

the REFORMATION *herald*

Vol. 56, No. 2

*Jesus,
Fully God*



Meeting the Great Judge Face to Face / The 144,000—Who Are They?

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

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"THINGS NEW AND OLD"

"Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matthew 13:52).

The Word of God can be compared to a treasure chest containing things new and old. But the main point is this: we find precious treasures in the Word of God—some are fresh revelations of His love that we may have never noticed before, while others are time-tested precepts we continue to cherish and uphold through His grace.

This issue of *The Reformation Herald* does not necessarily revolve around one single theme. Rather, it brings forth various important issues—"things new and old"—the central figure being Jesus Christ, fully God and perfect man. The complete divinity of Christ is brought up in the article "Jesus, Fully God."

Also the solitude of Christ during His experience from Gethsemane to the cross is taken into serious consideration in the article, "Solace in Solitude." We need to meditate daily on how great was the cost of our free salvation. It is free for everyone who believes, but tremendously expensive to our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ! We must know the cost of our salvation, even though this theme will be studied throughout all eternity. It pays to begin studying this vital topic here and now, today. Indeed, our spiritual experience depends upon our meditating on these subjects.

One of the distinctive doctrines of Adventism is the sealing message, and it especially considers the character of those who will make up the group of the 144,000. Why are they considered a "unique people"? Knowing the precious light of truth that we possess, can we be saved if we neglect such light? Paul puts

before us a vital question: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3).

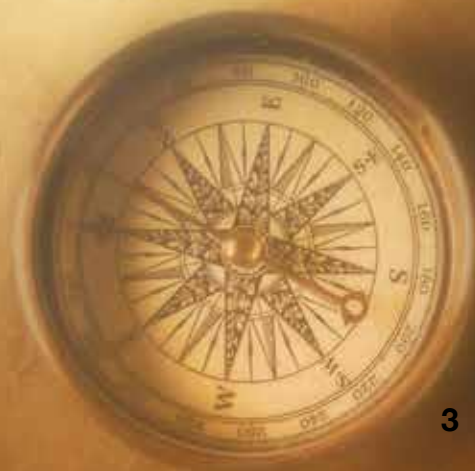
Another doctrine peculiar to Adventism is the investigative judgment, and this is brought to the attention of the reader. Why do we need an investigative judgment? Whose cases will be scrutinized during the judgment taking place before the second coming of Christ? This doctrine is an essential part of the first angel's message (Revelation 14:6–8). How can we face judgment without an Advocate?

How about our health reform? Are we following the laws of health as presented in the sacred writings? Are we developing our mental, physical and spiritual powers? How about physical exercise? Are we living up to the light

we have regarding the eight natural doctors available to preserve our health? True education involves the harmonious development of the whole person. About this vital point also, you will find inspired instruction.

We are sure that this issue of *The Reformation Herald* will bring a great blessing to our readers.

Enjoy the reading and be blessed with these inspiring messages!





The Divine Touch

By José Angel Usuga Góez

“We need to receive the divine touch, that we may understand our work in the home.”¹

The story of the old violin

In a public auction long ago, there were many objects, some new and some old; some big and some small. Among the items ready to be sold was an old, scarred, and battered violin. Apparently useless, it did not arouse much interest among those present. The auctioneer held up the poor violin as he cried: “What am I bid, good people, who will start the bidding for me? One dollar, one dollar, do I hear two?”

At that moment there was complete silence in the room. Finally, a lady stood up and said: “I bid one dollar for the violin.” The auctioneer asked again: “Is there anyone who will bid two dollars for this violin?”

But there was no answer. Since there was no one to bid more for the old violin, from the back of the room a

gray bearded man stood up and came forward—and as he came near to the auctioneer, he took the old violin and started to play a melody, and—oh, what an amazing moment! It was a big surprise for the people in the room when they saw that old man, a true artist, playing the sweetest notes they had ever heard in their life, from that old, scarred violin.

“The Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9).

Without saying anything, the musician returned the violin to its place and left the auction. Then the auctioneer asked again: “Is there anyone who bids more for this violin?” Suddenly, the voices of the multitude started to cry from everywhere.

Now they all wanted to bid more for the sake of having this amazing relic. From the delirious crowd, some offered five hundred, others a thousand as they began bidding more and more.

But what caused this rise in the price of the old violin? Was it not the same instrument that had been of so little worth just a few minutes ago?

Yes, it was the same instrument as before, but now, the thing that made the difference in the violin was the touch of the master’s hand, the talent and gift of a true artist—and the beautiful music playing there had made the change in the room and, suddenly, caused the value of the old instrument to soar.

My dear friend, we are not worthy of anything—and neither do we sound like beautiful music until we receive the divine touch of the Supreme Artist. That touch of the Master’s hand is the only thing that will make the difference in our life!

A transforming touch

In Genesis 32 we read about how the patriarch Jacob and his family were returning to Canaan, their homeland. When Jacob knew that his brother Esau was coming on his way to meet him with four hundred warriors, his heart fainted and his body trembled. He vividly recalled the obvious sentiments of his angry brother from twenty years before: “The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob” (Genesis 27:41). Jacob’s sin now awakened his conscience; memories and gloomy thoughts overwhelmed him. He remembered how he had deceived his brother and his father in his eagerness to obtain the birthright. As a good leader he was seeking now for the safety and integrity of his numerous and helpless caravan. Sending his family ahead after crossing the river Jabbok, Jacob strolled among those lonely mountains in the darkness, to spend the night in prayer and meditation with the Lord.

Until midnight, Jacob was wrestling in his mind as he claimed the Lord’s promises and prayed for forgiveness of his sins. But suddenly, he felt a hand on his shoulder. Thinking it was an enemy, he wrestled with him with all the strength of his being. Though exhausted, Jacob never gave up. It was an unequal fight, but his faith and perseverance were invincible.

The determined suppliant had not known that he was fighting with God, but when he realized it, he held onto Him with such strong faith that it made him a conqueror. Persisting in the struggle until dawn, he claimed to the heavenly messenger: “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me” (Genesis 32:26). Jacob did not want to give up; the opportunity was so precious for him that he would do anything to receive the blessing. In that memorable dawn, the patriarch was touch by the Lord in the hollow of his thigh. He was forgiven, he was blessed, and he left that place a conqueror; a transformed man, with

a new name as a symbol of his fighting, perseverance, and victory: ISRAEL (overcomer).²

“Who of us have emptied ourselves of pride and self-esteem? Who of us are really in earnest as was Jacob, who wrestled with the angel with all the energy of his being? Jacob put forth all his strength, supposing that he was wrestling with a lawless opponent, but the Lord put His finger with a divine touch upon him, and the wrestling ceased. Jacob knew that it was the Lord. Then, all broken, he fell upon the neck of the Angel, and held Him, pleading, ‘Bless me, even me.’”³

The healing touch

Let us gain encouragement from some wonderful experiences recorded from the life of Jesus:

“It came to pass, when [Jesus] was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him” (Luke 5:12, 13).

Leprosy was viewed as a symbol of sin, like a sign of a curse—even as



a sentence of death. But Christ, the divine healer, touched this man and healed him from his leprosy. In the same way, the Lord has the power to touch the most hardened, helpless sinner, declaring him or her free and clean from his or her spiritual disease.

The inhabitants of Gennesaret were so eager to touch the robe of Christ. “When the men of that place [Gennesaret] had knowledge of [Jesus], they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole” (Matthew 14:35, 36). These “ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in

through the crowd that they may get within reach of His notice and touch. Let the eye of faith take in the scene. Watch these mothers pressing their way to Him, pale, weary, almost despairing, yet determined and persevering, bearing their burden of suffering in their arms.”⁴

The touch of faith

One day, as Jesus and His disciples were passing through the thick crowd of the multitudes that thronged Him, “a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind [Jesus], and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole” (Matthew 9:20, 21).



beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch” (Mark 6:55, 56).

“Christ was the mighty Healer of all spiritual and physical maladies. Look, O look, upon the sympathetic Redeemer. With the eye of faith behold Him walking in the streets of the cities, gathering the weak and weary to Himself. Helpless, sinful human beings crowd about Him. See the mothers with their sick and dying little ones in their arms pressing

“When the woman reached forth her hand and touched the hem of His garment, she thought this stealthy touch would not be known by anyone; but Christ recognized that touch and responded to her faith by His healing power. She realized in a moment that she was made whole, and the Lord Jesus would not let such faith pass unnoticed. He turned Him about quickly and said, ‘Who touched me?’ All the disciples were pressing close around Him, and Peter said, ‘The multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath

touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me’ (Luke 8:45, 46).

“When the woman saw that she was not hid she came tremblingly and cast herself at His feet, telling the whole story. For twelve years she had been afflicted, but as soon as her finger touched the hem of His garment she was made whole. Jesus said to her, ‘Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace’ (verse 48). The mere touch of faith brought its reward.”⁵

“(And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them” (Acts 5:14, 15).

The redeeming touch

Isaiah was called to the prophetic ministry some 750 years before the arrival of the Babe of Bethlehem, in the same year that Uzziah, king of Judah, died. While the legions of Syria threatened the peace and the stability of the kingdom of Judah, young Isaiah was chosen by God to be the spokesman for His people. As Isaiah beheld the glory and majesty of God seated in His high and exalted throne, the young prophet exclaimed: “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (Isaiah 6:5-7).

As a result, a profound change suddenly took place in the attitude of the prophet:

“Isaiah had denounced the sin of others; but now he sees himself exposed to the same condemnation he had pronounced upon them. He had been satisfied with a cold, lifeless

ceremony in his worship of God. He had not known this until the vision was given him of the Lord. How little now appeared his wisdom and talents as he looked upon the sacredness and majesty of the sanctuary. How unworthy he was! how unfitted for sacred service! . . .

The vision given to Isaiah represents the condition of God's people in the last days. They are privileged to see by faith the work that is going forward in the heavenly sanctuary. 'And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament' (Revelation 11:19). As they look by faith into the holy of holies, and see the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, they perceive that they are a people of unclean lips—a people whose lips have often spoken vanity, and whose talents have not been sanctified and employed to the glory of God. Well may they despair as they contrast their own weakness and unworthiness with the purity and loveliness of the glorious character of Christ. But if they, like Isaiah, will receive the impression the Lord designs shall be made upon the heart, if they will humble their souls before God, there is hope for them. The bow of promise is above the throne, and the work done for Isaiah will be performed in them. God will respond to the petitions coming from the contrite heart."⁶

My dear, loving brethren, sisters, friends—may the soul of each of us be touched and renewed by our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen. *R*

References

- ¹ *Bible Echo*, December 8, 1893.
- ² See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 197; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 620, 621.
- ³ *This Day With God*, p. 298.
- ⁴ *The Upward Look*, p. 26.
- ⁵ *In Heavenly Places*, p. 108.
- ⁶ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1139.

The Tuner and the Tuning

I stood by the old church porches,
By the old-time sleeping dead;
And I heard the tuner tuning
The organ overhead;
And the notes seemed oft repeated,
As he touched the mournful thing—
There was neither hymn nor anthem
That choir could chant or sing.

But I listened in the silence,
Where the yew trees cast their shade,
Till the reeds had had their testing,
And the final chord was played.
Then it seemed in satisfaction
That the tuner ran then o'er,
To see what strains of music
The perfect notes could pour.

I stand today in the porches
Of the living Church divine;
And I hear the Master Tuner
Till I almost half repine;
For the notes seem long repeated,
And come with mournful wing—
There is neither hymn nor anthem
That choir can chant or sing.

I stand today in the porches
Of my own small temple heart,
And I hear the Master tuning
And adjusting every part;
I will rest with hopeful patience,
Till, perfect beneath His hand,
He wakens on earth the prelude
Of the praise in the better land.

—William Luff
ST November 28, 1892.

Jesus,

*A compilation of the Bible and Spirit of
Prophecy passages, with comments*

by D. P. Silva

Fully God

The Bible makes it clear that Jesus Christ is God in the fullest sense of the word. Some of the main characteristics of the Godhead are: Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence. There are abundant evidences of the divinity of Christ. Let us consider some scriptures:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Here, the Messianic prophet mentions several attributes of Christ, but we will consider just two of them: Mighty God, and Everlasting Father. Maybe this Scripture is one of the most powerful to identify Christ as God. However, there are many other biblical evidences.

Let us compare John 1, verses 1–4, 10, 14, with Genesis 1, verses 1, 2, 26, and 31.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” **“And the**

Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

John declares that the Word was in the beginning. This Word was with God. This Word was God. All things were created by Him. In Him was life. The Word was made flesh. God became man.

Now, let us consider Genesis chapter 1.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (verse 1). John declares that the Word was with God in the beginning, and that the Word took active part in the creation. In verse 2 Moses says that the Holy Spirit also was present at the creation of the Universe. Then we have: God the Father, God the Word that became flesh (John 1:1, 14), and the Holy Spirit.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (verse 26).

In this Scripture, God said, “Let US make man.” Here we have strong evidence that more than one Divine Agent took part in the creation.

In Colossians chapter 1, in referring to Jesus Christ, the

apostle explains, “by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (verses 16–19).

Reading the entire passage from Colossians we learn that in Christ we are translated from the power of darkness into His kingdom, we have redemption in His blood shed on the cross of Calvary, and that Christ is the image of the invisible God. He created all things in heaven and on earth, He is before all things and by Him all things consist, He is the Head of the body, the church, and in Him is the fullness of the Godhead.

Now, let us consider Philippians 2:5–8 in different Bible versions:

New International Version (NIV, 1984): “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, **being in very nature God**, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in

appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (emphasis added).”

Holman CSB, 2009: “Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, who, **existing in the form of God**, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a man in His external form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross” (emphasis supplied).

In his letter to the Hebrews also, Paul makes clear the full divinity of Christ with these words:

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, **by whom also he made the worlds**; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding all things by the word of his power**, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But **unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever**: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. **And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine**

hands” (1:1–10, emphasis supplied).

In these Bible verses, we find strong declarations about the divinity of Christ. Paul affirms that: Christ is the main revelation of God’s character and through Him God created the universe (verses 1 and 2); He is the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His Person; He upholds all things by His word; He is greatly superior to the angels, since He created them all; the Father commands the angels to worship Christ. Since only God can be worshipped, this is a clear evidence of the divinity of Christ (Revelation 19:10); the Father addresses Jesus Christ as God (verse 8), and Christ laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of His hands.

In his letter to Titus, Paul refers to Christ as “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (2:13). The same expression is used by Peter when he starts his second letter: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us **through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ**” (2 Peter 1:1, emphasis added).

In Psalm 50, Asaph describes **the second coming of Christ** with these majestic words:

“The mighty God [the same expression used in Isaiah 9:6 in regard to Christ], even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people” (verses 1–4).

“The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space,

the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore—humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father’s face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary’s cross. **That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe.**”¹

Some of the most vital attributes of the Godhead—that He is eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, unchangeable, and sinless—are all attributes of Christ. Let us focus on some of these:

1. Eternal

The title of “Everlasting Father” applied to Christ in Isaiah 9:6 has much to do with His attribute as the “eternal One.”

“Christ is the preexistent, self-existent Son of God. . . . In speaking of his preexistence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him.”²

“[Christ] was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son.”³

“While God’s Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His preexistence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. . . . Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God and was God.”⁴

“Christ shows [the Jews] that, although they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not



measured by figures.”⁵

2. Omnipresent

“The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, **is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.**

The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. “The Lord’s throne is in heaven” (Psalm 11:4); yet by His Spirit He is everywhere present.”⁶

In His interview with Moses at the “burning bush,” Christ identified Himself as the “I AM”: “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exodus 3:14).

“It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, ‘I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you’ (Exodus 3:14). This was the pledge of Israel’s deliverance. So when He came ‘in the likeness of men,’ He declared Himself the I AM. The

Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God ‘manifest in the flesh’ (1 Timothy 3:16). And to us He says: ‘I AM the Good Shepherd.’ ‘I AM the living Bread.’ ‘I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’ ‘All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth’ (John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matthew 28:18). I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. ‘God with us’ is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.”⁷

Talking with the Pharisees, “with solemn dignity Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am’ (John 8:58).

“Silence fell upon the vast assembly. **The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi.** He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, ‘whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity’ (Micah 5:2, margin).”⁸

“I AM means an eternal presence; the past, present, and

future are alike to God. He sees the most events of past history and the far distant future with as clear a vision as we do those things that are transpiring daily. . . . God gives us an opportunity to exercise faith and trust in the great I am.”⁹

Christ used the title “I AM” both before the incarnation (Exodus 3:14) and after it (John 8:58).

God cannot change (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17). “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8, NKJV).

The idea that Christ lost His omnipresence after the incarnation implies the thought that He lost an attribute of the Godhead. In this case He would not be fully God anymore, which is an impossibility.

Let us consider for a moment the experience of raising Lazarus (John 11:1–45). Even though Christ was far from the house of Lazarus, He saw what was happening. “Apparently Mary and Martha and the dying Lazarus were left alone. But they were not alone. **Christ beheld the whole scene, and after the death of Lazarus the bereaved sisters**

were upheld by His grace.”¹⁰

In spite of His human nature, Christ preserved His omnipresence. Let us consider other biblical examples:

Christ promised **His presence among His followers even when two or three would meet in His name** (Matthew 18:20).

When leaving His disciples in order to return to Heaven, He assured them: **“I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world”** (Matthew 28:20).

“Go to all nations, [Christ] bade [His disciples]. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe, but know that **My presence will be there**. Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I will forsake you.”¹¹

At baptism, “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, man is laid in his watery grave, buried with Christ in baptism, and raised from the water to live the new life of loyalty to God. **The three great powers in heaven are witnesses; they are invisible but present.**”¹²

Observe this point: The three great powers in heaven (God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit) are present at baptism. How could this be? By the omnipresence of all three. Even though Christ keeps His humanity, He never lost any attribute of divinity.

“The three great and glorious heavenly characters are present on the occasion of baptism. . . . All heaven is represented by these three in covenant relationship with the new life.”¹³

“The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, powers infinite and omniscient, receive those who truly

enter into covenant relation with God. **They are present at every baptism**, to receive the candidates who have renounced the world and have received Christ into the soul temple.”¹⁴

Speaking of the relationship between Christ and His church, the apostle Paul refers to “the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, . . . and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, **the fulness of him that filleth all in all**” (Ephesians 1:19–23, emphasis added).

This last expression mentioning the fullness of Christ in filling the church includes His omnipresence.

3. Omniscient

As a divine Being, Jesus is omniscient. During His ministry on earth, He gave plenty of evidence that He knows everything—even secret thoughts and unknown lives. Some examples:

In the experience of forgiving and healing the paralytic, Christ was confronted with the criticism of some of the scribes, who “said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And **Jesus knowing their thoughts** said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?” (Matthew 9:3, 4).

Reading the hearts of the people is one of the attributes included in the Omniscience that belongs to God alone. And Christ is God.

In another experience, Christ was accused by the same group of Pharisees that he expelled demons by the power of Beelzebub. Matthew wrote that **“Jesus knew their thoughts”** (12:25, emphasis added).

Another remarkable experience happened between Christ and Nathanael, when the latter asked: **“Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee”** (John 1:48, emphasis supplied). “He who saw Nathanael under the fig tree will see us in the secret place of prayer.”¹⁵

4. Omnipotent

As God, Christ possesses all the attribute of the Godhead—and omnipotence is one of them.

What did Christ say about His omnipotence?

In the gospel commission (Matthew 28:18–20), Jesus declared: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (verse 18). This quotation doesn’t mean that He lost His divine power during His incarnation, but that He would never use it for Himself. Now, after His resurrection He took possession of it.

One of the most remarkable manifestations of His divine power is regarding the control of life and death. He explained: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because **I lay down my life, that I might take it again**. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:17, 18, emphasis added).

And Paul describes: “Unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God**, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24, emphasis added). “For in [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And

ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:9, 10). The apostle also refers to “**our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**” (2 Timothy 1:10, emphasis supplied).

“[Before His ascension, Christ] assured [His disciples] **that He would be with them; and that if they would go forth in faith, they should move under the shield of Omnipotence. He bade them be brave and strong; for One mightier than angels would be in their ranks—the General of the armies of heaven.** He made full provision for the prosecution of their work and took upon Himself the responsibility of its success. So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. **Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe and be assured that My presence will be with you even there.** Labor in faith and confidence; for the time will never come when I will forsake you. **I will be with you always,** helping you to perform your duty, guiding, comforting, sanctifying, sustaining you, giving you success in speaking words that shall draw the attention of others to heaven.”¹⁶

We thank the Lord that we have a Saviour who is fully God and “able to save to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25). He is not just a human being trying to save another human being. He is fully divine, and, as a man, He developed a perfect character that is imputed and imparted to all who trust in Him.

An appeal to our heart

“What a price has been paid for us! Behold the cross, and the Victim uplifted upon it. Look at those hands, pierced with the cruel nails. Look at His feet, fastened with spikes to the tree. Christ bore our sins in His own body. That suffering, that agony, is the price of your redemption. The word of command was given: ‘Deliver them from going down to perish eternally. I have found a ransom.’

“Know you not that He loved us, and gave Himself for us, that we in return should give ourselves to Him? Why should not love to Christ be expressed by all who receive Him by faith as verily as His love has been expressed to us for whom He died?

“Christ is represented as hunting, searching, for the sheep that was lost. It is His love that encircles us,

bringing us back to the fold. . . . Let us praise Him, not in words only, but by the consecration to Him of all that we are and all that we have.”¹⁷ *R*

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- ² *The Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1900.
- ³ *Evangelism*, p. 615.
- ⁴ *The Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906.
- ⁵ *The Signs of the Times*, May 3, 1899.
- ⁶ *Education*, p. 132. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 24, 25.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 469, 470. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁹ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 21. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 822. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1074. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹² *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, p. 389.
- ¹³ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1075. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁴ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 141.
- ¹⁵ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 29. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 479, 480.



Passover — the feast of unleavened bread and wine

The word of God clearly says that the evening when Jesus and His disciples gathered in the upper room was the beginning of the “feast of unleavened bread” (Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7). What is the “feast of unleavened bread”?

The feast of unleavened bread began at the same time as the Passover, in the evening of the 14th toward the morning of the 15th of the month of Nisan (see Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23). In this article we'll not discuss the meaning of this feast; rather, we will focus on some of its details related to our subject. One of the laws of this feast said: “Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread;

even the first day **ye shall put away leaven out of your houses:** for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel” (Exodus 12:15, emphasis added).

“Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. And **there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast**

seven days” (Deuteronomy 16:2–4, emphasis supplied).

The law forbade the use of leaven during the seven days of the feast. Thus, people were commanded not only to bake fresh bread without yeast (leaven), but even to clean their houses, that nothing fermented would be found in them. Why was such a command given to Israel, and what was behind it? Like the Passover lamb, the removal of “leaven” has a biblical explanation. Paul explains the meaning of this symbol: “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but

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By G. Melnychuk

with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:6–8).

Jesus also referred to leaven (yeast) as symbolizing a substance that represents something evil: “Then Jesus said unto [His disciples], Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. . . . Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matthew 16:6, 12). “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” (Luke 12:1).

Now let us return to the topic of wine. Everyone knows that wine is produced by a process of fermentation. Just as yeast (leaven) ferments the dough—completely changing its substance—so does fermentation transform normal grape juice into an alcoholic drink (wine).

But here is where human wisdom steps in. According to the rabbis’ interpretation, “leavening agents, such as yeast or baking soda, are not themselves *chametz* [leaven]. Rather, it’s the fermented grains. Thus yeast may be used in making wine.”¹

In other words, they do not forbid the leaven [yeast] which makes the dough grow—but the dough itself, if it is made from a certain type of grain.

“*Chametz* refers not only to leavened bread but to any product made from the five species of grain—wheat, barley, rye, oats, and spelt.”²

While the Bible says that yeast (leaven) is the problem (see references above) and is to be removed: “**Put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread . . . , that soul shall be cut off from Israel,**” Jewish rabbis teach that yeast is ok, but that the grains and water are the problem.

According to the interpretation of the rabbis, if fresh bread or flour were to be in contact with water for more than 18 minutes, it was already considered “leavened” and thus forbidden. If flour or fresh bread is exposed to moisture for an extended period, it starts to ferment due to the action of the yeast bacteria which are

present everywhere. This is why even matzo is covered with a cloth right after its preparation—to prevent the risk of exposure to moisture.

We do not find any similar instructions in the Bible. Instead, the Bible clearly says that “whosoever eateth **leavened bread** . . . , that soul shall be cut off from Israel.” God’s law in no way points us to consider what kind of grain (wheat, barley, oats) was the bread made of. But the law forbade the use of yeast, which makes unleavened bread to be leavened. The Israelites received no instructions to protect the bread from moisture, but simply to eliminate all articles with any visible presence of yeast.

How is anyone to follow the rabbis’ logic? While they carefully try to protect the bread from being exposed to fermentation, they allow fermentation when dealing with the grape juice. People devise all kinds of “kosher” conditions which end up fermenting the grape juice.

Here we come to a **great paradox**: Products such as “bread, cereal, cake, cookies, pizza, pasta, and beer are blatant examples of *chametz* [leaven],”³ while fermented wine, produced by yeast, is actually recommended for use at the Seder (Passover supper).

The tradition of replacing fresh grape juice with fermented wine entered into the Jewish practice most likely during the Babylonian captivity. Since then to this day, the question whether to use fermented wine or fresh grape juice for the Passover is debated: “The question as to whether one who does not like wine may use grape juice for the Arba Kosot* is debated by twentieth century Halachic authorities. This question remains unresolved, as neither side seems to have brought conclusive proof to its position.”⁴

Another reference reveals how some rabbis consider unacceptable even the use of grape juice for Passover: “Rav Feinstein cites the Talmud Yerushalmi (Pesachim Chapter 10) as proof for his opinion. The Yerushalmi relates that Rav Yona

drank the four cups at the Seder and had a headache until Shavuot. It is also recounted in this source that Rav Yehuda . . . drank the four cups of wine at the Seder and had a headache until Sukkot. Rav Feinstein infers from this passage that grape juice is unacceptable for the Arba Kosot.* Had grape juice been acceptable, these rabbis would have drunk grape juice in order to avoid experiencing a headache for such an inordinate amount of time.”⁴

Rabbis who hold the position of using fermented wine explain that the alcohol portion of the wine is a symbol of the cup of bitterness the Hebrew people had drunk during their captivity in Egypt. “It is best to use red wine, since this alludes to the blood spilled by Pharaoh, the blood as part of the Ten Plagues, and the blood the Jews put on their doorposts. Someone who has difficulty drinking wine may use grape juice, but should add a little wine so that the taste of alcohol is detectable.”⁵

Such interpretation is extremely illogical, because God clearly instructed the Israelites to eat the Passover lamb with bitter herbs—and not with alcohol—to always remember the bitterness of their bondage in Egypt. Yet the majority of “Christians” today refer to the current Jewish practices of using alcoholic wine for the Passover as a proof to use alcoholic wine for their communion services.

The Talmud (see Nedarim 49b; Yerushalmi Shekalim 3:2; Mishnah Berurah 472:35) recounts how certain sages suffered headaches for weeks after Pesach but would not forgo the cherished tradition. It was not without reason that Jesus remarked: “Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men” (Mark 7:6–8).

*Arba Kosot—four cups of wine.

Grape juice—a symbol of blood

When Christ took the cup, He said: “This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” Grape juice or unfermented wine is selected as a symbol of the blood of Christ. Why grape juice? Here are certain factors that aid in such a choice:



Color. The Scripture says: “Thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape” (Deuteronomy 32:14). The juice made from fresh, dark grapes brings to mind the blood of Christ shed for us.

A unique plant. The grapevine is a very unique plant. Even without going into much detail about the biological and agricultural features of this plant, we can readily observe

that Christ used a vine to describe the people of Israel, as well as the fact that He repeatedly compared Himself to a vine: “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (John 15:5).

Two effects from one fruit.

Grapes can have absolutely opposite effects. Pure grape juice is used for health purposes because it carries life and energy in itself and promotes clear thinking. On the other hand, if grape juice is fermented it blurs our reasoning, which leads to: trouble, sorrow, illnesses, and eventually death. As mentioned, Christ is the true vine, so let us choose what we want. He offers the following to us: “Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Isaiah 8:13, 14). “For as often as ye . . . drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall . . . drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:26, 27). There are many Bible texts revealing that the same Jesus brings salvation for some and damnation for others. While many are redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19), others are condemned “who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29).

How does grape juice become wine?

First, freshly squeezed juice is poured into a container. Since yeast fungus is present everywhere, especially on the grape skin, it will naturally be present. The favorite food of yeast is sugar. Any fungus is a big lover of sweets. Because grape juice contains a large amount of sugar, it is the perfect environment for the reproduction of yeast. If more sugar

is added, the process goes a lot faster. Then where does the waste go? Yes, whether people like to admit it or not, the feces of the fungi consist of well known substances: ethyl alcohol (C_2H_5OH) and carbon dioxide (CO_2).

In view of this, I do not think that fermented wine can be considered an appropriate symbol of the pure, holy blood of Christ.

Alcoholic wine—a symbol of false doctrine

If pure grape juice symbolizes the blood of Christ, then what does alcoholic wine mean? The answer is in the New Testament. Let us compare a few verses from Revelation, chapters 17 and 18.

John the Revelator describes: “I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, **having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:** and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:3–5, emphasis added).

Let us understand some symbols presented here. First of all, John sees a “woman.” The “woman,” as we all know, is a symbol of a church (please compare the following verses: Jeremiah 3:1, 20; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Isaiah 4:3, 4; Jeremiah 6:2). But what kind of “woman” or church does the prophet see? John sees a “woman” (church) with a cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication, and her name is Babylon. Seeing such things, the prophet wrote: “and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration [margin, astonishment]” (Revelation 17:6). Why did John wonder with great astonishment when he saw the woman? The only church the prophet knew was the church of the apostles, founded by Christ. Moreover, earlier,

the same prophet was given another vision regarding the church of God: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (Revelation 12:1). Suddenly he sees the “woman” (church), sitting on a beast, arrayed in the attire of a harlot, with the golden cup from which she drank the abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

But in the given narration, another question comes up: What exactly did she have in her cup? “And [the angel] cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For **all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication**, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her” (Revelation 18:2, 3, emphasis added).

What is the “wine of her . . . fornication”? In the Bible we find an answer. Whenever the people of God depart from the truth, it is referred to as spiritual fornication or adultery against their Lord. So, having compared verses from Revelation, chapters 17 and 18, the following picture is seen:

- The woman from Revelation 17 is a symbol of the apostate church, whose name is “Babylon,” which means “confusion.”
- She holds in her hand the cup full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Fornication as stated in the Revelation means falling away from God, and the wine in the cup symbolizes the abomination and filthiness of her fornication.
- The doctrine of the apostatized church spreads all over the world, or as the verse says: she made “all nations drunk of the wine.”

From this we draw the following: The wine, which is called “abominations and filthiness of her fornication” symbolizes, in a spiritual sense, apostasy against God, and she, the woman (apostate church), made

all nations drink of that wine, or indulge in the false doctrines—and as a result, they apostatized against God and departed from the true church.

On the other hand, pure biblical doctrine, in contrast, is symbolized in Scripture as living water (see John 7:37, 38). While the true church offers pure and living water flowing from the Life-giver, the fallen church gives a cup filled with wine of abominations. And it isn’t a surprise to anyone that the content of the cup is called “abomination;” after all, alcoholic wine is nothing else but fungal feces permeating the grape juice after fermentation. But there are faithful souls even in the apostate church, and a special invitation is given to them, as the Revelator declares: “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

Summary

From this 3-part series of articles on wine as published in the *Reformation Herald*, we can conclude:

1. The Greek word “wine” (as well as its equivalent in the English and Hebrew languages) has a double meaning, and it refers to alcoholic wine as well as to pure grape juice. It can be either one.
2. Because the word “wine” has a dual meaning and may be easily misinterpreted, none of the four evangelists used the word “wine” in reference to the drink used in the upper room. Instead, describing the content of the cup, they refer to it as “the fruit of the vine,” adding to it the word “new,” thus making clear that Jesus pronounced a blessing over the “new wine,” which was in reality fresh juice squeezed into the cup from a cluster of grapes.
3. Jesus, being a High Priest, obeyed the law, “Do not drink wine nor strong drink” (Leviticus 10:9) and fulfilled the prophecy that the Lord’s Servant would eat and drink in such a way “that he may know to refuse the



evil, and choose the good” (see Isaiah 7:14, 15).

4. In the upper room Jesus did not take a sip of fermented wine; rather, He drank at least two cups of pure grape juice.

5. The original command of God forbade the use of anything fermented or that had been exposed to fermentation products. This would include a prohibition against the use of fermented wine for the Passover.

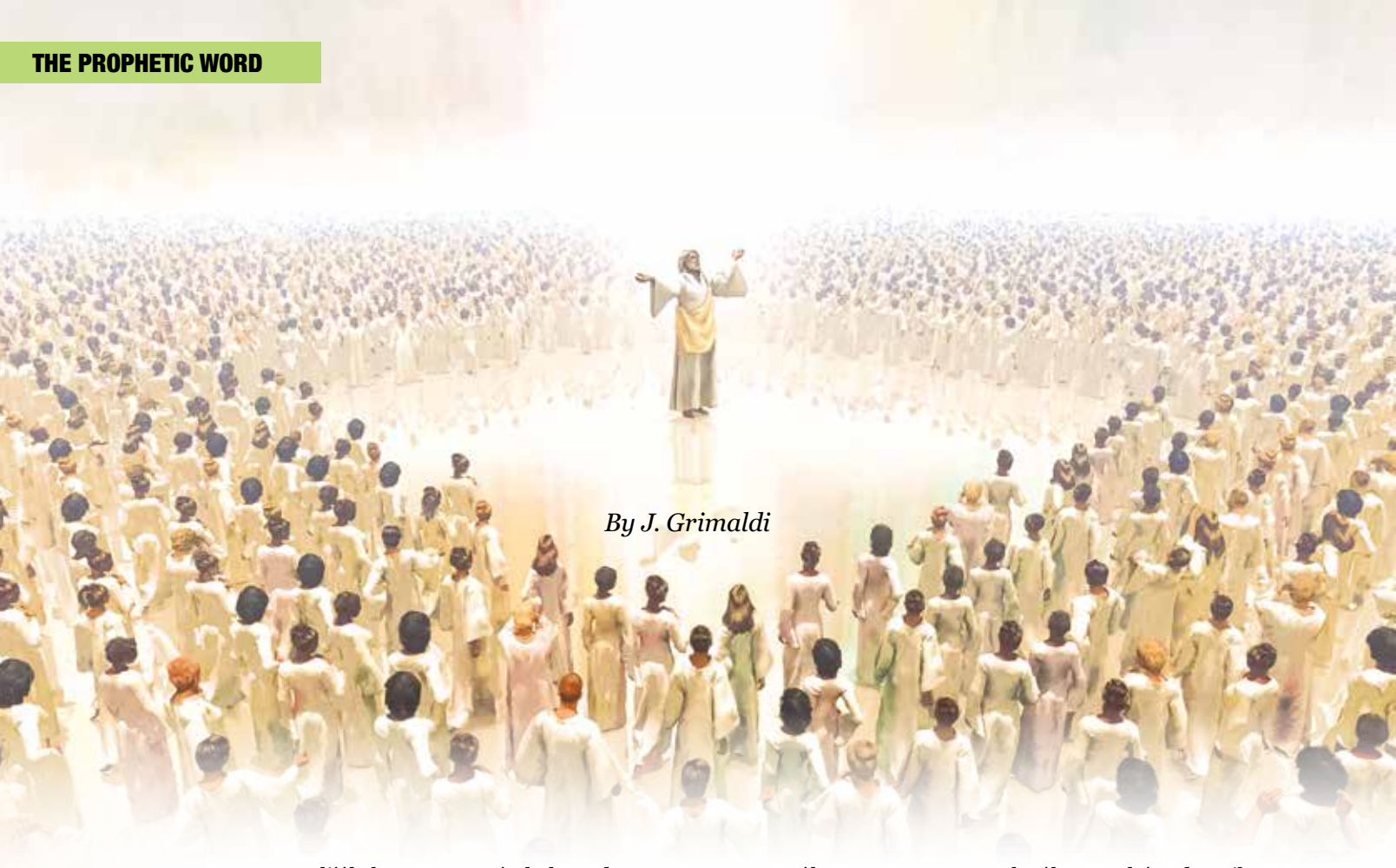
6. The excrement of fungus (ethyl alcohol) which turns grape juice into an alcoholic beverage cannot represent the pure blood of Jesus. Only unfermented grape juice can appropriately symbolize the holy Lamb of God.

7. Fermented wine in the Bible represents the false doctrines and teachings of an apostatized church referred to as “Babylon.”

With confidence we realize and conclude that on the Passover night, Jesus used unfermented grape juice, with which He made a New Covenant, and therefore did not leave to His disciples an example of using fermented wine. Even common sense and logical reasoning tell us so. Therefore, we cannot use alcoholic wine at the Holy Supper, because only pure and unfermented grape juice can symbolize the blood of Jesus shed for you and me, my dear friend. *R*

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- ⁵ Ibid.



By J. Grimaldi

Many, many little boys long to be a fireman someday. They thirst for the challenge and relish the amazing adventure factor involved in fighting fires. For most youngsters, this notion is only a dream that passes with time. But for me, it became a reality—an actual career.

When I first took the test to join the Fire Department, there were about 5,000 other applicants also competing for only about 100 openings. So when I got hired, I was really happy to get a job with a future. I knew that it wasn't going to be easy, but I was going to give it my all—I was even willing to die trying. My aim was to be a part of something that would be really good not only for myself but for the community as well.

Thirty-six years ago, I, together with about 60 other men whom I had never met before, went through fire academy—a very strenuous and dangerous training for a job about which we knew very little. For 16 weeks we had to learn to trust one another, to follow one another, and

to help and encourage one another. It was not an easy thing to do. But when you share that common goal and make it through to the end, a bond is formed that cannot be easily broken, a bond that has lasted for over 36 years. We had a little reunion a few years ago, and we reminisced and laughed and talked about our experiences and about those who were no longer with us—and that bond was still there, an enduring bond that does not shatter with time. In a similar way, the Spirit of Prophecy says that the bond of union between Jesus and His people is “the most enduring upon earth.”¹ There was a shared experience with the other men that went through fire academy with me. Indeed, it formed a unique bond that is rare in this world.

So why do I bring up this illustration? There are a group of people in the Bible that also have a shared experience, an experience that unites them into one group—the 144,000. What is that unites them—and what does it take to be in this

group? John the Revelator describes: “I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel” (Revelation 7:4).

From where did they come?

“Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand” (verses 5–8).

Who are these twelve tribes of Israel? Does it refer only to those from ancient Israel? In the Christian era, we read the explanation of this in a New Testament epistle from “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting” (James 1:1).

What about the gates of the New Jerusalem? Will we go through them?

We read that the heavenly city “had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel” (Revelation 21:12).

Of course, these things are intended for us—after all, aren’t we adopted into the family of God?

Who exactly is an Israelite? We are assured, “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:26–29).

The Spirit of Prophecy has much to say about this group. The Lord’s messenger was shown, first of all, that “the 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads were the words God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name.”²

Please notice that they are **perfectly united**, that is one very important point! What else? They have a Christlike character:

“John saw a Lamb on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. They bore the signet of heaven. They reflected the image of God. They were full of the light and the glory of the Holy One. **If we would have the image and superscription of God upon us, we must separate ourselves from all iniquity. We must**

forsake every evil way, and then we must trust our cases in the hands of Christ.”³

John the Revelator describes: “Lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth” (Revelation 14:1–3).

Here we see that they sing a new song that no one else could learn. What exactly is this song, and why could not anyone else sing it?

“Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire—so resplendent is it with the glory of God—are gathered the company that have ‘gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name’ (Revelation 15:2). With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, ‘having the harps of God,’ they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, ‘the voice of harpers harping with their harps.’ And they sing ‘a new song’ before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had.”⁴

What does this also tell us about this group of people and the song? They have gotten the victory over the beast and his image and his mark and the number of his name; it is a song of deliverance—a song of their experience that no company has ever had.

What makes these people so special?

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Revelation 14:4).

These are not defiled with women; they are virgins. Does this disqualify every married man and many single men? Obviously, this cannot be talking about the command that God gave Adam and Eve, “Be fruitful, and multiply” (Genesis 1:28); it cannot be something that God sanctions for married couples. So what does a “woman” represent in prophetic Bible symbolism? The Scripture interprets itself as the Lord declares: “I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman” (Jeremiah 6:2).

“What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee?” (Lamentations 2:13). This “virgin daughter” is referring to God’s church. When the Lord calls the church His virgin daughter, what is it that makes her a virgin? Her actions? No! For her breach is great:

“During ages of spiritual darkness the church of God has been as a city set on a hill. From age to age, through successive generations, the pure doctrines of heaven have been unfolding within its borders. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.”⁵

It is then the pure doctrines within the church that keeps it a virgin—it is the impure doctrines that defile a church, not the impure people within the church.

“And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:5).

What is guile? According to *Strong's Concordance* it means tricks or deceit or decoys; in the dictionary it means "to deceive craftily."

These people are true believers, straightforward, and genuine. So, what is their mission on this earth; what is it that makes these people what they are?

Uniquely pure in a corrupt age

"The experience of Enoch and of John the Baptist represents what ours should be. Far more than we do, we need to study the lives of these men—he who was translated to heaven without seeing death, and he who, before Christ's first advent, was called to prepare the way of the Lord, to make His paths straight."⁶

Enoch lived without sin in a degenerate age and was translated without seeing death. John the Baptist also lived in a degenerate age, but his job was to pave the way for the Lord's first coming. Both of these men lived

in the country but worked the cities. One walked with God into heaven and one was beheaded. Which will be our experience? Only God knows.

"None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had. 'These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.' These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as 'the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb' (Revelation 15:2, 3; 14:1–5). 'These are they which came out of great tribulation;' they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments. But they have been delivered, for they have 'washed their robes, and made

them white in the blood of the Lamb' (Revelation 7:14)."

All of these points are important, but perhaps the most solemn thing for us is the reality that, through the time of Jacob's trouble, we will need to stand without an intercessor pleading for us in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

What is Jacob's trouble?

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:7).

You can read the main part of the story in Genesis chapters 32 and 33, but to give a brief summary: In Genesis 31:11–13, God had directed Jacob to return to his homeland—yet the patriarch knew that this would involve seeing his brother whom He had wronged over 20 years before. The night before the meeting, Jacob went off to pray, wrestling alone—until he found himself wrestling with God. It was a night of anguish and perplexity for Jacob.

"Jacob's experience during that night of wrestling and anguish represents the trial through which the people of God must pass just before Christ's second coming."⁸

Yet despite this anguish, there is a glorious experience on the horizon for God's people:

Glorious union with Heaven

"At the transfiguration, Jesus was glorified by His Father. We hear Him say: 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him' (John 13:31). Thus before His betrayal and crucifixion He was strengthened for His last dreadful sufferings. As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, 'the time of Jacob's trouble,' they will grow up into Christ and will partake largely of His Spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the

time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel.”⁹

In light of this truly awesome prospect before us, what is our duty, and what should be our focus? We need to grow up into Christ unto perfection of character through His strength, richly partaking of His Spirit, cooperate with Him in giving the three angels’ message to the world, and receive the latter rain. Such a joyful experience will cause our faces to shine with the glory of God. This theme is where we need to focus our lives—not on this life, but on the life to come! Wouldn’t you like to go where Enoch went? Would you like to know where he went?

Just picture the scene described by God’s servant:

“The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the city to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place. . . . Then I was taken to a world which had seven moons. There I saw good old Enoch, who had been translated. On his right arm he bore a glorious palm, and on each leaf was written ‘Victory.’ Around his head was a dazzling white wreath, and leaves on the wreath, and in the middle of each leaf was written ‘Purity,’ and around the wreath were stones of various colors, that shone brighter than the stars, and cast a reflection upon the letters and magnified them. On the back part of his head was a bow that confined the wreath, and upon the bow was written ‘Holiness.’ Above the wreath was a lovely crown that shone brighter than the sun. I asked him if this was the place he was taken to from the earth. He said, ‘It is not; the city is my home, and I have come to visit this place.’ He moved about the place as if perfectly at home. I begged of

my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, ‘You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God.’”¹⁰

Yes, my brothers and sisters, I want to be in that place—how about you? Here we are in this sin-sick world. What must we do to be among the 144,000?

The lifestyle of the remnant

In conclusion, let us recall something from the experience of Daniel, that great man of God who remained unscathed by the corrupt society that surrounded him:

“In acquiring the wisdom of the Babylonians, Daniel and his companions were far more successful than their fellow students; but their learning did not come by chance. They obtained their knowledge by the faithful use of their powers, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They placed themselves in connection with the Source of all wisdom, making the knowledge of God the foundation of their education. In faith they prayed for wisdom, and they lived their prayers. They placed themselves where God could bless them. They avoided that which would weaken their powers, and improved every opportunity to become intelligent in all lines of learning. They followed the rules of life that could not fail to give them strength of intellect. They sought to acquire knowledge for one purpose—that they might honor God. They realized that in order to stand as representatives of true religion amid the false religions of heathenism they must have clearness of intellect and must perfect a Christian character. And God Himself was their teacher. Constantly praying, conscientiously studying, keeping in touch with the Unseen, they walked with God as did Enoch.”¹¹

The song, “Dare to Be a Daniel” should not only be for children! We all need to echo that theme.

“Daniel was sorely tried; but he overcame because he was of a humble and prayerful spirit. Although he was surrounded with distrust and suspicion, and his enemies laid a snare for his life, yet he maintained a serene and cheerful trust in God, never once deviating from principle. Although Daniel was a man of like passions with ourselves, the pen of inspiration presents him as a faultless character. His life is given us as a bright example of what man may become, even in this life, if he will make God his strength, and wisely improve the privileges and opportunities within his reach.”¹²

“While we are working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, God will work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. While you must do your part, yet it is God that must give you aid and sanctify you. Christ makes us penitent that He may forgive us. We have an idea that we must do some part of the work alone. We have thought that there are two or three steps that we must take without any help or support. But this is not so. The Spirit of God is continually wooing and drawing the soul to right purposes and into harmony with the law of God. The invitation is given to the helpless, ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price’ (Isaiah 55:1, 2). As soon as we separate ourselves from evil, and choose to serve God, we shall respond to this invitation.”¹³

This is my prayer for you and for me. AMEN! *R*

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 47.
- ² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 59.
- ³ *The Review and Herald*, March 19, 1889. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁴ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 648, 649.
- ⁵ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 12.
- ⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 329.
- ⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 649.
- ⁸ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 201.
- ⁹ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 353.
- ¹⁰ *Early Writings*, pp. 39, 40.
- ¹¹ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 486.
- ¹² *The Signs of the Times*, November 4, 1886.
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Meeting the Great Judge Face to Face

A Bible and Spirit of Prophecy
compilation submitted
by Even Etienne



Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. The archdeceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth.

“Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour’s mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time

or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has

*“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?”
(1 Peter 4:17).*

a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days.”¹

Why will a judgment take place?

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his

commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

“Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after” (1 Timothy 5:24).

Where will this judgment stand?

“Behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald” (Revelation 4:1–3).

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit,

whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Daniel 7:9, 10).

Where must this judgment begin?

“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?” (1 Peter 4:17).

“As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God’s remembrance. The Lord declared to Moses: ‘Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book’ (Exodus 32:33). And says the prophet Ezekiel: ‘When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, . . . all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned’ (Ezekiel 18:24).”²

“In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and

investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work and takes place at a later period.”³

What are some important elements for a judgment?

1. We need the law

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” (James 2:12).

“The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment. Says the wise man: ‘Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment’ (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).”⁴

2. We need a judge

“The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us” (Isaiah 33:22).

“I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord” (1 Corinthians 4:4).

“[Daniel 7:9, 10 quoted.] Thus was presented to the prophet’s vision the great and solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered ‘according to his works.’ The Ancient of Days is God the Father. Says the psalmist: “Before the moun-

tains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God’ (Psalm 90:2).”⁵

3. We need record books

a. The book of life

“Whosoever was not found written in **the book of life** was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15, emphasis added).

“The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment. Says the prophet Daniel: ‘The judgment was set, and the books were opened’ (Daniel 7:10). The revelator, describing the same scene, adds: ‘Another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works’ (Revelation 20:12).

“The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade His disciples: ‘Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven’ (Luke 10:20). Paul speaks of his faithful fellow workers, ‘whose names are in the book of life’ (Philippians 4:3). Daniel, looking down to ‘a time of trouble, such as never was,’ declares that God’s people shall be delivered, ‘everyone that shall be found written in the book.’ And the revelator says that those only shall enter the city of God whose names ‘are written

in the Lamb’s book of life’ (Daniel 12:1; Revelation 21:27).”⁶

b. The book of remembrance

“They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and **a book of remembrance** was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name” (Malachi 3:16).





“‘A book of remembrance’ is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of ‘them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name’ (Malachi 3:16). Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven. Nehemiah refers to this when he says: ‘Remember me, O my God, . . . and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God’ (Nehemiah 13:14). In the book of God’s remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ’s sake, is recorded. Says the psalmist: ‘Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?’ (Psalm 56:8).

“There is a record also of the sins of men. ‘For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’ ‘Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.’ Says the Saviour: ‘By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt

be condemned’ (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36, 37). The secret purposes and motives appear in the unerring register; for God ‘will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts’ (1 Corinthians 4:5). ‘Behold, it is written before Me, . . . your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord’ (Isaiah 65:6, 7).”⁷

Conclusion

We need an attorney/advocate

“Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24).

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

“As the features of the countenance are reproduced with unerring accuracy on the polished plate of the artist, so the character is faithfully delineated in the books above. Yet how little solicitude is felt concerning that record which is to meet the gaze of heavenly beings.”⁸

“Those who in the judgment are ‘accounted worthy’ will have a part in the resurrection of the just. Jesus said: ‘They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, . . . are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection’ (Luke 20:35, 36). And again He declares that ‘they that have done good’ shall come forth ‘unto the resurrection of life’ (John 5:29). The righteous dead will not be raised until after the judgment at which they are accounted worthy of ‘the resurrection of life.’ Hence they will not be present in person at

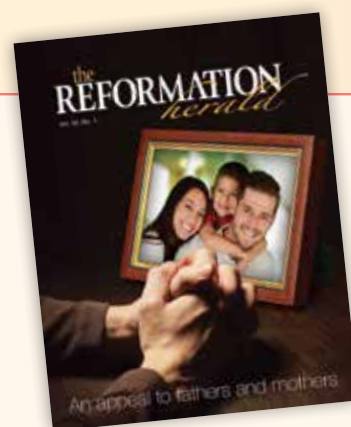
the tribunal when their records are examined and their cases decided.”

“Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God. ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous’ (1 John 2:1).”⁹

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). *R*

References

- ¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 488.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 483.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 480.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 482.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 479.
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Solace in Solitude

By T. Stockler



Jesus found His disciples “asleep on the job.” Emotionally challenged beyond anything we can understand, our Saviour looked for human sympathy. The olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane were familiar, but the full weight of human sin and wretchedness was not. Jesus hated the very sin He was now carrying. How could His humanity and divinity cope with something so foreign to both of His natures?

“Christ expressed His desire for **human sympathy**, and then withdrew Himself from [Peter, James, and John] about a stone’s cast. Falling upon His face He prayed. . . .

“At the end of an hour, Jesus, **feeling the need of human sympathy**, rose from the ground and staggered to the place where He had left His three disciples. He **longed** to see them. His **human nature** yearned for **human sympathy**. He longed to hear from them **words** that would bring Him some **relief in His suffering**. But He was disappointed. They did not bring to Him the **help He craved**. Instead, He ‘findeth them sleeping.’ . . .

“At the most critical moment, when the Son of God was in need of [the disciples’] **sympathy** and **heart-felt prayers**, they were found

asleep. Even the ardent Peter, who, only a few hours before had declared that he would die with his Lord, was sleeping.”¹

What did Jesus do when He was lonely? How did He address His own need for sympathy? Did He have a negative word, an expression of frustration, an act of emotional immaturity? No! The suffering Saviour offered sympathy to those who disappointed and betrayed Him.

“Even in [Jesus’] great agony He was willing to excuse the weakness of His disciples. ‘The spirit truly is ready,’ he said, ‘but the flesh is weak’ (Mark 14:38).”²

Jesus wanted friends to be with Him in the hardest hour of His life. He looked for their companionship and empathy. But when we, as fellow humans, let Him down, He was kind and generous to us. He offers an excuse on our behalf: Our flesh really is weak.

Our human nature often demonstrates much less patience with those that disappoint us. When friends fail or hurt us, we often behave terribly or at least whine endlessly. To be alone is hard for many of us. We will lower our standard of behavior just to avoid

loneliness. The fear of loneliness is probably the most effective tool Satan can use against us. His satanic majesty conquered Adam with it.

“Having herself transgressed, [Eve] became the agent of Satan in working the ruin of her husband. In a state of strange, unnatural excitement, with her hands filled with the forbidden fruit, she sought [Adam’s] presence and related all that had occurred.

“An expression of sadness came over the face of Adam. He appeared astonished and alarmed. To the words of Eve he replied that this must be the foe against whom they had been warned; and by the divine sentence she must die. In answer she urged him to eat, repeating the words of the serpent, that they should not surely die. . . .

“Adam understood that his companion had transgressed the command of God, disregarded the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love. There was a terrible struggle in his mind. He mourned that he had permitted Eve to wander from his side. But now the deed was done; he must be separated from her whose society had been his joy. How could he have it thus? Adam had enjoyed the companionship of God and of holy

angels. He had looked upon the glory of the Creator. He understood the high destiny opened to the human race should they remain faithful to God. Yet all these blessings were lost sight of in the **fear of losing** that one gift which in his eyes outvalued every other. Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator—all were overborne by love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and **he could not endure the thought of separation.**"³

Satan is just as successful today as he was with Adam. He urges us to abandon God, just so that we will not be lonely. Does a man or a woman seem attractive to us? Does this potential lover love God and keep all of His commandments? How many times do we abandon honesty, integrity, Sabbathkeeping, respect for our own parents, and love for God Himself, just because we "want to be happy"?

Let us be plain. To marry another person is to accept him or her as he or she is. It is to acknowledge his or her moral values and condition to be as good as your own. Neither spouse is to be the complete conscience of the other. Once you are married, your spouse has as much right as you do to define what is right and wrong behavior for family members. If your spouse enjoys eating the flesh of animals or disrespects the sacred activities of the Sabbath day from before the consummation of the marriage, he or she has every right to teach your children to do these wrong actions afterwards. (Beware of whom you choose to marry!) Marriage is a compromise between two individuals. Neither spouse is always right. Neither spouse has the right to demand that we follow "my way" all of the time. A family's standard of morality is defined by its unholy member. Choosing a spouse may very well be choosing one's destiny. Too many people today are willing to lose eternal life and reject God, if only they can be "happy" with some lover next to them. (Asking unmarried church members to marry within the church is not a desire to limit their marital choices, but a recognition that unequally yoked

marriages are a lifelong experience of suffering as a house divided against itself which cannot stand.)

"Few have correct views of the marriage relation. Many seem to think that it is the attainment of perfect bliss; but if they could know one quarter of the heartaches of men and women that are bound by the marriage vow in chains that they cannot and dare not break, they



would not be surprised that I trace these lines. Marriage, in a majority of cases, is a most galling yoke. There are thousands that are mated but not matched. The books of heaven are burdened with the woes, the wickedness, and the abuse that lie hidden under the marriage mantle. This is why I would warn the young who are of a marriageable age to make haste slowly in the choice of a companion. The path of married life may appear beautiful and full of happiness; but why may not you be disappointed as thousands of others have been? . . .

"Upon [parents] depends in a great measure the well-being of their children in this world, and their happiness in the world to come. To a great extent they determine both the physical and the moral stamp that the little ones receive."⁴

Can you be happy and alone? Yes! Loneliness and contentment seem to be contradictions. Certainly, some

personality-types find it easier than others to be alone. But you can find contentment without companionship. Jesus succeeded in choosing to face Calvary alone. You and I can face our cross (that is so much easier than His) with no one to help but Him.

As someone whom God chose to drink the cup of loneliness deeply, let me observe a few points about living alone:

Acceptance. Generally, those that live alone refuse to accept their condition. Often they whine and pine that this is not the way their life should be. If God has permitted it, and the devil has handed you a lonely life, choose it! What you cannot change should be accepted. Refusing to accept it will only lead you to sin.

Living alone is always unnatural. "It is not good for humans to be alone." God, who is all-wise, stated this. Living alone can become something you get very used to doing. But it will never be the ideal that God made us to experience. Sin has changed our environment. Humans were designed to live surrounded by a spouse, parents, children, and extended family. There is a community of family we are all designed to have. In this community, any individual that is missing from doing his or her part injures the entire community. Our individual sinful choices have a serious impact on those

who are related to us. They suffer for our failures inside the family. And we suffer from the failures of our family members.

Persons who live alone are constantly reminded of how unnatural it is. Every time they see a happy family or come home to an empty house can remind them of their cross in life.

Living alone is dangerous. It leads us to develop imbalanced characters that are a problem socially and make us unfit for heaven. There is no more certain way to nourish selfishness than to live alone. There is no one around to prompt you to be unselfish. There is no one around to stretch your personality until it is more well-rounded. There is often no one to observe the little signs in your life that otherwise pass unnoticed, signs of health or disease physically, mentally, or spiritually. There is no one to take care of you when you are discouraged or sick, or when you die. And that often drives individuals into extreme forms of worrying and of distrusting God.

God intended marriage and close family members to alter our personalities in a positive way. “The cultivation of a uniform courtesy, a willingness to do by others as we would like them to do by us, would banish half the ills of life.”⁵

“All who enter into matrimonial relations with a holy purpose—the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman’s heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband’s character and give it completeness—fulfill God’s purpose for them.”⁶

“When the wife yields her body and mind to the control of her husband, being passive to his will in all things, sacrificing her conscience, her dignity, and even her identity, she loses the opportunity of exerting that mighty influence for good which she should possess to elevate her husband. She could soften his stern nature, and her sanctifying influence could be exerted in a manner to refine and purify, leading him to strive earnestly to govern his passions and be more spiritually minded, that they might be

partakers together of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. The power of influence can be great to lead the mind to high and noble themes, above the low, sensual indulgences for which the heart unrenewed by grace naturally seeks. If the wife feels that in order to please her husband she must come down to his standard, when animal passion is the principal basis of his love and controls his actions, she displeases God; for she fails to exert a sanctifying influence upon her husband. If she feels that she must submit to his animal passions without a word of remonstrance, she does not understand her duty to him nor to her God.”⁷

“The sympathy, forbearance, and love required in dealing with children would be a blessing in any household. They would soften and subdue set traits of character in those who need to be more cheerful and restful. The presence of a child in a home sweetens and refines. A child brought up in the fear of the Lord is a blessing.

“Care and affection for dependent children removes the roughness from our natures, makes us tender and sympathetic, and has an influence to develop the nobler elements of our character.”⁸

Living alone can be a blessing if you choose to make it that way.

The apostle Paul, who knew this experience firsthand, explains: “I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. . . . The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction” (1 Corinthians 7:32–35). God has special blessings that He gives only to those alone.

The church has an added responsibility toward those who live alone. Job tells us that he “delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that **had none to help him**” (Job 29:12). God commanded the Israelites to remind themselves publicly that “Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow” by responding to that statement with an “Amen” (Deuteronomy 27:19). Certainly God expected more than just an “amen,” for “for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20). “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep [ourselves] unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

Living alone while developing heaven in our heart is a challenge that it is only possible to overcome with divine help. But Jesus was able to choose the cross, for your salvation and my salvation, while He was alone and lonely. Jesus died for the sin of Adam, who introduced sin into our world because the world’s first man refused to live alone without Eve. Jesus died for us. In His strength, those of us who must live alone, can do it cheerfully and successfully.

To those who do not have to live alone, thank God for every day that you have with your spouse, parents, and children. They are a blessing that others of us miss. Treasure them. Ask God to help you to be a blessing to them.

To all of us, may we find God’s help to live contentedly as a blessing to those around us. Amen. *R*

References

- ¹ *The Signs of the Times*, December 2, 1897. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ² Ibid.
- ³ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 56. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁴ *The Adventist Home*, p. 44.
- ⁵ Ibid., p. 421.
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 99.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 127.
- ⁸ Ibid., p. 160.

Sound Advice

for the Online Generation

Timely instruction compiled from the writings of E. G. White

The muscles and the mind

Many have suffered from severe mental taxation, unrelieved by physical exercise. The result is a deterioration of their powers, and they are inclined to shun responsibilities. What they need is more active labor. This condition is not confined to those whose heads are white with the frost of time; men young in years have fallen into the same state and have become mentally feeble.

Strictly temperate habits, combined with exercise of the muscles as well as of the mind, will preserve both mental and physical vigor, and give power of endurance to those engaged in the ministry, to editors, and to all others whose habits are sedentary.

Ministers, teachers, and students do not become as intelligent as they should in regard to the necessity of physical exercise in the open air. They neglect this duty, a duty which is most essential to the preservation of health. They closely apply their minds to study, and yet eat the allowance of a laboring man. Under such habits, some grow corpulent, because the system is clogged. Others become thin and feeble, because their vital powers are exhausted in throwing off the excess of food. The liver is

burdened, being unable to throw off the impurities of the blood, and sickness is the result. If physical exercise were combined with mental exertion, the circulation of the blood would be quickened, the action of the heart would be more perfect, impure matter would be thrown off, and new life and vigor would be felt in every part of the body.

When the minds of ministers, school teachers, and students are continually excited by study, and the body is allowed to be inactive, the nerves of emotion are taxed, while the nerves of motion are inactive. The wear being wholly on the mental organs, they become overworked and enfeebled, while the muscles lose their vigor for want of employment. There is no inclination to exercise the muscles in physical labor; exertion seems to be irksome.¹

Preserving brain nerve power

Many feel that if they do not eat meat and the grosser articles of food, they may eat of simple food until they cannot well eat more. This is a mistake. Many professed health reformers are nothing less than gluttons. They lay upon the digestive organs so great a burden that the vitality of the system is exhausted in the effort to dispose of it. It also has a depressing influence upon the intellect; for the brain nerve power is called upon to assist the stomach in its work. Overeating, even of the simplest food, benumbs the sensitive nerves of the brain and weakens its vitality. Overeating has a worse effect upon the system



than overworking; the energies of the soul are more effectually prostrated by intemperate eating than by intemperate working.

The digestive organs should never be burdened with a quantity or quality of food which it will tax the system to appropriate. All that is taken into the stomach, above what the system can use to convert into good blood, clogs the machinery; for it cannot be made into either flesh or blood, and its presence burdens the liver, and produces a morbid condition of the system. The stomach is overworked in its efforts to dispose of it, and then there is a sense of languor, which is interpreted to mean hunger, and without allowing the digestive organs time to rest from their severe labor, to recruit their energies, another immoderate amount is taken into the stomach, to set the weary machinery again in motion. The system receives less nourishment from too great a quantity of food, even of the right quality, than from a moderate quantity taken at regular periods.²

How bad is this, really?

Overeating is intemperance just as surely as is liquor drinking. And what influence does overeating have upon the stomach? It becomes debilitated, the digestive organs are weakened, and disease, with all its train of evils, is brought on as the result. If persons were diseased before, they thus increase the difficulties upon them, and lessen their vitality every day they live. They call their vital powers into unnecessary action to take care of the food that they place in their stomachs. What a terrible condition is this to be in!⁴

Another pernicious habit is that of eating just before bedtime. The regular meals may have been taken; but because there is a sense of faintness, more food is taken. By indulgence this wrong practice becomes a habit and often so firmly fixed that it is thought impossible to sleep without food. As a result of eating late suppers, the digestive process is continued through the sleeping hours. But though the stomach works constantly, its work is

Strictly temperate habits, combined with exercise of the muscles as well as of the mind, will preserve both mental and physical vigor.

not properly accomplished. The sleep is often disturbed with unpleasant dreams, and in the morning the person awakes unrefreshed and with little relish for breakfast. When we lie down to rest, the stomach should have its work all done, that it, as well as the other organs of the body, may enjoy rest. For persons of sedentary habits late suppers are particularly harmful. With them the disturbance created is often the beginning of disease that ends in death.⁵

Food for clear thought

If your work is sedentary, take exercise every day, and at each meal eat only two or three kinds of simple food, taking no more of these than will satisfy the demands of hunger.⁶

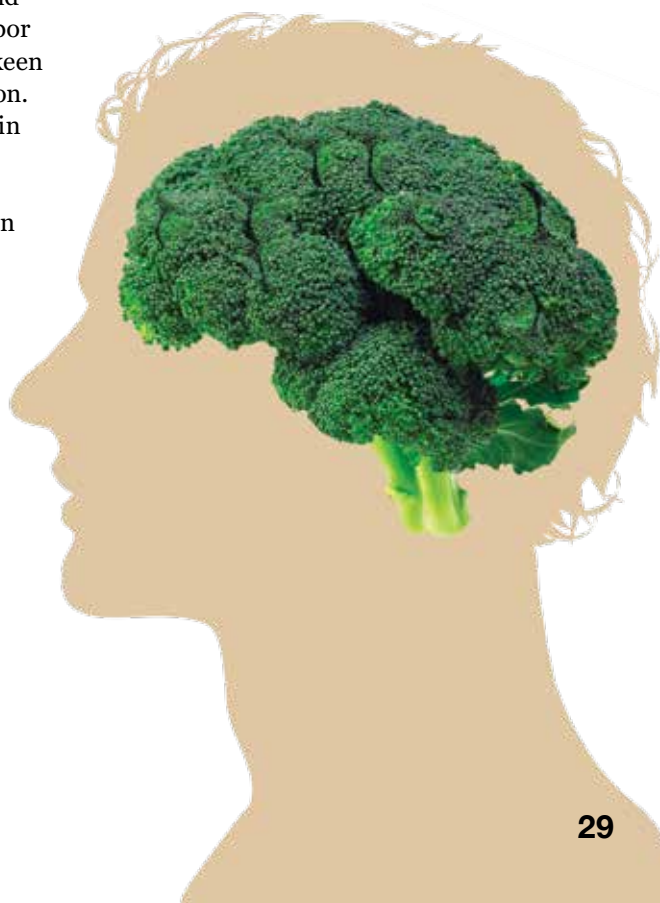
God wants men to cultivate force of character. Those who are merely timeservers are not the ones who will receive a rich reward by and by. He wants those who labor in His cause to be men of keen feeling and quick perception. They should be temperate in eating; rich and luxurious food should find no place upon their tables; and when the brain is constantly taxed, and there is a lack of physical exercise, they should eat sparingly, even of plain food. Daniel's clearness of mind and firmness of purpose, his strength of intellect in acquiring knowledge, were due in a great degree to the plainness of his diet, in connection with his life of prayer.⁷

There is a constant warfare to be maintained

between virtue and vice. The discordant elements of the one, and the pure principles of the other, are at work striving for the mastery. Satan is approaching every soul with some form of temptation on the point of indulgence of appetite. Intemperance is fearfully prevalent. Look where we will, we behold this evil fondly cherished. In spite of the efforts made to control it, intemperance is on the increase. We cannot be too earnest in seeking to hinder its progress, to raise the fallen, and to shield the weak from temptation. With our feeble human hands we can do but little, but we have an unfailing Helper. We must not forget that the arm of Christ can reach to the very depths of human woe and degradation. He can give us help to conquer even the terrible demon of intemperance.⁸ *R*

References

- ¹ *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, pp. 160, 161.
- ² *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 102, 103.
- ³ *Healthful Living*, p. 89.
- ⁴ *Child Guidance*, pp. 389, 390.
- ⁵ *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 110.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.
- ⁷ *The Youth's Instructor*, July 16, 1903.





U.S.A.

SEUSF workers' seminar in Citra, Florida, February 2015.

Hungary

Bible workers' seminar, March 2015 (middle).

Philippines

Workers' seminar in Manila, March 2015 (bottom).



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Who Gets the Credit?

The county fair had a contest: Who could grow the biggest pumpkin?

Young Jimmy was excited, because all year he had cultivated and fertilized the soil in his garden so that it could really produce some great results. The largest pumpkin on record weighed over a ton, but Jimmy was just a small-scale junior farmer in a remote area—so he would be happy just to be able to win the local contest. With great hopes and Dad's help in lifting, the boy loaded his biggest pumpkin onto his wooden wagon and pulled it down the dirt road to the county fair.

Sure enough, when Jimmy presented the giant pumpkin, the scales tipped the balance as the heaviest pumpkin in the contest. But wait—much to Jimmy's shock, suddenly neighbor Sandra Sue claimed that that was her pumpkin on the scale, not Jimmy's. So, the judges had to vote a tie because they weren't exactly sure whose pumpkin it really was.

Jimmy's spirit was crushed. He went home to talk with Mom about it.

"I was the creator of that pumpkin, not Sandra Sue," Jimmy cried. "I can't believe that happened after all my hard work!"

Mom gave Jimmy a comforting hug. Then she slowly asked, "But wait, Jimmy. Who was the creator of the pumpkin?"

"I was. . . . Oh, I suppose it was God. But I was an important part of the picture."

"I understand your frustration, Jim," said Mom. "Really I do. . . . But just imagine how Jesus feels when people try to make Him a 'junior' instead of recognizing Him as the Creator.

"Jesus—the Creator? I thought God the Father was the Creator and that Jesus was only the Son of God," said Jimmy.

"Remember the Scriptures," said Mom. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by him; and without**

him was not any thing made that was made. . . .

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth' (John 1:1–3, 14). The Word made flesh is Jesus, of course. There are also other verses that explain His creative power—for example, Hebrews 1:1, 2 and Colossians 1:12–17. Plus, at creation 'the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters' (Genesis 1:2) as well."

Jimmy thought for a minute, then said: "I suppose if Jesus doesn't always get credit for His work, I'm in good company. The Godhead made everything. I just missed out on getting the top honor at a pumpkin contest. That's nothing to complain about compared to what Jesus went through."

"You're right, Jimmy," Mom continued, "I'm so glad you understand that—and you'll always be happier and blessed for thinking of things that way. . . . Now let's make some pie with all those fresh pumpkins you harvested!"

