Abraham walked and talked with the heavenly angels who came to him in the garb of humanity. Jacob talked with Christ and angels. Moses held converse with Jesus face to face as one who speaketh with a friend.

From the creation and fall of man to the present time, there has been a continual unfolding of the plan of God for the redemption, through Christ, of the fallen race. The tabernacle and temple of God on earth were patterned after the original in heaven. Around the sanctuary and its solemn services mystically gathered the grand truths which were to be developed through succeeding generations. There has been no time when God has granted greater evidences of His grandeur and exalted majesty, than while He was the acknowledged governor of Israel. The manifestations of an invis-

ible King were grand and unspeakably awful. A scepter was swayed, but it was held by no human hand. The sacred ark, covered by the mercy seat, and containing the holy law of God, was symbolical of Jehovah Himself. It was the power of the Israelites to conquer in battle. Before it idols were thrown down, and for rashly looking into it thousands perished. Never in our world has the Lord given such open manifestations of His supremacy as when He alone was the acknowledged King of Israel.

How wise was the arrangement of God to preserve a knowledge of Himself in the earth by giving man His holy law, which was the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth, and by connecting with it a system of worship that would be a continual reminder of a coming Saviour. While darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, the Lord had a humble few who acknowledged His sovereignty by respecting and obeying the constitution of His kingdom, the ten commandments. Through the ages of idolatry and apostasy, the promise of a Messiah kept the star of hope shining in the darkened moral heavens until the time came for Christ to make His first advent.

In the sacrificial offering on every altar was seen a Redeemer. With the

cloud of incense arose from every contrite heart the prayer that God would accept their offerings as showing faith in the coming Saviour. Our Saviour has come and shed His blood as a sacrifice, and now He pleads that blood before His Father in the sanctuary in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Even before He took humanity upon Him, [our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ] saw the whole length of the path He must travel in order to save that which was lost. Every pang that rent His heart, every insult that was heaped upon His head, every privation that He was called to endure, was open to His view before He laid aside His crown and royal robe, and stepped down from the throne, to clothe His divinity with humanity. The path from the manger to Calvary was all before His eyes. He knew the anguish that would come upon Him. He knew it all, and yet He said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psalm 40:7, 8).<sup>2</sup>

"We have not followed cunningly devised fables," [the apostle Peter] reminded the believers, "when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount" (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Yet convincing as was this evidence of the certainty of the believers' hope, there was another still more convincing in the witness of prophecy, through which the faith of all might be confirmed and securely anchored. "We have also," Peter declared, "a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as

they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (Verses 19-21).<sup>3</sup>

### Old Testament prophecies fulfilled

Jesus had several times attempted to open the future to His disciples, but they had not cared to think about what He said. Because of this His death had come to them as a surprise; and afterward, as they reviewed the past and saw the result of their unbelief, they were filled with sorrow. When Christ was crucified, they did not believe that He would rise. He had stated plainly that He was to rise on the third day, but they were perplexed to know what He meant. This lack of comprehension left them at the time of His death in utter hopelessness. They were bitterly disappointed. Their faith did not penetrate beyond the shadow that Satan had cast athwart their horizon. All seemed vague and mysterious to them. If they had believed the Saviour's words, how much sorrow they might have been spared!

Crushed by despondency, grief, and despair, the disciples met together in the upper chamber, and closed and fastened the doors, fearing that the fate of their beloved Teacher might be theirs. It was here that the Saviour, after His resurrection, appeared to them. For forty days Christ remained on the earth, preparing the disciples for the work before them and explaining that which heretofore they had been unable to comprehend. He spoke of the prophecies concerning His advent, His rejection by the Jews, and His death, showing that every specification of these prophecies had been fulfilled. He told them that they were to regard this fulfillment of prophecy as an assurance of the power that would attend them in their future labors. "Then opened He their understanding," we read, "that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." And He added, "Ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:45-48).<sup>4</sup>

[Before His ascension,] beginning at Moses, the very Alpha of Bible history, Christ expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. . . . It was necessary for [the disciples on the way to Emmaus] to understand the witness borne to Him by the types and prophecies of the Old Testament. Upon these their faith must be established. Christ performed no miracle to convince them, but it was His first work to explain the Scriptures. They had looked upon His death as the destruction of all their hopes. Now He showed from the prophets that this was the very strongest evidence for their faith.

In teaching these disciples, Jesus showed the importance of the Old Testament as a witness to His mission. Many professed Christians now discard the Old Testament, claiming that it is no longer of any use. But such is not Christ's teaching. So highly did He value it that at one time He said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

It is the voice of Christ that speaks through patriarchs and prophets, from the days of Adam even to the closing scenes of time. The Saviour is revealed in the Old Testament as clearly as in the New. It is the light from the prophetic past that brings out the life of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament with clearness and beauty. The miracles of Christ are a proof of His divinity; but a stronger proof that He is the world's Redeemer is found in comparing the prophecies of the Old Testament with the history of the New.

Reasoning from prophecy, Christ gave His disciples a correct idea of what He was to be in humanity. Their expectation of a Messiah who was to take His throne and kingly power in accordance with the desires of men had been misleading. It would interfere with a correct apprehension of His descent from the highest to the lowest position that could be occupied. Christ desired that the ideas of His disciples might be pure and true in every specification. They must understand as far as possible in regard to the cup of suffering that had been apportioned to Him.

## *Had the Saviour appeared at an earlier period in the world's history, the advantages gained to Christians would not have been so great.*

He showed them that the awful conflict which they could not yet comprehend was the fulfillment of the covenant made before the foundation of the world was laid. Christ must die, as every transgressor of the law must die if he continues in sin. All this was to be, but it was not to end in defeat, but in glorious, eternal victory. Jesus told them that every effort must be made to save the world from sin. His followers must live as He lived, and work as He worked, with intense, persevering effort.<sup>5</sup>

### **God's perfect timing**

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal" (Romans 16:25, RV). It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Lucifer had said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; . . . I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14). But Christ, "being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:6, 7, RV, margin).

This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing.

Nearly two thousand years ago, a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven, from the throne of God, "Lo, I come." "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:5-7). In these words is announced the fulfillment of the purpose that had been hidden from eternal ages. Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence.

That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity—the invisible glory in the visible human form.<sup>6</sup>

God had ruled the events clustering around the

birth of Christ. There was an appointed time for Him to appear in the form of humanity. A long line of inspired prophecy pointed to the coming of Christ to our world and minutely described the manner of His reception. Had the Saviour appeared at an earlier period in the world's history, the advantages gained to Christians would not have been so great, as their faith would not have been developed and strengthened by dwelling upon the prophecies which stretched into the far future and recounted the events which were to transpire.

Because of the wicked departure of the Jews from God, He had allowed them to come under the power of a heathen nation. Only a certain limited power was granted the Jews; even the Sanhedrim was not allowed to pronounce final judgment upon any important case which involved the infliction of capital punishment. A people controlled, as were the Jews, by bigotry and superstition, are most cruel and unrelenting. The wisdom of God was displayed in sending His Son to the world at a time when the Roman power held sway. Had the Jewish economy possessed full authority, we should not now have a history of the life and ministry of Christ among men. The jealous priests and rulers would have quickly made away with so formidable a rival. He would have been stoned to death on the false accusation of breaking the law of God. The Jews put no one to death by crucifixion; that was a Roman method of punishment; there would therefore have been no cross upon Calvary. Prophecy would not then have been fulfilled; for Christ was to be lifted up in the most public manner on the cross, as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness.

The Roman power was the instrument in God's hand to prevent the Light of the world from going out in darkness. The cross was lifted, according to the plan of God, in the sight of all nations, tongues, and people,



calling their attention to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

Had the coming of Christ been deferred many years later, until the Jewish power had become still less, prophecy would have failed of its fulfillment; for it would not have been possible for the Jews, with their waning power, to have influenced the Roman authorities to sign the death warrant of Jesus upon the lying charges presented, and there would have been no cross of Christ erected upon Calvary. Soon after the Saviour's execution the method of death by crucifixion was abolished. The scenes which took place at the death of Jesus, the inhuman conduct of the people, the supernatural darkness which veiled the earth, and the agony of nature displayed in the rending of the rocks and the flashing of the lightning, struck them with such remorse and terror, that the cross, as an instrument of death, soon fell into disuse. At the destruction of Jerusalem, when mob power again obtained control, crucifixion was again revived for a time, and many crosses stood upon Calvary.

Christ coming at the time and in the manner which He did was a direct and complete fulfillment of prophecy. The evidence of this, given to the world through the testimony of the apostles and that of their contemporaries, is among the strongest proofs of the Christian faith. We were not eyewitnesses of the miracles of Jesus, which attest His divinity; but we have the statements of His disciples who were eyewitnesses of them, and we see by faith through their eyes, and hear through their ears; and our faith with theirs grasps the evidence given.

The apostles accepted Jesus upon the testimony of prophets and righteous men, stretching over a period of many centuries. The Christian world have a full and complete chain of evidence running through both the Old and the New Testament; in the one pointing to a Saviour to come, and in the other fulfilling the conditions of that prophecy. All this is sufficient to establish the faith of those who are willing to believe. The design of God was to leave the race a fair opportunity



to develop faith in the power of God and of His Son and in the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup>

### Cherishing the prophetic words

God designs that the plan of redemption shall come to His people as the latter rain; for they are fast losing their connection with God. They are trusting in man, and glorifying man, and their strength is proportionate to the strength of their dependence. Some matters have been opened before me which will be fulfilled ere long. We are to know more than we do at the present time. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. There are themes to be dwelt upon which are worthy of more than a passing notice. Angels have desired to look into the truths which are revealed to the people who are searching God's Word and with contrite hearts praying for wisdom, for greater lengths and breadths and heights of that knowledge which God alone can give.

Hundreds of commentaries have been written upon the gospel by men who are called great, and as we near the closing scenes of this earth's history still more wonderful representations will be made. We need to study the Scriptures with humble, contrite hearts. Those who will devote their powers to the study of God's Word, and especially the prophecies referring to these last

days, will be rewarded by the discovery of important truths. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truths that need to be understood. Satan has blinded the eyes of men, and they have been glad of any excuse for not making a study of this book. Here Christ has declared through His servant John what shall be in the last days.

Every Bible student should study these prophecies with diligence. As we search the Scriptures, the character of Christ will appear in its infinite perfection. He is the one in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. He is eternal life to all who will eat His flesh and drink His blood. Those who will look to Him may be healed of the serpent's sting; for He is the sinbearer, the only remedy for sin. By beholding Him, we may become changed into the same image. Nothing must interpose between the soul and God. Faith, love, adoration, are to grow in the soul of the student. We are in possession of the richest treasures of truth, and if we follow on to know the Lord, we shall have a large field in which to work. The word records the deeds of mercy and the wonderful restoring power of Jesus. With aching hearts we read of His sorrow because of the sins we have committed. We may learn, too, how through His suffering and sacrifice in our behalf, we may be complete in Him. Inspiration tells the story which is of more importance to us than all human learning, however broad and deep.

"This is life eternal," Christ said, "that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent" (John 17:3). Why do we not realize the value of this knowledge. Why are not these glorious truths glowing in our hearts, trembling upon our lips, and pervading our whole being.<sup>8</sup> ❧

### References

<sup>1</sup> *The Review and Herald*, March 2, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 410.

<sup>3</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 534, 535.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>5</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 796-799.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>7</sup> *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 180-182.

<sup>8</sup> *Bible Training School*, January 1, 1913.



# “Behold, I Stand at the Door, and Knock”

By Paul Balbach

**H**ave you had anyone knock at your door lately? Can you even remember the last time it happened? Door knocking is not common any more in some places. Most young people do not even know what that is. Nowadays sales and visitation appointments are mostly done by phone or internet.

What is your first reaction when you hear a knock at the door? “A stranger is at my door. Do I open the door? Should I let him in? Maybe I should ask for his name. Perhaps I will ask, “What do you want?” Or I might ignore the knock.

## Who is knocking?

Christ is knocking today at the door of your heart through the Holy Spirit. He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). Does Christ knock at the door of a few select friends? No. “[The True Witness’] voice is appealing to every heart. . . . (Revelation 3:20 quoted).”<sup>1</sup>

“Jesus is going from door to door, standing in front of every soul temple, proclaiming, ‘I stand at the door and

knock.’ . . . ‘Open your doors,’ says the great Merchantman, the possessor of spiritual riches, ‘and transact your business with Me. It is I, your Redeemer, who counsels you to buy of Me.’”<sup>2</sup>

Among the busy activities of your life, do you hear Christ’s knock? Are you familiar with His voice or do you think He is a stranger? Are you perhaps so mesmerized with the sounds of the world that you no longer recognize Him? Will you let Him in? Do you anticipate He has good or bad news for you? Can you open the door? Are you prepared to receive the heavenly Guest?

## What is the knock?

A knock at the door could bring good news or bad news. It could be the delivery service bringing flowers for Mother’s Day. During World War II, many homes in the United States were visited by uniformed government officers. They came to bring the bad news that the husband, father, or son was “killed in action.” When we open the door, we must be prepared to hear what the messenger has to say.

Have you ever wondered what this “knock of Jesus” on my heart really means? Inspiration tells us that “Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the Word of God, or through His delegated messengers, is a knock at the door of the heart; it is the voice of Jesus asking for entrance.”<sup>3</sup> (This message has wide,

multiple applications, but, for the purposes of this article, we will make a personal, spiritual application of this timely “knock.”)

Christ uses the Bible, or the Spirit of Prophecy, or “His delegated messengers” to warn, reprove, and encourage us. These messengers may be pastors, teachers, and brothers or sisters in the faith.

What happens if we don’t open the door at once? “With every knock unheeded, your determination to open becomes weaker and weaker. If the voice of Jesus is not heeded at once, it becomes confused in the mind with a multitude of other voices, the world’s care and business engross the attention, and conviction dies away. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of time, and of the great eternity beyond.”<sup>4</sup> How dangerous! If we don’t open immediately, we eventually become spiritually unconscious.

## What is the context of this Bible passage?

The verse describing Christ’s knocking at the door of our wayward, human heart is found in Revelation chapter 3—right at the end of the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. It is a message for our time! Now—more than ever before—Christ wants to



dwell in human hearts. He does not necessarily speak to us in an audible voice but rather in the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit to our conscience. How important it is, therefore, in the time of the outpouring of the latter rain that we understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the conscience.

**“Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved.**

“We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle!

“When secret prayer and reading of the Scriptures are neglected today, tomorrow they can be omitted with less remonstrance of conscience. There will be a long list of omissions, all for a single grain sown in the soil of the heart. On the other hand, every ray of light cherished will yield a harvest of light. Temptation once resisted will give power to more firmly resist the second time; every new victory gained over self will smooth the way for higher and nobler triumphs. Every victory is a seed sown to eternal life.”<sup>5</sup>

The psalmist prayed, “Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: **unite my heart to fear thy name**” (Psalm 86:11, emphasis supplied). He prayed that his sin-stricken, divided heart would be united as he learned of God’s ways of doing things—and he pledged to walk in the ever-advancing truths he would learn. This is a growing process of ever-increasing love and obedience to the Master. The Holy Spirit convicts us more and more of ways in which we can come to higher and higher ground until finally, like Enoch, we can be ready for translation into the heavenly courts. The heavenly Comforter will be ever convincing us

## *What is your real standing before God? Are you satisfied with your spiritual condition?*

“of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). And as a result, our own personal standard of character that we are seeking will be higher, ever higher. Therefore, how great is our need of Christ’s saving visit to our soul—and now!

### **What is the purpose of Christ’s visit?**

The great Redeemer represents Himself as a heavenly Merchantman, laden with jewels of truth of the richest value. He is calling from house to house, presenting His priceless goods. He has merchandise for every member of the family. We must buy the gold tried in the fire (faith and love), the white raiment (the robe of Christ’s Righteousness), and eyesalve (spiritual discernment) for ourselves.

Christ comes with a message of peace. He wants to cleanse our soul temple of every defilement and sin. His very presence cleanses and sanctifies the soul. “Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart” (Psalm 95:7, 8). “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh” (Hebrews 12:25). “Today go about the work, else you may be one day too late. The impression that you have now may not be as strong tomorrow. Satan’s snare may close about you. The candlestick may be moved out of its place, and you left in darkness.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Are you blocking the entrance?**

You would think that such an important Guest would be welcomed by everyone! Unfortunately, however, not all open the door to Jesus. Like the great majority of His own people rejected Christ nearly 2,000 years ago, so He is rejected today. “Many refuse to receive [our Redeemer]. The Holy Spirit waits to soften and subdue hearts; but they are not willing to open the door and let the Saviour in, for fear that He will require something of them. And so Jesus of Nazareth passes by. He longs

to bestow on them the rich blessings of His grace, but they refuse to accept them. What a terrible thing it is to exclude Christ from His own temple! What a loss to the church!”<sup>7</sup>

Christ does not force His entrance, but He persists with a stronger, louder knock. He “continually seeks the lost ones, saying, ‘How shall I give thee up’ (Hosea 11:8)? He returns to plead with greater force, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock.’ The winning power of His love compels souls to come in. And to Christ they say, ‘Thy gentleness hath made me great’ (Psalm 18:35).”<sup>8</sup>

They open and finally He comes in. What peace, what calm to the soul.

What happens each time we refuse to hear His message of mercy? “Every time you refuse to listen to the message of mercy, you strengthen yourself in unbelief. Every time you fail to open the door of your heart to Christ, you become more and more unwilling to listen to the voice of Him that speaketh. You diminish your chance of responding to the last appeal of mercy.”<sup>9</sup>

After reading the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, “Do you believe that the testimonies of reproof which have been given you are of God? If you really believe that the voice of God has spoken to you, pointing out your dangers, do you heed the counsels given? Do you keep these testimonies of warning fresh in your minds by reading them often with prayerful hearts?”<sup>10</sup>

### **What is barring the door?**

Christ is represented as waiting outside the door. Why does He not enter? There are several things blocking the entrance to the door of our heart. “I saw that many have so much rubbish piled up at the door of their heart that they cannot get the door open.”<sup>11</sup> “It is the sinner himself who has barred the door. Will he take down the barriers? Will he unbolt the door? The locks are all on his side of the door, not on the Saviour’s side.”<sup>12</sup>

"We are to clear away the rubbish, open the door, and invite Jesus to come in and abide with us."<sup>13</sup> Here is a partial list of hindrances that prevent Christ from coming in.

"The love of sin has closed the door of the heart."<sup>14</sup> "Christ will not enter a heart that is defiled with sin. It is our work to put away all iniquity."<sup>15</sup>

"Some have difficulties between themselves and their brethren to remove."<sup>16</sup> "Find out what it is that separates you from your brother and plead for the unity that Christ has said should exist in the church."<sup>17</sup>

"Others have evil tempers, selfish covetousness to remove before they can open the door.

"Others have rolled the world before the door of their heart, which bars the door."<sup>18</sup>

"We must put away everything like passion, impatience, murmuring, and unrest, and find a place for Jesus in the heart."<sup>19</sup>

"The question of highest importance to you is, 'Do I have an experimental knowledge of God? Am I ready to believe what He tells me, to do what He bids, instead of following my own judgment? Am I drawing nearer to

God?' The Scripture says, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Corinthians 2:14). If your hearts are not fully surrendered to God, if you do not submit your will to His, you will devise and plan without the guidance of Him who is mighty in counsel. . . .'

"It does not become anyone to drop a word of doubt here and there that shall work like poison in other minds, shaking their confidence in the messages which God has given, which have aided in laying the foundation of this work, and have attended it to the present day, in reproofs, warnings, corrections, and encouragements. To all who have stood in the way of the Testimonies, I would say, God has given a message to His people, and His voice will be heard, whether you hear or forbear. . . .

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them' (Isaiah 8:20). Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.'

"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold' (Matthew 24:12). The True Witness says of the church, after enumerating many virtues, 'I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love' (Revelation 2:4). The prevailing idolatry and iniquity have had a paralyzing, deadening influence upon piety and godliness. There is distrust, selfishness, and suspicion. A few hold fast their profession of faith. Others have been leaving the simplicity of the faith, and as the result they are now treading on the borderland of skepticism. They are spiritually beclouded; and thus many are holding serious errors. Some sit in judgment on the Scriptures, declaring that this or that passage is not inspired, because it does not strike their minds favorably. They cannot harmonize it with their ideas of philosophy and science, 'falsely so called.' Others for different reasons question portions of the word of God. Thus many walk

blindly where the enemy prepares the way. Now, it is not the province of any man to pronounce sentence upon the Scriptures, to judge or condemn any portion of God's word. When one presumes to do this, Satan will create an atmosphere for him to breathe which will dwarf spiritual growth. When a man feels so very wise that he dares to dissect God's word, his wisdom is, with God, counted foolishness. When he knows more, he will feel that he has everything to learn. And his very first lesson is to become teachable. 'Learn of me,' says the Great Teacher; 'for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls' (Matthew 11:29).

"Would that the spiritual eyesight of all the workers might be clear to distinguish the sacred from the common. Blinded by self-love, many lose sight of the claims of others, and also of the glory of God. When you see yourselves as you really are, and see God as He wants you to see Him, you will feel deeply your need of Jesus and will seek Him with contrite hearts. Then He will be found of you. You will seek for His heavenly treasure of graces as one seeks for precious pearls; and when you find it, there will be no doubt on the minds of your brethren but that you have found the pearl of great price. You will have the mind of Christ; you will work and speak as Christ did.

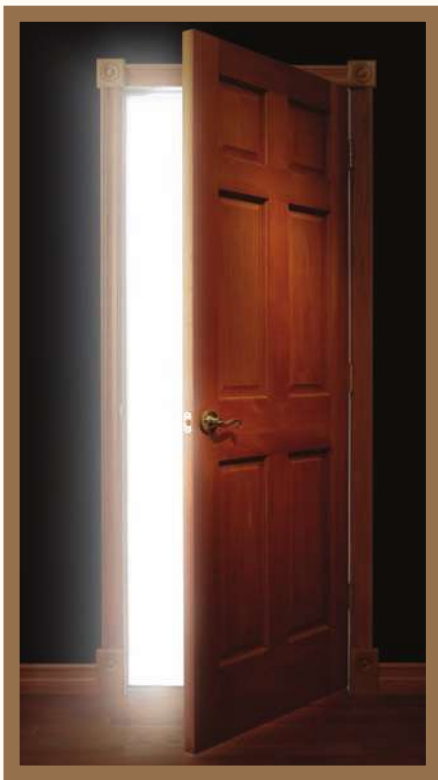
"The people of God are not to be guided by the opinions or practices of the world. . . .

"The word of God plainly declares that His law is to be scorned, trampled upon, by the world; there will be an extraordinary prevalence of iniquity."<sup>20</sup>

"When the heart is emptied of self-importance, the door will be opened to Christ."<sup>21</sup>

"Jesus says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. . . .' We are to divest ourselves of everything that separates our souls from Him. When this is done, we shall see of the salvation of God."<sup>22</sup>

"O, remove everything that obstructs the entrance to your heart, and let the Saviour in."<sup>23</sup> Let us open wide the door and welcome Jesus in with open arms. "Let the hearts of all respond



# Let us prayerfully look at the list of hindrances that are blocking Christ's entrance to our heart. He will show us specifically which ones they are and give us the power to remove them.

with exceeding joy for the priceless gift of the Son of God."<sup>24</sup>

## What does Christ do once He comes in?

Once Christ comes in He wants to feed us an abundance of spiritual blessings. "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). The very presence of Christ in the soul will bring the following:

**He brings peace and removes fear**—"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

**He brings patience and calmness**—"When the peace of Jesus enters our heart we are calm and patient under the severest trials."<sup>25</sup>

**He brings love**—"When the love of Christ enters the heart we strive to imitate the character of Christ. . . . The more we study the life of Christ with a heart to learn, the more Christlike we become."<sup>26</sup>

**He brings understanding**—"Into the heart of every true doer of the Word the Holy Spirit infuses clear understanding."<sup>27</sup>

**He brings heavenly graces**—"The more we crucify selfish practices by imparting our blessings to others and by exercising our God-given ability, the more the heavenly graces will be strengthened and increased in us."<sup>28</sup>

**He brings all the fruit of the Spirit**—"We will grow in spirituality, in patience, in fortitude, in meekness, in gentleness."<sup>29</sup>

**He brings light and joy**—"Behold I stand at the door and knock," says the Saviour. . . . He humbles Himself to seek an entrance at the door of the heart, that He may bless us with His light, and make us to rejoice in His glory."<sup>30</sup>

**He brings everlasting life**—"The Saviour] will redeem from sin and

death all who will come to Him; and will elevate them to His throne, and give them everlasting life."<sup>31</sup>

"With Christ abiding in the soul, the human agent becomes a partaker of the divine nature and is a coworker with Jesus Christ. He manifests ardor and earnestness and possesses that perseverance, so that, like his Master, he will not fail nor be discouraged. Let all turn away from the heart cravings for selfish gratification; let all empty the soul of self-love, selfish desires and ambitions, and Christ will supply the vacuum; He will reign in the heart that is emptied of self, and from His divine presence will flow forth living streams to revive and refresh the souls of those who are ready to perish."<sup>32</sup>

Once we are emptied of self, Christ comes in and abides with us. We receive His divine nature and become coworkers with Him. With a new zeal and earnestness, we help Jesus knock on the doors of the hearts of our fellow human beings.

## Invite Him in now!

What is your real standing before God? Are you satisfied with your spiritual condition?

"So great is the unwillingness of the Lord to leave you, and such is His love toward you, that notwithstanding your life has not been in accordance with His will, and your works and ways have been offensive to Him, the Majesty of heaven condescends to beg the privilege of making you a visit and leaving you His blessing: 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.' The mansions in glory are His, and the joy of that heavenly abode; yet He humbles Himself to seek an entrance at the door of your heart, that He may bless you with His light and make you to rejoice in His glory."<sup>33</sup>

Brethren and sisters, let us prayerfully look at the list of hindrances that are blocking Christ's entrance to our heart.

He will show us specifically which ones they are and give us the power to remove them.

"Jesus will not force open the door of the heart. We must open it ourselves and show that we desire His presence by giving Him a sincere welcome."<sup>34</sup>

"How is it that so many of you are saying you do not know whether you are accepted of God or not; that you want to find Jesus? Don't you know whether you have opened the door? Don't you know whether you have invited Him in? If you have not, invite Him now. Don't wait a moment. Open the door, and let Jesus in."<sup>35</sup> ❧

## References

- <sup>1</sup> *The Review and Herald*, December 9, 1890.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, August 7, 1894.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, November 2, 1886.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 120 (emphasis supplied).
- <sup>6</sup> *The Review and Herald*, November 2, 1886.
- <sup>7</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 262.
- <sup>8</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 235.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- <sup>10</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 362.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 143.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Review and Herald*, March 5, 1889.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Home Missionary*, November 1, 1890.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, September 12, 1911.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Review and Herald*, October 30, 1888.
- <sup>16</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 143.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Review and Herald*, January 19, 1905.
- <sup>18</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 143.
- <sup>19</sup> *The Bible Echo*, January 15, 1892.
- <sup>20</sup> *The EGW 1888 Materials*, pp. 900, 901.
- <sup>21</sup> *This Day With God*, p. 74.
- <sup>22</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1892.
- <sup>23</sup> *The Review and Herald*, May 5, 1891.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, December 17, 1889.
- <sup>25</sup> *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 219.
- <sup>26</sup> *That I May Know Him*, p. 118.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>30</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, February 10, 1887.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, September 5, 1895.
- <sup>33</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 224.
- <sup>34</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, February 10, 1887.
- <sup>35</sup> *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 13, 1891.

# “WHO MAY ABIDE THE *Day of His Coming?*”

*A compilation from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy*

## A Key Prophecy: Christ in the Most Holy Place

**A**s foreshadowed in the type, and foretold in the Scriptures, Christ, at the time appointed, entered the most holy place of the temple of God in heaven. He is represented by the prophet Daniel as coming at this time to the Ancient of days: “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came”—not to the earth, but—“to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him” (Daniel 7:13).

This coming is foretold also by the prophet Malachi: “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:1). The coming of the Lord to His temple was sudden, unexpected, to His people. They were not looking for Him *there*. They expected Him to come to the earth, “in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel” (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Shortly after the fulfillment of some of the signs that the Saviour foretold would be seen before His second coming, there took place throughout the Christian world a great religious awakening. Students of prophecy came to the conclusion that the time of the end was at hand. In the book of

Daniel they read: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Thinking that the earth was the sanctuary, they understood that the cleansing foretold in Daniel 8:14 represented the purification of the earth by fire at the second coming of Christ. Searching the Scriptures for further light, and comparing this prophetic period with the records of historians, they learned that the twenty-three hundred days extended to the year 1844.

This was the foundation of the great advent movement of 1844. The falling of the stars in 1833 gave added force to the proclamation of the message of a soon-coming Saviour. Through the labors of William Miller and many others in America, of seven hundred ministers in England, of Bengel and others in Germany, of Gausson and his followers in France and Switzerland, of many ministers in Scandinavia, of a converted Jesuit in South America, and of Dr. Joseph Wolff in many Oriental and African countries, the advent message was carried to a large part of the habitable globe.

But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in His ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning

and instruction was to be given to the church.

Says the prophet: “Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Malachi 3:2, 3). Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above, are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14.

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. “Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years” (Malachi 3:4). The church which our Lord at His coming is to receive

to Himself will be "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (Ephesians 5:27; Song of Solomon 6:10).

Besides the coming of the Lord to His temple, Malachi also foretells His second advent, His coming for the execution of the judgment. . . : [Malachi 3:5 quoted.] Jude refers to the same scene when he says, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds" (Jude 1:4, 15). This coming, and the coming of the Lord to His temple, are distinct and separate events.<sup>1</sup>

### The purification of God's people

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Malachi 3:3, 4).

In this scripture is portrayed a refining, purifying process to be carried on in the hearts of men by the Lord of hosts. The process is most trying to the soul, but it is only by this means that the dross can be removed. Of necessity we must endure trials; for through these we are brought close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that we may render to Him an offering in righteousness.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation," Christ declares, "but in me ye shall have peace" (John 16:33). Pride, selfishness, evil passions, and love of worldly pleasure must all be overcome; therefore God sends afflictions to test and prove us and show us that these

evils exist in our characters. We must overcome through His strength and grace, that we may be partakers of the divine nature. . . .

There is a high standard to which we are to attain if we would be children of God, noble, pure, holy, and undefiled; and a refining process is necessary if we would reach this standard. How would this refining be accomplished if there were no difficulties to meet, no obstacles to surmount, nothing to call out patience and endurance? These trials are not the smallest blessings in our experience. They are designed to nerve us to determination to succeed. We are to use them as a heaven-appointed means of gaining decided victories over self, instead of allowing them to hinder, oppress, and destroy us.

Character will be tested. Christ will be revealed in us if we are indeed branches of the Living Vine. Under every circumstance in life we shall be patient, kind, forbearing, and cheerful. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self and develop a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, unceasing prayer, and constant help from Christ. . . .

The Master sees wherein we need to be purified for His heavenly kingdom. He will not leave us in the furnace until we are wholly consumed. As a refiner and purifier of silver, He is beholding His children, watching the process of

purification until He shall discern His image reflected in us. Although we often feel affliction's flame kindling about us and at times fear that we shall be utterly consumed, yet the loving-kindness of God is just as great toward us at these times as when we are free in spirit and triumphing in Him. The furnace is to purify and refine, but not to consume and destroy. God in His providence would try us, to purify us as the sons of Levi, that we may offer to Him an offering in righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

### Cultivating heart purity in daily life

From the Holy of Holies, there goes on the grand work of instruction. The angels of God are communicating to men. Christ officiates in the sanctuary. We do not follow Him into the sanctuary as we should. . . .

It is a melancholy and dispiriting thing to observe how little effect the solemn truths relating to these last days have upon the minds and hearts of those who claim to believe the truth. They listen to the discourses preached, they seem to be deeply interested as they hang upon the lips of the speaker, and if his words are sublime they are delighted; tears flow as the love of Christ is the theme brought before them.

But with the close of the discourse the spell is broken. Enter the homes and you will be surprised to not hear one word that would lead you to think that a deep impression was made as the circumstances warranted in the



## *Many more of the lay members, if consecrated to God's service, could give the warning message of mercy to the multitudes.*

presentation of such elevating things. It was exactly as if they had listened to some pleasant song or melody. It is done, and the impression gone like the morning dew before the sun.

What is the reason of this? The truth is not brought into the life. They did not accept the truth spoken as the word of God to them. They did not look past the instrument to the great Worker within the heavenly sanctuary. They did not take the word as a special message from God, of whom the speaker was only the one who was entrusted with the message. It is then any marvel that the truth is so powerless, that with a large number, if there is some excitement, a little animal ecstasy, a little head knowledge, the influence is no deeper? . . .

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Fill the mind with the great humiliation of Christ, and then contemplate His divine character, His majesty and glory of the Highest, and His disrobing Himself of these and clothing His divinity with humanity. Then we can see a self-denial, a self-sacrifice, that was the marvel of angels.

Oh, it was poverty indeed apportioned to the Son of God that He should be moving upon a province of His own empire and yet not be recognized or confessed by the nation He came to bless and to save. It was poverty that when He walked among men, scattering blessing as He trod, the anthem of praise floated not around Him, but the air was often freighted with curses and blasphemy. It was poverty that as He passed to and fro among the subjects He came to save, scarcely a solitary voice called Him blessed, scarcely a solitary hand was stretched out in friendship, and scarcely a solitary roof proffered Him shelter. Then look beneath the disguise, and whom do we see?—Divinity, the Eternal Son of God, just as mighty,

just as infinitely gifted with all the resources of power, and He was found in fashion as a man.

I wish that finite minds could see and sense the great love of the infinite God, His great self-denial, His self-sacrifice, in assuming humanity. God humbled Himself and became man and humbled Himself to die, and not only to die, but to die an ignominious death. Oh, that we might see the need of humility, of walking humbly with God, and guarding ourselves on every point.

I know that Satan's work will be to set brethren at variance. Were it not that I know [that] the Captain of our salvation stands at the helm to guide the gospel ship into the harbor, I should say, Let me rest in the grave.

Our Redeemer liveth to make intercession for us, and now if we will daily learn in the school of Christ, if we will cherish the lessons He will teach us in meekness and lowliness of heart, we shall have so large a measure of the Spirit of Jesus that self will not be interwoven into anything that we may do or say. The eye will be single to the glory of God. We need to make special efforts to answer the prayer of Christ that we may be one as He is one with the Father, He who declared Himself actually straitened while in the days of His humiliation because He had many things to say to His disciples which they could not bear now. . . .

We need Jesus abiding in the heart, a constant, living well-spring; then the streams flowing from the living fountain will be pure, sweet, and heavenly. Then the foretaste of heaven will be given to the humble in heart.<sup>3</sup>

### **What is revealed in the judgment?**

Each one in the day of investigative judgment will stand in character as he really is; he will render an individual account to God. Every word uttered,

every departure from integrity, every action that sullies the soul, will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. Memory will be true and vivid in condemnation of the guilty one, who in that day is found wanting. The mind will recall all the thoughts and acts of the past; the whole life will come in review like the scenes in a panorama. Thus everyone will be condemned or acquitted out of his own mouth, and the righteousness of God will be vindicated.

In the case of each individual there is a process going forward which is far more wonderful than that which transfers the features to the polished plate of the artist. The art of the photographer merely imprints the likeness on perishable substance; but in the life-record the character is faithfully delineated, and this record, however dark, can never be effaced except by the blood of the atoning Sacrifice. Then, young friends, will you not stop and think what record the books in heaven present of your life and character? What kind of a picture are you making to confront you in the final judgment? Will you consider that the harboring of a polluted thought, the formation of a bad, selfish habit, which debases your own soul and ruins others, is a blot upon that record that will one day appear against you? Can you afford this?

Remember that to cause a suspicion or a reproach to rest upon the cause of God is a terrible thing. It is crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to open shame before His enemies. Those who do this are without excuse, and their course will stand against them in the day of reckoning. God has given to young men precious talents; but all have not made the best use of these gifts; some have perverted these powers, and used them to gratify their own desires, to serve their own purposes. The Lord accepts no such service.<sup>4</sup>

### **The time has come**

A living church is a working church. The precious light of Bible truth, like a lamp that burneth, is to shine forth from every church member. God will

use His believing ones as His instrumentalities; through them He will minister to souls fainting for the bread of life. Words of hope and cheer falling from lips that have been touched with a live coal from God's altar will revive and comfort those who are weary and distressed.

Time is precious. The destiny of souls is in the balance. At infinite cost a way of salvation has been provided. Shall Christ's great sacrifice be in vain? Shall the earth be entirely controlled by Satanic agencies? The salvation of souls is dependent upon the consecration and activity of God's church. The Lord calls all who believe in Him to be workers together with Him. While their life shall last, they are not to feel their work is done. Until the time comes when Christ shall say, "It is finished," His work for the saving of souls is not to decrease, but is to grow in extent and importance.

The mercy of God is shown by His long forbearance. He is holding back His judgments, waiting for the message of warning to be sounded to all. There are many who have not yet heard the testing truths for this time. The last call of mercy is to be given more fully to our world.

### Individual responsibility

Many more of the lay members, if consecrated to God's service, could give the warning message of mercy to the multitudes who are not acquainted with the truth for this time. All around us there are souls perishing in sin. Every day there is something to do for the Master.

Every Christian is to let his light shine forth in good works. His words are to magnify our Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of waiting for great opportunities before doing anything, he is to do the work lying nearest him. Thus he will increase his talents and gain a preparation for wider service. Wherever he is, there is his field, in which he is earnestly to show forth in word and deed the saving power of truth. He is not to wait to see what others do. He has a personality of his own, and he is responsible to Christ, whose servant he is, for every word and act.

God's people would put on joy and gladness as a garment if they would only receive that which He is waiting to give them—that which would make them strong to help those in need of help. Our people, need the breath of spiritual life breathed into them, that they may arouse to spiritual action. . . .

### Open doors

In the service of God there is work of many kinds to be performed. In the service of the temple there were hewers of wood, as well as priests of various orders bearing various degrees of responsibility. Our church members are to arise and shine because their light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon them. Let those who know the truth arouse out of sleep, and make every effort to reach the people where they are. The work of the Lord must no longer be neglected by us and made secondary to worldly interests. We have no time to be idle or discouraged. The gospel is to be proclaimed to all the world. The publications containing the light of present truth are to go forth to all places. Canvassing campaigns are to be organized for the sale of our literature, that the world may be enlightened as to what is just before us.

In many states there are settlements of industrious, well-to-do farmers, who have never heard the truth for this time. Such places should be worked. Let our lay members take up this line of service. By loaning or selling books, by distributing papers, and by holding Bible readings, our lay members could do much in their own neighborhoods. Filled with love for souls, they could proclaim the message of present truth with such power that many would be converted. Let us remember that it is as important to carry the message to those in the home field who have not heard the truth, as it is to go as missionaries to foreign countries.

There is abundant work for all who know the truth. Approach the people in a persuasive, kindly manner, full of cheerfulness and love for Christ. The Saviour is ever near with grace and power to enable you to present the gospel of salvation, which will bring souls

out of the darkness of unbelief into His marvelous light. Reach out after those who are ready to perish. Call attention to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29).

I wish that all our people could see the many doors that are open before them. Beside all waters we are to sow the seeds of truth. O how my soul is drawn out for sinners, that they may be won for Christ! If those who have received the truth would exercise a living faith in Christ, if they would realize that they are to be His workers, wholly consecrated to His service, what a work might be done! When God's people surrender themselves unreservedly to Christ, they will use every power of mind and body to His name's glory, and His work will make rapid advancement.

### Wholehearted devotion

The things of this world are soon to pass away. This is not discerned by those who have not been divinely enlightened, who have not kept pace with the work of God. Consecrated men and women must go forth to sound the warning in the highways and byways.

I urge my brethren and sisters not to engage in work that will hinder them from proclaiming the gospel of Christ. You are God's spokesmen. You are to speak the truth in love to perishing souls. Remember that one day you will stand before the Lord of all the earth, to give an account of the deeds done in the body. Then your work will appear as it really is. The vineyard is large, and the Lord is calling for laborers. Allow nothing to keep you from the work of soulsaving. By earnest prayer obtain power that will make your influence a savor of life unto life. The Master Worker will put His Spirit upon all who labor for Him with wholehearted devotion.<sup>5</sup> *R*

### References

<sup>1</sup> *The Southern Watchman*, January 24, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, February 7, 1905.

<sup>3</sup> Manuscript Releases, vol. 15, pp. 24–27.

<sup>4</sup> *The Review and Herald*, November 4, 1884.

<sup>5</sup> *Pacific Union Recorder*, November 5, 1903.

# “Except Ye See Signs and Wonders”

By V. W. Lukic



## The need for divine counsel

Bible history presents a tragic example of how a consistent failure to seek God can eventually result in a desperate attempt to seek hidden mysteries from unseen agencies of a fallen nature. When God seems to be silent, instead of humbling themselves before Him in searching of heart and confession, many desperately turn to forbidden sources of mysteries. Remember the tragic experience of Israel's first king, Saul. According to prophecy, this was not the last time that the spirits of the devil would communicate with the kings of this earth.

## Discerning the snare

Revelation 16 tells us something of the nature of the last phase of the long-standing conflict between Christ and Satan and their respective followers.

Let us consider the prophetic text in Revelation 16:13, 14: "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world." This prophecy takes place on earth when the sixth angel would pour out his vial of God's wrath.

It is not difficult to identify the main characters of this "unholy trinity." First, we come across the dragon and realize

how that image has already appeared in Revelation 12:3 and throughout the remainder of chapter 12 as well as in 13:2. We understand that this power represents not only Satan, but also the forces of paganism in their ancient and modern forms. Second, the beast power mentioned in Revelation 16:13 corresponds with the blasphemous and persecuting "sea beast" of Revelation 13:1-8. The historic Protestant interpretation of Scripture has always maintained that this power has its seat in the city of Rome. Finally, there is the third agent in this unholy trio that is called the "false prophet." We can readily observe that the description of this third agent in Satan's triumvirate corresponds with the two-horned-beast of Revelation 13:11-17. Verses 13, 14 described the true nature of that beast as follows: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." The main characteristic of false prophets is their deceptive nature and their ability to mislead people. It has been observed that "true religion has no worse enemies, and Satan no better allies" than false prophets. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, diligent Bible students recognized that this image applies primarily to apostate Protest-

antism having its center in the United States of America.

These forces array themselves against Christ and His remnant people in preparation for the final battle. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet could properly be named a satanic trinity. They also appear together as defeated powers that will be visited with God's severest judgments (see Revelation 19:20 and 20:10).

It should not escape our attention that out of the mouth of these forces proceed three unclean, frog-like spirits, which are the spirits of devils or demons. Unprecedented demonic activity was well documented in the Bible at the time of Christ's first coming to this earth. Similarly, Christ foretold that, immediately preceding His second coming, demons will work with such intensity that even the people who are called "the very elect" will not be able to escape the enemy's reach: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24).

The three frog-like spirits or demons (evil angels) are Satan's powerful agents of propaganda who are capable of performing very persuasive deceptions here called miracles or miraculous signs. For centuries and



*“There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*

millennia Satan has been preparing for the last, decisive battle. The sole purpose of these deceptive miraculous signs is to persuade the kings (rulers) of the whole inhabited world to gather for the battle of the great day of God the Almighty. At that time Satan sends three demonic angels with the false gospel and miracle-working power to persuade secular and political leaders of the world to marshal their forces against God and His people. The passage that has been under our review from Revelation 16 clearly demonstrates that deceptive powers of spiritualism will play a crucial role in the preparation for the final battle.

The Spirit of Prophecy confirms this end-time scenario: “Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world’s Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.”<sup>1</sup>

### Genuine God-given miracles

By definition, a miracle is an event that inspires admiration but appears inexplicable by the laws of nature and so is held to be supernatural in origin or an act of God. In the original text of the New Testament there are four Greek words, all of which are translated in English by the word “miracle”—miraculous power (*dynamis*), wonder (*teras*), sign (*semeion*), and work (*ergon*). Considering the context in which these words appear, a miracle could

be defined as an extraordinary event arousing wonder, produced by divine power, accomplishing some useful and beneficial work, and confirming a messenger and his message as sent by God.

Even a casual reader of the Bible can observe that miracles occur with greater frequency at some special times in the sacred history. When God intended to raise the remnant church to proclaim the most solemn warning ever committed to mortals—the Three Angels’ Messages—He again chose “the weakest of the weak” and imparted to her the gift of prophecy. We should never overlook prophecy as a unique kind of miracle. Of all spiritual endowments, the gift of prophecy has always been regarded as the highest gift within the church.

As followers of Christ, we must humbly realize that only God in His infinite wisdom can determine whether at any particular point in time His representatives on earth need miracle-working power and, secondly, to what extent that power should be granted to them.

### Miracles of another origin

From time to time miraculous events have occurred, and some of them are recorded in the Bible. However, the persons who performed those miracles were not the servants of God. The earliest examples include the “magicians of Egypt” (Exodus 7:11, 22), and in the New Testament period we find Simon the sorcerer of Samaria and Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 8:9, 11; 13:6, 8). Those people the Word of God clearly identifies as the representatives of Satan—a mighty, but fallen angel.

The miracles performed by Satan and his mediums can be divided into two categories:

1. **Actual miracles.** We are told that the symbolic two-horned beast “deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.”

Says the Spirit of Prophecy: “Before the close of time [Satan] will work still greater wonders. So far as his power extends, he will perform actual miracles. Says the Scripture: ‘He . . . deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do,’ not merely those which he pretends to do. Something more than mere impostures is brought to view in this scripture.”<sup>2</sup>

2. **Counterfeit miracles.** Those miracles that he cannot perform, Satan will counterfeit. The archenemy is called a deceiver for a reason. When he could not duplicate the miracles that God performed through Moses, Satan counterfeited them through the priests and magicians. For the casual observers, they produced the same results as the true miracles that Moses displayed. “To human sight the rods were changed to serpents. Such they were believed to be by Pharaoh and his court. There was nothing in their appearance to distinguish them from the serpent produced by Moses.”<sup>3</sup>

“But there is a limit beyond which Satan cannot go, and here he calls deception to his aid and counterfeits the work which he has not power actually to perform.”<sup>4</sup>

In another reading in this Week of Prayer magazine are addressed some of the main ways by which satanic miracles will be performed. But for now, let us look again into Revelation 16 in connection with chapters 12, 13, and 14 of the same book. We have already identified the major forces in the enemy’s camp. They are the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

a. **The Dragon.** “Dragon” is a figurative name for Satan and also for paganism in its various forms. Modern forms of paganism are found in the Eastern religions and in their Western counterpart—the New Age movement. The essence of their teachings can be found exactly in the suggestion that the

*“Let us give no place to strange exercisings, which really take the mind away from the deep movings of the Holy Spirit. God’s work is ever characterized by calmness and dignity.”*

serpent offered to Eve in the first great lie—“Ye shall not surely die . . . and ye shall be as gods” (Genesis 3:4, 5). According to this view, human beings are actually divine—they only need to develop a higher level of consciousness. This philosophy teaches that all religions come from the same source—so any doctrines, dogmas, and beliefs which divide the followers of various religions should be dismissed in favor of the true source of spirituality which is in mysticism, in esoteric knowledge, and original mysteries. This source is thought to be God or Christ who dwells within a person. But the Christ of the New Age is not the Christ of the Scripture. He is considered to be just one of the many influential religious leaders such as Buddha or Mohammed. The notion is that by recognizing this single source of all religions and obtaining “the global consciousness,” human beings will enter into a New Age, the Age of Aquarius, the Age of God and the Holy Spirit.

As we can see, it is a synthesis—a mixing of truth and error that lies at the heart of the New Age philosophy. The other prominent feature of this movement is a very strong ecumenical pull. All religions in the world—of both East and West—can come together only if they discover the mysterious, essential wisdom.

We have been warned in advance against such evil sources of darkness: “There is danger in having the least connection with Theosophy, or Spiritualism. It is Spiritualism in essence and will always lead in the same path as Spiritualism. These are the doctrines that seduce the people whom Christ has purchased with His own blood.”<sup>5</sup>

Some experts on cults estimate that worldwide today around 30 to 50 million people are involved in some form of cultic organization. About 60 million people have experience in some

New Age practice or occultist thinking.

**b. The Beast.** The second major force in the unholy trio of the book of Revelation is the beast power. This power has a long history as a teacher and enforcer of erroneous doctrines and practices. The apostle Paul detected the emergence of that deceptive power in his days: “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. . . . And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:7–11).

We should not fail to observe that this power succeeded pagan Rome by adopting many of its beliefs and practices, including spiritualism and Sunday sacredness. It would take many pages to disclose all manifested forms of spiritualism within this religious system. Here we will only refer to two well-known forms, Marian apparitions and charismatic activities.

It is interesting to note that Marian apparitions began to appear with great intensity just as the three angels’ messages began to sound. Beginning with the French apparitions of La Salette in 1846, Lourdes in 1858, and Pontmain in 1871, continuing in the twentieth century with Fatima (Portugal) in 1917, Banneux and Beauraing (1932–33), Garabandal (Spain) (1962–63), and Medjugorje (Bosnia-Herzegovina) ongoing from 1981.

Apparitions of Mary have created apparition sites that have become the centers for pilgrimage and prayer with

reports of miraculous healings and other extraordinary events. The impact of these modern pilgrimage sites on both lay members and clergy in all parts of the world cannot be underestimated. It is noteworthy that those who most often receive supposed messages from Mary are children of both genders, as we are told.

The messages generally call the world to conversion and prayer and warn that the world would suffer if it does not heed those admonitions. Sometimes the messages may contain prophecies that have profound worldwide significance.

The second form of spiritualism pervaded the Roman Church in the wake of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (1963–1965). Pope John XXIII prayed for the new Pentecost, and this Vatican II encouraged charismatic gifts. Within two years after Vatican II, speaking in tongues broke out in Catholicism and within only 10 years the phenomenon had spread to Catholics in almost 100 countries.

**c. The False Prophet.** It is a truly sad fact that the churches whose roots go back to a mighty religious movement, known as the Protestant Reformation and which claim to be established on the Bible only, have embraced unscriptural teachings such as the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness. Today, these denominations, with very rare exceptions, have witnessed the Pentecostal and charismatic gift of tongues of which we spoke earlier. This modern “speaking in tongues” has nothing to do with the biblical gift of tongues.

The charismatic movement is a mighty force within Christianity today, and not without reason it is called “the third force in Christendom.” When considering its importance, some have compared this mighty movement with the Protestant Reformation and the launching of the apostolic church.

Although Pentecostalism emerged only at the beginning of the twentieth century, by the year 2000 it was estimated to be 300 million strong. Charismatic gifts (speaking in tongues and faith healing) did not appear in mainline Protestant churches until the early 1960s.

Having observed these outstanding spiritualistic phenomena taking place in our lifetime, we may draw two conclusions which have support in the prophetic word. One is that these spurious charismatic gifts promote the union of churches. When churches abandon a biblical platform and experience religious declension they tend to unite on common points of doctrine. Spiritualism, Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism are now gradually joining together because spiritualism performs miracles that have convincing power.

The other conclusion points to the purpose which Satan intends to accomplish when he employs spiritual forces in the end-time. Most of the people who claim to have received these modern spiritual gifts believe that they have experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain, just prior to the second coming of Christ.

Here is the inspired statement penned many decades ago: "Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these [popular] churches. Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under

a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world."<sup>6</sup>

How appropriate, how timely are the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 calling people out of spiritual Babylon, out of the great confusion that exists among the professing Christians of our days.

### What should be our course?

Seventh-day Adventists have very early in their history encountered the spiritual manifestations which did not bear the stamp of Heaven. Every time we come across the term "fanaticism" in the writings of Ellen White, we may know that the "power from beneath" was at work.

The first incidence of speaking in tongues and of similar spiritual manifestations was reported already in 1848. Even as late as 1908 Ellen White met with a young couple who came to her residence to inquire whether the spiritual gifts the young lady claimed to have experienced had their source in the Holy Spirit. Ellen White did not provide a definite answer at the time of the interview with that couple. However, she later received a vision regarding that matter, and this is what she wrote at that time to Brother and Sister Mackin: "Your wife, in speech, in song, and in strange exhibitions that are not in accordance with the genuine work of the Holy Spirit, is helping to bring in a phase of fanaticism that would do great injury to the cause of God, if allowed any place in our churches.

"My brother and sister, I have a message for you: you are starting on a false supposition. There is much of self woven into your exhibitions. Satan will come in with bewitching power through these exhibitions. It is high time that you call a halt. If God had given you a special message for His people, you would walk and work in all humility—not as if you were on the stage of a theater, but in the meekness of a follower of the lowly Jesus of Nazareth. You would carry an influence altogether different from that which you have been carrying."<sup>7</sup>

It appears that the Mackins soon disappeared from denominational

history. However, fanaticism that called forth the counsels remains a challenge facing the church of God in these last days. Thankfully, the inspired counsel given hundred years ago has lost nothing of its force with the passage of time: "You will be exposed to the fallacies of satanic agencies. Fearful waves of fanaticism will come. But God will deliver the people who will earnestly seek the Lord and consecrate themselves to His service."<sup>8</sup>

The work of the Holy Spirit has always been and always will be characterized by complete harmony with the sacred Word of God. Further, that work is always free from unhealthy excitement: "Such [spiritualistic] experiences will come to us from time to time. Let us give no place to strange exercisings, which really take the mind away from the deep movings of the Holy Spirit. God's work is ever characterized by calmness and dignity. We cannot afford to sanction anything that would bring in confusion and weaken our zeal in regard to the great work that God has given us to do in the world to prepare for the second coming of Christ."<sup>9</sup>

When it comes to the ministry of healing, the inspired word provides instruction how that work should be carried out in the last days, and why we should not rely on miracles.

"The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the sanitariums for treatment.

This is the provision the Lord has made whereby gospel medical mis-



sionary work is to be done for many souls."<sup>10</sup>

This is not to say that in the last stage of the conflict of ages the people of God will not receive miracle-working power. When the Holy Spirit comes upon the saints in the power of the latter rain, they will be able to perform mighty miracles. But this will take place only during the closing scenes of this earth's history, and that period of time will not last very long.

Miracles have not always accompanied the work of many of the great servants of God. One of them was John the Baptist. John, whose ministry was predicted through the prophecy of the "coming of Elijah" and whose work, in turn, represents the work of God's people in our days, did not perform any miracles. Yet, speaking of him, Christ said: "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" (Luke 7:28).

Jesus Himself, although He performed many miracles, did not consider the ability to perform miracles a true sign of discipleship. He even said this: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23). **What distinguishes the true followers of Jesus from those who only make pretension is**

**faithfulness to His teachings, in the keeping of God's commandments:**

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (verse 21).

True disciples of Jesus in the last days are identified in this way: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

A nobleman from Galilee had a son who was terminally ill and for whom there was no hope of recovery. The nobleman heard about Jesus, and in his desperation he came to Him hoping that Christ would heal his child. However, this nobleman's faith struggled: "His faith faltered when he saw only a plainly dressed man, dusty and worn with travel. He doubted that this Person could do what he had come to ask of Him."<sup>11</sup> In his mind, the father made his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah conditional upon the successful healing of his child. Christ, reading the father's mind, said: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (John 4:48). **Yes, signs and wonders—the father asked for miracles.** However, please note the following thought: "**Yet the nobleman had a degree of faith.**"<sup>12</sup>

The words of Jesus pierced through the nobleman's mind and heart. He realized his own selfishness and the ability of Jesus to read his thoughts. In agony, he pleaded with Christ: "Sir,

come down ere my child die" (verse 49). His faith took hold upon Christ. "The Saviour cannot withdraw from the soul that clings to Him, pleading its great need. 'Go thy way,' He said; 'thy son liveth.' The nobleman left the Saviour's presence with a peace and joy he had never known before."<sup>13</sup>

From this story we can learn valuable lessons. **Miracles could awaken faith only in those who already have a degree of faith and disposition to listen to God. No miracle, no matter how great, will generate faith in the heart of those who have not received the love for the truth.** The resurrection of Lazarus, recorded in John 11, is a good example in that regard.

In the end-time conflict between the forces of light and the powers of darkness, miracles will be an increasingly deceptive tactic of the enemy of souls.

God admonishes and instructs His people how to maintain their purity and discernment: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Revelation 16:15).

That "garment" is identified in Revelation 19:8 as the righteousness of saints.

What the people of God need in order to stand are not miracles but the righteousness of Christ as revealed in His holy Word and mediated through the power of the Holy Spirit. The deceiver's days are numbered and God's faithful will be victorious.

May we today be clothed in white linen, never doubting and asking for miracles, but trusting in the One who is the greatest Miracle of all! Amen. *R*

## References

<sup>1</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 624.

<sup>2</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 698.

<sup>3</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 264.

<sup>4</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 698.

<sup>5</sup> *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

<sup>7</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

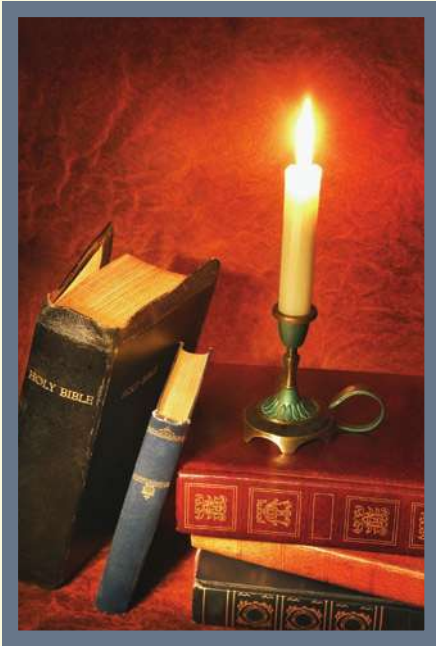
<sup>11</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 197.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198 (emphasis supplied).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 199.

# “To the Law and the Testimony”

By B. Monteiro



**T**here is something powerful about putting information into writing. Official legal documents, birth and death records, the legislative edicts of governments, and long-sought peace treaties between warring nations all exemplify the fact that the weightiest, most important matters in life are put in writing.

Vision is the strongest, most widely used of the five senses granted to humans; therefore when something can be seen in writing it carries far greater impact. In fact, “where there is no vision, the people perish.” The wise words in the first half of this Bible verse are frequently quoted, while the remainder of the verse is often omitted. So let us read the entire verse, for it has a complete message for us: “**Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he**” (Proverbs 29:18, emphasis supplied).

Clear vision—seeing things in their fullest, most accurate perspective—is here associated with the keeping of God’s law. This results in happiness. Do you want to be happy? Are you really as happy as you would like to be? The secret is in viewing the whole panorama that our Creator has revealed to humanity and in obeying the law of Ten Commandments which He has seen fit to put in writing—not merely

on plain paper, ancient parchment, or modern electronic media—but actually engraved by His own finger on tables of stone. And there is even better news: He is willing to write this law on the fleshy tablets of our heart.

## Where shall I go? What shall I do?

One of the most tragic predicaments that can be experienced in the human condition is aimlessness. In today’s generation, suicide is becoming increasingly frequent among young people all around the world. Why? It is often because a person even in the bloom and freshness of youth may see no real meaning in life; there is no sense of hope, no anchor, no feeling of security.

Yet we need not wander aimlessly! Surely we can be thankful for that which our gracious, loving Creator has written for us. He tells us plainly where we can ultimately go through His power. He tells us plainly what to do and what not to do.

“In the clear light of the Word of God, we may read plainly the meaning of sin. John declares that sin is ‘the transgression of the law’ (1 John 3:4). . . .

“Cannot men see that to belittle the law of God is to reproach Christ?”<sup>1</sup>

Notice that the above statement is not only for those who reject God’s law. Even those who may profess to keep it could actually be minimizing its importance. The Lord wants us to **love** His law, as the psalmist declared: “**O how love I thy law!** it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for **thy testimonies are**

**my meditation**” (Psalm 119:97–99, emphasis supplied).

God wants us to view this world in its proper perspective. Our vision is too dim and shortsighted—we need eyesalve from heaven (Revelation 3:18).

“We are thankful that we have a sure word of prophecy, so that none of us need be deceived. We know that there are heresies and fables in our world at the present time, and we want to know what is truth. . . . Many may come to you and tell you that they have the truth, but it is your privilege to search the Scriptures for yourself.”<sup>2</sup>

## The sure word of prophecy

The descriptions of Christ’s coming are historical—they are simply history written beforehand. And with Him from whom this revelation comes, there is no difference whatsoever between the past and the future. What has been and what shall be are matters of equal certainty.

## What is written about the future?

How much concern do people have about the future? It is so important that successful people actually mold their life around it. We check tomorrow’s weather report to know what plans to make. Often when a new baby arrives, the parents begin a long-term goal of saving money for the child’s future educational expenses. On a larger scale, national governments and international commissions anxiously look to the future to foresee challenges facing the entire planet through the depletion of natural resources, the quest for renewable energy, and the environmental implications of global warming.

## *“Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then?”*

Yet what about the future in terms of the spiritual realm? Truly successful, victorious people will not fail to place eternal realities as their first priority in planning for the future. And again, the key to unveiling a future clouded in mystery has been put in writing. The answers are found in the Word of God and the Testimonies of His Spirit of Prophecy.

In considering this future, certain basic facts should remain foremost in mind:

### **1. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN TO REDEEM THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Revelation 1:7). See also John 14:1–6; Colossians 3:4; 2 Timothy 4:8.)

### **2. SIGNS FORETELL THAT THIS EVENT IS VERY SOON.** (Study these chapters: Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Revelation 13.)

**3. OUR CASES ARE PENDING IN THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT TO BE CONCLUDED BEFORE THE LORD RETURNS.** “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear” (1 Peter 4:17, 18)? Jesus says, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12). The apostle exhorts, “Little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness

is born of him” (1 John 2:28, 29). (See also Malachi 3:1–3; Luke 17:33–36).

**4. JUST BEFORE CHRIST RETURNS, AGENCIES OF SATAN WILL BE INTENSELY ACTIVE** in full operation to deceive unconsecrated multitudes to prevent them from choosing to prepare for the day of God. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:13–15).

Prophecy has told us already that in the last days, sights of a supernatural character will be deceiving the world. In essence, you will not be able to trust your own eyes. How crucial it is, therefore, to stick to the law and to the testimony to know what is real and true—and what is not.

**5. DESPITE TREMENDOUS OBSTACLES AND DIFFICULTIES, WE ALL CAN HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF SHARING WITH OTHERS** about the issues at stake **ahead of time**. Everyone is to have the chance to make an intelligent decision for or against Christ, but how can they unless someone explains these things to them? “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

### **Healings**

By practicing lies for thousands of years, Satan has become a master counterfeiter. He will appear to be a great benefactor of the human race, willing to bring healing to the sick and suffering: “God’s Word declares that Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick, and then will suddenly

remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. These works of apparent healing will bring Seventh-day Adventists to the test. Many who have had great light will fail to walk in the light, because they have not become one with Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

In our days there are many who claim to possess divine power to heal the sick. Some call this type of healing faith healing. We strongly suspect that most of those healings come from the source that is not holy. The great majority of so-called “faith healers” do not teach or practice obedience to all God’s commandments, and further, they do not follow Christ’s pattern in the ministry of healing.

“The apostles of nearly all forms of spiritism claim to have the power to cure the diseased. They attribute their power to electricity, magnetism, the so-called ‘sympathetic remedies,’ or to latent forces within the mind of man.”<sup>4</sup>

There is, however a genuine form of healing: “The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God’s servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

“For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Speaking in tongues**

Satan is capable of falsifying many of the spiritual gifts that God bestowed upon the early Christian church. One of those gifts is the biblical gift of tongues. The text in Acts 2:4 informing us that on the Day of Pentecost when the disciples “were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance,” clearly indicates the use of actual, foreign languages spoken by

## *“Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said?”*

the Jews living in the Diaspora. The analysis of 1 Corinthians 14, which establishes the rules for the use of spiritual gifts in religious assemblies, primarily for prophesying and speaking in tongues, does not support the proposition that by their nature the tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 are any different than the tongues in Acts 2. Most definitely, the speaking in tongues described in 1 Corinthians 14 was not the gibberish spoken in many Pentecostal and charismatic assemblies of our days. The gift of tongues was not a gift possessed by every member of the apostolic church. Further, it was considered one of the least of the spiritual gifts, and it did not necessarily accompany baptism by the Holy Spirit as claimed by modern proponents of “speaking in tongues.”

Here is the inspired commentary on genuine “speaking in tongues” as described through the gift of prophecy: “The Holy Spirit did for [the apostles] that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were laboring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Apparitions and myths**

Another powerful counterfeit miracle is the apparition, a demonic appearance in the form of a human who, in most cases, is dead or presumed dead. “Many will be confronted by the spirits of devils personating beloved relatives or friends and declaring the most dangerous heresies. These visitants will appeal to our tenderest sympathies and will work miracles to sustain their pretensions. We must be prepared to withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Custom-designed attempts to deceive God’s remnant**

The enemy of souls has prepared in his arsenal tactics so sophisticated that “if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24). **“The very last deception of Satan will be**

**to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.** ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them.

“Likewise, he works through persons who have been reprov’d for some inconsistency in their religious life, for some course of action which was dangerous to themselves and others. Instead of receiving the testimony as a blessing from God, they refuse the means God uses to set them right. Such apparently may be very zealous for God, but they put their own interpretation upon the Word and make it contradict what the Lord has revealed in the testimonies. They think they are doing God’s service, but such work God has not given them to do.”<sup>8</sup>

Through various means—including certain high-tech websites, **“there will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded.”<sup>9</sup>**

### **The impersonation of Christ**

The crowning act of deception will be Satan’s attempt to imitate the second coming of Christ. “As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but he will personate Jesus Christ; and the world who has

rejected the truth will receive him as the Lord of lords and King of kings. . . .

“As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. . . . This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is ‘the great power of God’ (Acts. 8:10).

“But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures.”<sup>10</sup>

All these counterfeit miracles are possible because “Satan can lead deceived souls to great lengths. He can pervert their judgment, their sight, and their hearing.”<sup>11</sup>

The “very elect” should not feel overly confident, for demons are on their track: “If our eyes could be opened to discern the fallen angels at work with those who feel at ease and consider themselves safe, we would not feel so secure. Evil angels are upon our track every moment. . . . Are we prepared to resist them by the word of God, the only weapon we can use successfully?”<sup>12</sup>

### **“Study to show thyself approved unto God”**

“Like the noble Bereans, we should search the Scriptures carefully, prayerfully, to become acquainted with the utterances of God. We should inquire, not what the minister, the church, or some personal friend may say, but what the Lord says. ‘To the law and to the testimony. If they [ministers, churches, or friends] speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them’ (Isaiah 8:20).

“While searching for the truth as for hid treasures, light from the written word breaks into the mind. The benumbed and dormant faculties are awakened to new life and energy, the limited capacities are expanded to comprehend the truth, and earnest efforts are put forth to

bring others into the light. Then why is it that there is such blindness in regard to the Scriptures? Why are ideas entertained, and sometimes taught to others, that are so vague and inconsistent? It is because the heart is not in harmony with the revealed word; the conscience has been so long depraved by practices condemned by that word, that the mental and moral powers are incapable of discerning spiritual things."<sup>13</sup>

"There is no safety for you unless you understand what saith the Scriptures, and carry this out, and weave it into your daily life and experience. Carry it with you wherever you go. Thus you will be fortified against the delusions that are filling the world at the present time and will obtain the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>14</sup>

We need to allow God to touch us with His word that the moistening showers of the latter rain may refresh the soil of our heart, and new life may sprout and bring forth spiritual fruit.

### How can I tell others?

Now is the time for even the smallest churches and the weakest saints to arouse from slumber. No one is too frail or unimportant to be active. Do not wait for someone to tell you what to do or when and where to begin working—the Master has already told you in His Word! What greater authority can there be? By diligently searching the Scriptures, even minds of limited capacity can become mighty in God. In meekness and reverence, meet the needs of those around you. Remember practical godliness and as the door opens, seize upon every opportunity to share with others the precious truths you know.

"The small churches, although they are but few, may be a power for the truth. Everyone should feel that a solemn responsibility rests upon him to build up his little church in the most holy faith. The very fact that there are only a few should cause every individual member to seek most earnestly for a living connection with God."<sup>15</sup>

### How can hard hearts be softened?

"Many will hear the message, but will refuse to heed; nevertheless the warning is to be given to all in clear, plain tones.

Not only is the truth to be presented in public assemblies; **house-to-house work is to be done. Let this work go forward in the name of the Lord. Those who engage in it have the heavenly angels as their companions.** . . . .

"Let us study the life and death of Christ. Let us do all in our power to work out the plan of God. What tongue can tell, what pen unfold, the mighty results of looking to Jesus and living His life!"<sup>16</sup>

"O, search with prayer, most earnest prayer, to know what God has written; and to trace the footprints of Jesus in His life of perfect obedience to His Father's commandments. Endeavor to catch the inspiration in expounding the word, the sure word of prophecy, that it shall not be as dead letter, but a living, burning, shining light from the throne of God, preparing a people to endure the trials, the sufferings and persecution which Christ endured."<sup>17</sup>

"It is a wonderful privilege to be able to understand the will of God as revealed in the sure word of prophecy. This places on us a heavy responsibility. God expects us to impart to others the knowledge that He has given us. . . .

"So far as his opportunities extend, **everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same responsibility as was the prophet of Israel** to whom came the word: 'Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. [Ezekiel 33:8, 9 quoted].

**"Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God's judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said?"<sup>18</sup>**

### Do I see myself in the final work?

"In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God's people. . . . Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts

were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth."<sup>19</sup>

"All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in."<sup>20</sup>

"Two Bible workers were seated in a family. With the open Bible before them, they presented the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour. Earnest prayer was offered to God, and hearts were softened and subdued by the influence of the Spirit of God. Their prayers were uttered with freshness and power. As the Word of God was explained, I saw that a soft, radiant light illumined the Scriptures, and I said, softly, **'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled'** (Luke 14:23)."<sup>21</sup>

### Conclusion

Dear brothers and sisters, there is no time to waste, no time to pretend that the final scenes described are afar off. The reality is: They are even at the doors. Let us constantly keep in mind the Lord's sacrifice and intercession in our behalf. Let us each determine to "quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings" (1 Thessalonians 5:19, 20). *✠*

### References

- <sup>1</sup> *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, pp. 134, 135.
- <sup>2</sup> *The Review and Herald*, April 3, 1888.
- <sup>3</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 53.
- <sup>4</sup> *Evangelism*, p. 606.
- <sup>5</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 54.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 39, 40.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 560.
- <sup>8</sup> *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 311. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>9</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 48. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>10</sup> *Maranatha*, p. 276.
- <sup>11</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 351.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 302.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, November 26, 1885. [Words in brackets are in the original.]
- <sup>14</sup> *The Review and Herald*, April 3, 1888.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, August 11, 1903. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>17</sup> *The Paulson Collection*, p. 139.
- <sup>18</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 19, 20. [Emphasis supplied.]
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 126.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.
- <sup>21</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 35. [Emphasis supplied.]



# “A Famine of Hearing the Words of the Lord”

By Alwyn Vedhasingh

**A** **famine** is an acute shortage of food, usually accompanied by malnutrition and starvation. Historically, famines have occurred in ancient times and in the modern world as well. The results: Men, women, children, young, and old run to and fro in search of food that will satisfy their hunger and keep them from starvation.

God foretells, through the prophet Amos, the coming of a time when He will send famine—a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord. People will be wandering, seeking, looking for the Word of God and yet will not find it. It will no longer be available. It will be “off-line.”

God has given His people His Word, which is able to make them wise unto salvation through Christ. The Word is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good words” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). God wants all to be saved, but it can only happen when we come to the knowledge of the truth and believe it (1 Timothy 2:3, 4). His words are spirit and life (John 6:63). We are commanded to eat the Word daily as we do with our physical food (John 6:50–58). We need His Word to strengthen our faith, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

## Unique and precious food

The Bible came into existence by the inspiration of God. It took about

sixteen hundred years to complete it by forty different authors, who lived in different eras of history. God intended His Word to be the spiritual food for the human race. He sent His prophets, who walked throughout the land, giving warning after warning and call after call to repentance. But the children of Israel did not turn their heart to His Word. Therefore, around the fourth century before Christ, the voice from heaven went silent, when the book of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, was completed. We have no evidence that there were any prophetic revelations until the beginning of the Christian era. Then the voice of God through the prophets was heard again for about a century.

Early in the second century, the voice of the prophet had again ceased, because the church had departed from the truth, compromised the principles, and slid into apostasy. Many centuries elapsed before the prophetic word was again restored to God’s people through the Spirit of Prophecy.

## Famine foretold

Around 750 B.C., a farmer and shepherd had been called by God to be a prophet. His mission was to warn Israel of God’s coming judgment if they did not repent. Sadly, the nation did not heed the call to repentance. As a result, they were led into the Assyrian captivity. Part of the fulfillment of Amos’ prophecy concerned an unusual famine that would come upon the people: A FAMINE FOR THE WORD OF GOD! (See Amos 8:11, 12.)

## Why would this famine come?

Instead of turning to the Lord with repentant hearts, the Jews had been putting far off the day of doom (Amos 6:3). The people ignored God’s messages repeatedly, yet He still cautioned them with warnings:

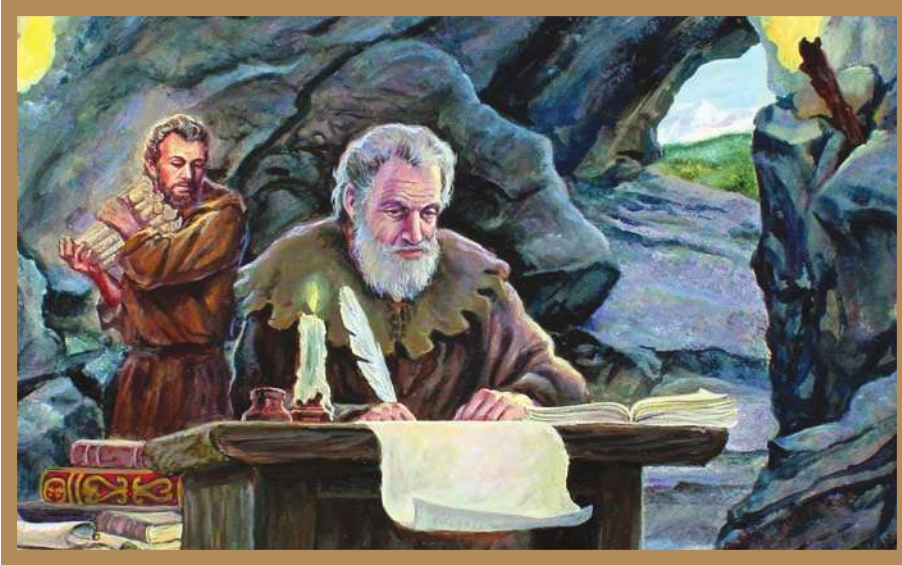
“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Isaiah 55:6).

The warnings through Amos came during a time of national prosperity, when the people were wandering far away from the Lord. However, God’s patience was coming to an end with ancient Israel.

Today, there is also a famine for the Word of God—different in some ways, yet similar in other ways.

## What does this prophecy mean? When will this famine of hearing the words of the Lord come?

The Bible is the most translated book in almost every language and dialect. And it is sold and distributed free of charge more than any other publication. Therefore the warning concerning the “famine of hearing the words of the Lord” is quite surprising. Does this mean that all Bibles will be rounded up and burned? That does not seem to be necessary, since just having Bibles around doesn’t mean that they are read, believed, or understood. However, it does seem that God’s work of proclaiming His words through His children, as well as through the media, will be shut off, perhaps through economic downturns, persecution, governmental



regulations, or a combination of these and other factors.

We know that the predicted famine for the Word of God is fulfilling gradually. The real, most accurate translations of the Bible are fast disappearing from many churches and homes. Carrying a Bible to church is often considered old-fashioned and outdated. Soon it will be as scarce as is bread during a time of literal famine. If we love righteousness, we will hear His Word. If we love evil, we will hear the strong delusions that suit us, and we will be lost. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.)

**DURING AMOS' ERA:** Amos was prophesying during the reign of Jeroboam, the king of the ten tribes of the house of Israel. The prophet foresaw the future declension and apostasy of Israel right up to the latter days just before the second advent of Christ. Indeed, we have such situation of famine today.

Today we find the same forces attacking anyone who preaches the Word. He or she will always be blamed with similar accusations. Against Amos it was said, "Amos hath conspired against [the king] in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words." Amos was warned: "Flee thee away into the land of Judah" (Amos 7:10, 12). God summarized the reaction of the people of that day: "Ye . . . commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not" (Amos 2:12).

**DURING JEREMIAH'S TIME:** "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it" (Jeremiah 6:10).

**DURING JESUS' TIME:** Although Jesus had done miracles of mercy, we read nonetheless that most of the Gadarenes "began to pray him to depart out of their coasts" (Mark 5:17). Generation after generation, people try in every way to bring ruin upon those who dare speak the truth.

**DURING THE APOSTOLIC ERA:** The apostle John was banished to the island of Patmos for the Word of God (Revelation 1:9). The prophecy of Revelation tells of a great company of believers who lived and died for the Word of God. Note carefully that these martyrs and their end-time kinsmen were slain for the Word of God. They were slain because they loved the living and written Word of God and kept the commandments recorded in it (Revelation 6:9; 12:17).

**DURING THE DARK AGES:** The Middle Ages are also known as the Dark Ages. It was an era during which the Roman church kept the Word of God out of the hands of the people. Millions of true believers died for the Word of the Almighty. It was very dan-

gerous to possess a copy of the Bible or even portions of it.

During that period of persecution, the followers of Christ had to suffer much more than at any other time in history.

However, all the dangers and adversities they had to meet were powerless to destroy or weaken their love for God's Word. Those who did not own a copy of the Scriptures found ways to read it or hear it read. And many memorized portions of the Bible.

The history of the Waldensian Christians shows their love for the Bible in the face of the greatest perils. Multitudes perished by the sword, at the stake, through starvation, beatings, and other forms of torture.

Peter Waldo translated the Scriptures into French and spread the Word to many spiritually hungry souls. But soon the churchmen in the area ordered Waldo to stop his work. The clergy persecuted his followers, who were forced to flee. Nevertheless, through their dispersion, the light was carried into other areas towards the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The Waldenses were proficient students of the Bible. Even unlearned members were able to recite the entire book of Job and many Psalms by heart. Others had a good knowledge of the whole New Testament. During those days, because it was very dangerous for anyone to carry the Bible, the Waldensian ministers memorized large portions of the Holy Scriptures.

There was a time in England when the Bible was proscribed under severe penalties. Because of the fierce opposition of the clergy, William Tyndale's English translation of the Bible had to be smuggled into England. And it was not long before the bishop of London ordered that all the copies of the Holy Book that could be found in the homes of the people should be gathered up and burned.

Tyndale was kidnapped in Antwerp, Belgium, and put into prison. After nearly two years, he was tied to a stake, strangled, and burned in 1536. While his enemies were tying him, he cried out: "Lord open the eyes of the king of England!"

Now, in our days, when Bibles are so widely available, it's hard to imagine what it was like through most of history. Yet, in some nations, even today Bibles are hard to come by or are dangerous to possess, and conversion to Christianity can be punishable by death.

**SOME STRATEGIC ATTACKS OF THE ENEMY:** Down through the ages, the Bible has continually come under the attack of the enemy. From the beginning, Satan has always hated the Bible because it reveals the whole plan of salvation. The enemy's chief aim has constantly been to destroy God's written Word. Atheists and infidels have spent time and energies in trying to obliterate the Bible and its influence. The papacy did her best to burn it and to blot its readers out of existence. Despite these obstacles, nevertheless, God has miraculously intervened and preserved His Word. Through His mercy, today we have Bibles in abundance. And now that the Holy Scriptures are so widely available, the enemy has found new ways to discredit it or just to make it seem irrelevant to modern concepts.

**SELF-INFLICTED FAMINE:** God has provided for a "feast," not a "famine"! Therefore, the present spiritual famine is self-inflicted. We have an abundance of Bibles. Never before in the history of the nations has the world enjoyed such free access to God's Word as in our days. But many read the Bible from cover to cover as a matter of routine and gain nothing for their soul.

The Word of God should not just be read, but deeply studied and well understood. People like to hear today's popular preachers but hardly spend time in searching the Scriptures for themselves. They actually do not know what the Bible says. In this sense they go spiritually hungry.

**POST-MODERN CULTURE:** We're living in a post-modern world, within a culture saturated with godless philosophies. These are "perilous" times (2 Timothy 3:1, 2). "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:4). Postmodernism is not just everyone

doing what is right in his or her own eyes (Judges 17:6; 21:25). The present-day thought has actually dragged society down to the point of subtly rejecting the Word altogether. This is why people of faith are crying out: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do" (Psalm 11:3)? The world today believes that there is no absolute written truth—that nothing can be known with certainty. And, as a result of the present spiritual famine, our society is impacted and obsessed with pleasure-seeking and lawlessness.

Also, the people of God may be partly responsible for the existing "famine." When they neglect to faithfully exemplify the Word of the Lord in their daily life, those who are watching them may go spiritually hungry. Likewise, when incompetent men are ordained as shepherds, the flock will languish from lack of green pastures. This may also be the case when the preaching of the Word is displaced by other programs such as pageants, plays, cantatas, and other forms of entertainment.

There is more. When men and women substitute their own ideas for the Word of God, when error prevails under the pretense of truth, when tradition is emphasized instead of the clear-cut teachings of Christ, there is "famine" in the land.

"The Bible declares that in the last days men will be absorbed in worldly pursuits, in pleasure and money-getting. They will be blind to eternal realities."<sup>1</sup>

### **MATERIAL LUXURY**

In the days of Amos, the Jews were working out their own defeat (6:1–8). Luxury and pride prompted the people to put far off the day of doom in their minds. They did not want to think about the future. And they even forgot to thank God for their present abundance. The Lord had warned Israel about this danger (Deuteronomy 8:11–14, 17). Jesus also warned the disciples that the cares of this life, the love of pleasures, and the ambition for riches can easily choke our interest in the Word (Luke 8:14). Today, in their search for these things, multitudes forget about God and take no time to

study the Bible. This is a form of self-inflicted famine.

### **SOCIAL AND MORAL DEGRADATION**

The social and moral corruption prevalent in Israel in the days of Amos is described in chapter 2, verses 6, 7. We see a similar situation in our society today. The attractions of the big cities (with lively streets, shopping malls, saloons, night clubs, gambling houses, theaters, and cinemas, for example), constitute a trap, especially for the younger generation. It is no wonder, therefore, that the overwhelming majority loathe even the "smell" of spiritual food, the Word of God. The unavoidable result: spiritual famine.

Satan is not concerned about worldlings who are already in his trap. He is "walking about, seeking whom he may devour" among those who profess the present truth (1 Peter 5:8). Therefore, we need more than human wisdom and power to keep the attractions of the world out of our heart out of our homes, and out of the church. Otherwise, there will be famine also in our midst.

### **RELIGIOUS CORRUPTION**

Amos further describes a sad picture in chapter 8:13, 14. (1) Young people fainting from "thirst" and (2) others falling and not rising again. Doesn't this depict the daily life of many Christians today? Suffering from a lack of spiritual food, they are easily overcome by temptation and often lose interest in the things of God. **The condition of many churches today is one "spiritual malnutrition."**

The world is full of negative influences under which people seek material advantages, temporal comforts, and an extravagant lifestyle. And, influenced by the spirit of the world, many—even professed believers—are suffering from spiritual malnutrition by their own misdirected choice. How tragic for those who do not know better!

### **AFTER THE CLOSE OF PROBATION:**

"The plagues were falling upon the inhabitants of the earth. Some were denouncing God and cursing Him. Others rushed to the people of God and begged to be taught how they

## *Many forget about God in their search for wealth. Others have filled their time enjoying their luxuries so that they have no time for the Word of God. This is self-inflicted famine.*

might escape His judgments. But the saints had nothing for them. The last tear for sinners had been shed, the last agonizing prayer offered, the last burden borne, the last warning given. The sweet voice of mercy was no more to invite them. When the saints, and all heaven, were interested for their salvation, they had no interest for themselves. Life and death had been set before them. Many desired life, but made no effort to obtain it. They did not choose life, and now there was no atoning blood to cleanse the guilty, no compassionate Saviour to plead for them, and cry, 'Spare, spare the sinner a little longer.' All heaven had united with Jesus, as they heard the fearful words, 'It is done. It is finished.' The plan of salvation had been accomplished, but few had chosen to accept it. And as mercy's sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked. With terrible distinctness they heard the words, 'Too late! too late!'

"Those who had not prized God's Word were hurrying to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, and from the north to the east, to seek the Word of the Lord. Said the angel, 'They shall not find it. There is a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord.' What would they not give for one word of approval from God! but no, they must hunger and thirst on. Day after day have they slighted salvation, prizing earthly riches and earthly pleasure higher than any heavenly treasure or inducement. They have rejected Jesus and despised His saints. The filthy must remain filthy forever." <sup>12</sup>

**PREPARING FOR THE YEARS OF FAMINE:** Following the example of Joseph back in ancient Egypt, we need now to prepare for the future. Now, during these years of plenty, we should be treasuring the Word of God for the coming time of famine.

"The world is perishing for want of the gospel. There is a famine for the word of God. There are few who preach the word unmixed with human tradition. Though men have the Bible in their hands, they do not receive the blessing that God has placed in it for them. The Lord calls upon His servants to carry His message to the people. The word of everlasting life must be given to those who are perishing in their sins." <sup>3</sup>

God has entrusted His church with a commission to evangelize the world. To carry out this task, we must study the Bible daily, understand it for ourselves, and live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In this way we can help others—and by helping others we will be helping ourselves—while the door of probation is still open.

"There is earnest work for every pair of hands to do. . . . There are so many that need to be helped. The heart of him who lives, not to please himself, but to be a blessing to those who have so few blessings, will thrill with satisfaction. Let every idler awake and face the realities of life. Take the word of God and search its pages. If you are doers of the word, life will indeed be to you a living reality, and you will find that the reward is abundant.

"The Lord has a place for everyone in His great plan. Talents that are not needed are not bestowed. Supposing that the talent is small. God has a place for it, and that one talent, if faithfully used, will do the very work God designs that it should do. The talents of the humble cottager are needed in the house-to-house labor and can accomplish more in this work than brilliant gifts.

"A thousand doors of usefulness are open before us. We lament the scanty resources at present available, while various and urgent demands are pressing us for means and men. Were we thoroughly in earnest, even now we could multiply the resources a hundredfold. Selfishness and self-indulgence bar the way.

"Church members, let the light shine forth. Let your voices be heard in humble prayer, in witness against intemperance, the folly, and the amusements of this world, and in the proclamation of the truth for this time. Your voice, your influence, your time—all these are gifts from God and are to be used in winning souls to Christ.

"Visit your neighbors and show an interest in the salvation of their souls. Arouse every spiritual energy to action. Tell those whom you visit that the end of all things is at hand. . . .

"Tell them how you found Jesus and how blessed you have been since you gained an experience in His service. Tell them what blessing comes to you as you sit at the feet of Jesus and learn precious lessons from His word. Tell them of the gladness and joy that there is in the Christian life. Your warm, fervent words will convince them that you have found the pearl of great price. Let your cheerful, encouraging words show that you have certainly found the higher way. This is genuine missionary work, and as it is done, many will awake as from a dream. . . .

"My brother, my sister, what are you doing for Christ? Are you seeking to be a blessing to others? Are your lips uttering words of kindness, sympathy, and love? Are you putting forth earnest efforts to win others to the Saviour?" <sup>4</sup>

"God is not unmindful of those who labor in love to give the word of life to perishing souls, who in their turn reach forth their hands for food for other hungry souls." <sup>5</sup>

May this noble act of feeding the starving with spiritual food be the life priority of each of us while opportunity lingers, before the famine strikes! ❧

### References

<sup>1</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Writings*, pp. 281, 282.

<sup>3</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 228, 229.

<sup>4</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 37–39.

<sup>5</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 370.

# IT IS FINISHED!

By Romulo P. Borges



**T**hroughout the ages, the children of God have cherished the blessed hope of seeing the history of sin coming to an end with the glorious triumph of good over evil. In the establishment of Christ's eternal kingdom lies the assurance of victory and salvation. All the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament were comforted and strengthened by this coming event. Likewise, in the New Testament era, the holy men of God found in this event their inspiration and motivation to live with Christ and for Christ. Today we also have the same hope. We want to see the King and take part in His royalty, His life, and His glory.

## The eternal morning and the eternal night

"The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come" (Isaiah 21:11, 12).

This prophecy of Isaiah against the Edomites has a special application to the end of our world's history. The glorious appearing of Jesus in the clouds of heaven signals the end of earth's tragic saga of sin and marks the begin-

ning of eternity. At the return of the Saviour, eternal day will dawn upon all the faithful children of God. This event assures life and victory to the overcom-

ers, and, on the other hand, this will be the end of the wicked—the end of the lovers of this world and of sin.

"With earnest longing, God's people await the tokens of their coming King. As the watchmen are accosted, 'What of the night?' the answer is given unfalteringly, 'The morning cometh, and also the night' (Isaiah 21:11, 12). Light is gleaming upon the clouds above the mountaintops. Soon there will be a revealing of His glory. The Sun of Righteousness is about to shine forth. The morning and the night are both at hand—the opening of endless day to the righteous, the settling down of eternal night to the wicked."<sup>1</sup>

On that great day the final separation between the righteous and the wicked will occur, and the difference between those that obey God and those that do not obey Him will be clearly seen.

The children of God sleeping in the dust of the earth will resurrect to immortal life, and those that are alive will be transformed. The "trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:52, 53).

The children of God will meet the King, but the children of the wicked

one will be eternally lost as candidates for everlasting destruction. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

## Silence in Heaven

"And when [the angel] had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (Revelation 8:1).

At the end of the sixth seal, Revelation 6:14 says that "the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." This will take place at the second coming of Christ. The sixth seal closes its history with the glorious appearing of the Saviour, followed by a silence in heaven for about half an hour (the 7<sup>th</sup> seal). Heaven will be emptied at that time. All the angels will compose the retinue of the King.

The half-hour silence has been interpreted by SDA pioneers as follows: one prophetic hour corresponds to 15 days, and a prophetic half hour is seven and a half days. The Bible text says "about the space of half an hour," which corresponds to seven days. E. G. White describes the trip of the saints to the heavenly kingdom in these words:

"We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory."<sup>2</sup>

# *All the promises in the Word of God point to the overcomers, and all of us are involved in this battle. We are struggling against ourselves, because our greatest enemy is "self."*

## **Greeted by the King of kings**

Traveling to heaven will be an unforgettable experience for all the saints. Accompanied by Christ and the holy angels, the redeemed will cross galaxies and will see stars and worlds. They will contemplate glorious things never seen before by mortal eyes. Eternally saved, they will begin to enjoy eternity.

To welcome the redeemed to the kingdom, Jesus will say, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in" (Isaiah 26:2).

The messenger of the Lord describes this event: "I saw a very great number of angels bring from the [holy city] glorious crowns—a crown for every saint, with his name written thereon. As Jesus called for the crowns, angels presented them to Him, and with His own right hand the lovely Jesus placed the crowns on the heads of the saints. In the same manner the angels brought the harps, and Jesus presented them also to the saints. The commanding angels first struck the note, and then every voice was raised in grateful, happy praise, and every hand skillfully swept over the strings of the harp, sending forth melodious music in rich and perfect strains.

"Then I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. He laid hold of the gate and swung it back on its glittering hinges and bade the nations that had kept the truth enter in. Within the city there was everything to feast the eye. Rich glory they beheld everywhere. Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, 'I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally.'"<sup>3</sup>

## **The enjoyment of the redeemed**

From time immemorial human beings have tried to build in this earth a kingdom with equality for all—without misery and without evil. Projects have been elaborated, battles have been fought, but all without success. The dream of humanity to enjoy only good things and to live in a perfect new world order has never materialized. The political science of many generations has never been able to achieve a righteous society, let alone a perfect one. This dream will become a reality only when the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven. The apostle John affirmed: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2).

Human language is incapable of describing the glories of the celestial kingdom. Things that human eyes have not seen, that ears have not heard, nor they have ever entered into the imagination of men and women are the things that God has prepared for the redeemed:

**NO MORE TEARS, NOR WEEPING.** "God shall wipe away all tears . . . ; and there shall be no more . . . crying" (Revelation 21:4).

**NO MORE PAIN.** "Neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

**NO MORE SICKNESS.** "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isaiah 33:24).

**NO PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DEFECTS.** "Then the eyes of the blind

shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isaiah 35:5, 6).

**NO MORE DEATH AND FUNERAL PROCESSIONS.** "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying" (Revelation 21:4).

**THE PRESENCE OF GOD WILL BE WITH HIS CHILDREN.** "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3).

**CREATION WILL BE IN PERFECT HARMONY AS IN THE BEGINNING.** "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 65:25).

**THERE WILL BE EVERLASTING JOY AND HAPPINESS AMONG THE REDEEMED.** "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

"And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32:18).

"Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (Isaiah 60:18).

**NO MORE TEMPTATIONS AND SIN.** "No tree of knowledge of good and evil will afford opportunity for temptation. No tempter is there, no possibility of wrong."<sup>4</sup>

"Affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum 1:9).

"[In the new earth], immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There is no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt

to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.

"All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise."<sup>5</sup>

### Who shall be ready?

The Bible expression "to him that overcometh" identifies those who shall inherit eternal life. All the promises in the Word of God point to the overcomers, and all of us are involved in

this battle. We are struggling against ourselves, because our greatest enemy is "self." It is imperative that we submit to the power of Christ in our battle against selfishness, pride, and other sins. We have to struggle against the giant living within us. Yet, self is not the only enemy we must defeat. We have a second great enemy—the world. This world with all its vanities, pleasures, and sins must be vanquished. Primarily, however, we have the archenemy—Satan. But victory is within our reach. Covered with the righteousness of Christ, everyone will receive sufficient power to be victorious. All those who daily overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil will be ready for heaven.

"If you would be a saint in heaven, you must first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in society. Jesus does not change the character at His coming. The work of transformation must be done now. Our daily lives are determining our destiny. Defects of character must be repented of and overcome through the grace of Christ, and a symmetrical character must be formed while in this probationary state, that we may be fitted for the mansions above."<sup>6</sup>

"Those who, while having all the light of truth flashing upon their souls, should have works corresponding to their avowed faith but are allured by sin, setting up idols in their hearts, corrupting their souls before God, and polluting those who unite with them in sin, will have their names blotted out of the book of life and be left in midnight darkness."<sup>7</sup>

### Appeal

It is sad to know that in comparison with the world's population, only a few will enjoy the privileges of being in heaven. Only very few will be rewarded with eternal life. Immersed in the cares of this life, absorbed with worldly pursuits, and seeking the pleasures of the flesh, millions upon millions will close their earthly history like irrational beings, without hope and without salvation!

"A few, yes, only a few, of the vast number who people the earth will be saved unto life eternal, while the masses who have not perfected their souls in obeying the truth will be appointed to the second death."<sup>8</sup>

It is also very sad to know that very few young people will find eternal life. Seduced by the world and by the enchantment of sin, the youth of the 21st century are far from God. Most of them are engaged only in finding pleasures for themselves. They overlook eternal values, despising the invitation to find salvation. A gloomy picture!

"How can I endure the thought that most of the youth in this age will come short of everlasting life! Oh, that the sound of instrumental music might cease and they no more while away so much precious time in pleasing their own fancy. Oh, that they would devote less time to dress and vain conversation, and send forth their earnest, agonizing prayers to God for a sound experience. There is great necessity for close self-examination in the light of God's Word; let each one raise the inquiry: 'Am I sound, or am I rotten at heart? Am I renewed in Christ, or am I still carnal at heart, with a new dress put on the outside?' Rein yourself up to the great tribunal, and in the light of God examine to see if there be any secret sin that you are cherishing, any idol that you have not sacrificed. Pray, yes, pray as you have never prayed before, that you may not be deluded by Satan's devices."<sup>9</sup>

The door of probation is still open. The privilege to live with Christ and the redeemed throughout eternity is still within our reach. Therefore, let us not run the risk of missing Heaven. Let us rather take advantage of the golden opportunity—to be among the redeemed. There will be no second chance. Now is the acceptable time (2 Corinthians 6:12). Amen! ✠

### References

- <sup>1</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 632.
- <sup>2</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 16.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Story of Redemption*, p. 413.
- <sup>4</sup> *Education*, p. 302.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. 677, 678.
- <sup>6</sup> *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 82.
- <sup>7</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445.
- <sup>8</sup> *Maranatha*, p. 251.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Faith I Live By*, p. 313.

# The Test of Time

As tensions mount, assurance comes:  
"My children, do not be distressed;  
"With trials thick and sorrows great—  
"Still, all that comes is for the best."

The difficulties to be borne  
May trigger quite a tear and sigh.  
Yet every pain is seen above  
With tenderness by watchful eye.

Persecution soon will come—  
Against thy fellows bear no grudge.  
This world will pass, so keep in mind  
Before the door there stands the Judge.

The time is short, the signs are clear,  
Approaching near the very end.  
Our mandate strong, our duty known:  
With greater zeal the truth defend!

God's glory soon will fill this earth  
And then that midnight hour will chime.  
The prophecies will be fulfilled;  
The message bears the test of time.

How reassuring is the thought  
That none of this will come by chance.  
The Master says, "There's no surprise—  
"Recall, I told you in advance."

—B. Monteiro

*A*t Eden's loss there came the news:  
Redemption through Messiah's blood!  
A later man would build an ark—  
Forewarned, protected from the Flood.

And now today, the world is rushing  
More and more with rapid pace.  
Yet still the Word sends peace and love:  
"For you I have prepared a place."

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