



the
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Vol. 63, No. 3

**Stand Like
the Brave**

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"The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold."—*Education*, p. 57.

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STRENGTH WHEN NEEDED

When we think of standing like the brave—how often do we feel as weak as water! Some are naturally bold; others not. But God's biddings are His enablings. Remember Jeremiah, who felt he was only a child, Moses, who felt he could not speak, Ellen Harmon the weak and frail, and many more who became empowered by God's strength. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isaiah 40:29).

Remember John of Saxony. During the great Reformation in Germany, when the Confession was to be signed by the princes, "the reformers were solicitous that their cause should not be confounded with political questions; they felt that the Reformation should exercise no other influence than that which proceeds from the Word of God. As the Christian princes advanced to sign the Confession, Melancthon interposed, saying, 'It is for the theologians and ministers to propose these things, while the authority of the mighty ones of earth is to be reserved for other matters.' 'God forbid,' replied John of Saxony, 'that you should exclude me. **I am resolved to do my duty, without being troubled about my crown. I desire to confess the Lord. My electoral hat and robes are not so precious to me as the cross of Jesus Christ.**' Having thus spoken he wrote down his name. Said another of the princes as he took the pen, 'If the honor of my Lord Jesus Christ requires it, I am ready to leave my goods and life behind me.' 'Rather would I renounce my subjects and my States, rather would I quit the country of my fathers, staff in hand,' he continued, 'than to receive any other doctrine than is contained in this Confession.' Such was the faith and daring of those men of God."¹

When called to stand . . .

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be"
(Deuteronomy 33:25, last part).

Problems are mounting, the enemy is escalating his attacks. Indeed, "many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing

happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (1 Peter 4:12-14).

"The temptations of Satan are greater now than ever before, for he knows that his time is short and that very soon every case will be decided, either for life or for death. It is no time now to sink down beneath discouragement and trial; we must bear up under all our afflictions and trust wholly in the Almighty God of Jacob. . . .

"We must have on the whole armor of God and be ready at any moment for a conflict with the powers of darkness. **When temptations and trials rush in upon us, let us go to God and agonize with Him in prayer. He will not turn us away empty, but will give us grace and strength to overcome, and to break the power of the enemy.**"²

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. . . .

"When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. **Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare.** The deeper the night for God's people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors."³

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Amen! *R*

References:

¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 206.

² *Early Writings*, p. 46. [Emphasis added.]

³ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 81. [Emphasis added.]



By Leslie D. Bauer

A TIME FOR COURAGE

In the time in which we live, what is God wanting from His people?

Let us consider the words of Mordecai to Esther during a time of crisis:

“For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and **who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?**” (Esther 4:14).

It seems we are living in a very confusing time. Chaos seems to be all around us. Different opinions are

rising in society, apparently causing confusion in nearly every subject—gender, healthcare, police protection, the freedom to be whatever you may want to be as long as God or religion is not tolerated.

There must be a reformation in our society. In the churches, in our homes, at our workplace—in all parts of society, a need of reformation is felt. Who will stand up for God at such a time as this? Courage is needed!

What is courage? When considering this point, I found something very interesting: Courage never appears by itself; something else must always be present.

WHAT IS COURAGE?

“Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.”¹

As we see from the definition, courage only appears when you need moral or mental strength to venture out at a time when it’s dangerous or when fear or difficulty is evident. Such a person who will do this we call “courageous.”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COURAGEOUS?

Let’s look for a moment at self-confidence. Courageous people be-

lieve in themselves. They know who they are and what they stand for. They have strong values, recognize their personal capabilities, and are confident in meeting the challenges that lie before them.

Such a concept almost seems wrong or sacrilegious. After all, our greatest battle is with self! Nonetheless, God is trying to give us confidence and what **He** can do **through** us. The apostle Paul explains: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

"Our dependence is not in what man can do; it is in what God can do for man through Christ. When we surrender ourselves wholly to God, and fully believe, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. The conscience can be freed from condemnation. Through faith in His blood, all may be made perfect in Christ Jesus. Thank God that we are not dealing with impossibilities."²

"Whenever man accomplishes anything, whether in spiritual or in temporal lines, he should bear in mind that he does it through co-operation with his Maker. There is great necessity for us to realize our dependence on God. Too much confidence is placed in man, too much reliance on human inventions. There is too little confidence in the power which God stands ready to give. 'We are laborers together with God.' 1 Corinthians 3:9. Immeasurably inferior is the part which the human agent sustains; but if he is linked with the divinity of Christ, he can do all things through the strength that Christ imparts."³

"There are always a few who think, when their brethren are pulling forward, that it is their duty to pull back. They object to everything that is proposed, and make war on every plan that they have not themselves originated. Here is an opportunity for persons to develop inordinate self-confidence."⁴

We must have courage; we must be courageous and have self-confidence in what God can do and will do through us if we let Him. **Our danger lies in not depending on God. That kind of self-confidence becomes inordinate.**

"What an inspiration of courage and lofty faith was displayed by the simple shepherd before the armies of the Israelites and the Philistines. There was a ring of fearlessness in his tone, a look of triumph and rejoicing upon his fair countenance."

WHAT DOES "INORDINATE" MEAN?

1. **Not within proper or reasonable limits; immoderate; excessive.**
2. **Unrestrained in conduct, feelings, etc.**
3. **Disorderly; uncontrolled.**

We must be under the control of God that He may do great things for us, our families, our churches, and society. So, God's presence in our life dispels many things that His absence would allow the enemy to use to control us.

The enemy will always try to instill fear, but "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

An example of what God can do for us is found in the experience faced by Israel in its crisis over the threat of giant Goliath taunting them morning and evening.

Yet "David said to Saul, let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:32).

We find that the enemy had come in and instilled fear in the entire army of Israel. The great need was courage—but all were afraid! Whom could God inspire? Where was courage? It was found in a young shepherd boy seemingly out of place at the wrong time—and yet fearless. David, seeing the situation, claimed victory.

"What an inspiration of courage and lofty faith was displayed by the simple shepherd before the armies of the Israelites and the Philistines. There was a ring of **fearlessness** in his tone, a look of triumph and rejoicing upon his fair countenance."⁵

"Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled" (1 Samuel 17:51).

The enemy, when seeing true courage and self-confidence in what God can do through His representatives, turns and runs.

"The Philistines were smitten with terror. They knew that the day was lost. In horror and confusion they began an irregular retreat. The shout of the triumphant Hebrews echoed along the summits of the mountains."⁶

What gave David this courage and faith? God does not bestow faith upon us, but He gives us a start!

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).

I believe that faith is an experience. When we first meet God, we have no experience on which to build, so God gives to every man that initial gift to lean on. When Goliath came to threaten and intimidate Israel, young David already had a previous experience with what God could do.

"David said unto Saul, thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear:

and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee" (1 Samuel 17:34–37).

WHAT IS FAITH?

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). This requires complete trust or confidence in someone or something.

Such an experience only comes to those who are willing to step forward when others want to keep silent or hide. We can look at another example, Elijah the Tishbite.

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1).

From where did this man appear? How did he have such courage to go before such a corrupt king?

"Among the mountains of Gilead, east of the Jordan, there dwelt in the days of Ahab a man of faith and prayer whose fearless ministry was destined to check the rapid spread of apostasy in Israel. Far removed from any city of renown, and occupying no high station in life, Elijah the Tishbite nevertheless entered upon his mission confident in God's purpose to prepare the way before him and to give him abundant success. The word of faith and power was upon his lips, and his whole life was devoted to the work of reform."⁷

Elijah was not from a prominent family; he was not well known, but he had a fearless ministry and he was full of confidence in God—so much so that he devoted his whole life to the work of reform. We could say he was full of confidence in God and had a courageous ministry of reform. That gave this unknown man the courage to stand before corruption and denounce it. It did not matter to Elijah if he were the only

Elijah was not from a prominent family; he was not well known, but he had a fearless ministry and he was full of confidence in God—so much so that he devoted his whole life to the work of reform. . . . He was full of confidence in God and had a courageous ministry of reform.



one left who was still serving God. He would stand for the right!

In the showdown on Mount Carmel, "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men" (1 Kings 18:22).

As Elijah stands before this vast assembly, God is able to use this courageous man to display His presence through him.

"Unashamed, unterrified, the prophet stands before the multitude, fully aware of his commission to execute the divine command. His countenance is lighted with an awful solemnity. In anxious expectancy

the people wait for him to speak. Looking first upon the broken-down altar of Jehovah, and then upon the multitude, Elijah cries out in clear, trumpetlike tones, 'How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.'"⁸

Now is the time for courage to shine forth from the assembly. Now is the time to be courageous and stand with God!

WHAT PARALYZES OUR FAITH?

"The people answer him not a word. Not one in that vast assembly

dare reveal loyalty to Jehovah. Like a dark cloud, deception and blindness had overspread Israel. Not all at once had this fatal apostasy closed about them, but gradually, as from time to time they had failed to heed the words of warning and reproof that the Lord sent them. **Each departure from right doing, each refusal to repent, had deepened their guilt and driven them farther from Heaven.** And now, in this crisis, they persisted in refusing to take their stand for God."⁹

Not one person was willing to take a stand, not one had enough courage to step forward. **What could have led to this sad state of affairs, this apostasy? An unwillingness to repent from wrongdoing, an unwillingness to reform, a state of complacency.** This all led to darkness, deception, and blindness. What a condition to be in! What was God looking for in them?

"The Lord abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis in His work."¹⁰

Some common synonyms for "abhor" are **abominate, detest, hate, and loathe.** Is this not the same condition found in the church mentioned in the present era?

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:14–17).

When we are willing to devote our life to God, He is willing to intervene in our behalf. We have the victory—we just need to claim it.

THE ENEMY RESTRAINED

"How gladly would Satan, who fell like lightning from heaven, come to the help of those whom he has deceived, whose minds he has

controlled, and who are fully devoted to his service. Gladly would he send the lightning and kindle their sacrifices; but **Jehovah has set Satan's bounds. He has restrained his power, and all his devices cannot convey one spark to Baal's altars.**"¹¹

Elijah now has the victory of the battle. The prophets of Baal have been defeated, great victory has come for God. Now Elijah's faith must be proven.

"As [Elijah] prayed, his faith reached out and grasped the promises of Heaven, and he persevered in prayer until his petitions were answered. He did not wait for the full evidence that God had heard him, but was willing to venture all on the slightest token of divine favor. And yet **what he was enabled to do under God, all may do in their sphere of activity in God's service;** for of the prophet from the mountains of Gilead it is written: 'Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.' James 5:17."¹²

What encouraging words—what a promise is here given for you and me! Elijah was not some superhuman, not some extraordinary man, but his faith had made him more than human. He was a man (or of mankind) like you or me. What he had we can have; it just takes faith.

"Faith such as this is needed in the world today—faith that will lay hold on the promises of God's word and refuse to let go until Heaven hears."¹³

OUR FAITH TESTED

Our faith must be continually tested so that the Lord might perform great and marvelous reforms in our lives, then through us to others. If we forget to rely on God, reformation stops.

"Only a few hours had passed since he had witnessed a wonderful manifestation of divine power, and this should have given him assurance that he would not now be forsaken. **Had he remained where he was, had he made God his refuge and strength,** standing

steadfast for the truth, he would have been shielded from harm. **The Lord would have given him another signal victory by sending His judgments on Jezebel; and the impression made on the king and the people would have wrought a great reformation.**"¹⁴

RADICAL REFORMATION

Daniel is another man of courage we can consider. What allowed Daniel to display such courage?

"Through the fidelity to the principles of temperance shown by the Hebrew youth God is speaking to the youth of today. There is need of men who like Daniel will do and dare for the cause of right. Pure hearts, strong hands, fearless courage, are needed; for the warfare between vice and virtue calls for ceaseless vigilance. To every soul Satan comes with temptation in many alluring forms on the point of indulgence of appetite."¹⁵

It is Daniel's adherence to temperance that gave him such courage. Knowing he was complying with the standards God had set, he could have the courage to stand for the right. We are living in radical times. It seems like radicalism is everywhere. What would God have us be like?

"There is need now of men like Daniel—men who have the self-denial and the **courage to be radical temperance reformers.** Let every Christian see that his example and influence are on the side of reform. Let ministers of the gospel be faithful in sounding the warnings to the people. And let all remember that our happiness in two worlds depends upon the right improvement of one."¹⁶

I never thought there would be a day that God would call for "radical" reform, yet the times demand it. This not talking about individual demands, but a social change in me, you, and others.

WHAT DOES "RADICAL" MEAN?

This word especially refers to change or action relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough

“Faith such as [Elijah had] is needed in the world today—faith that will lay hold on the promises of God’s word and refuse to let go until Heaven hears.”

as in, for example, a radical overhaul of something that already exists as a status quo.

God is calling for a thorough change in us to stand on a higher platform of truth.

“The only hope for our people now is to take their stand on the true foundation. Higher and still higher they are to raise the banner of truth. Not for one moment are they to give place to the enemy.”¹⁷

This age in which we live is demanding extremes in all areas of life and it will take dedicated youth to meet this challenge.

“There is earnest work to be done in this age, and parents should educate their children to share in it. . . . Young men should be gaining solidity of character, that they may be fitted for usefulness. Daniel and Joseph were youth of firm principle, whom God could use to carry out His purposes. Mark their history, and see how God wrought for them. Joseph met with a variety of experiences, experiences that tested his courage and uprightness to the fullest extent. . . . But he is not discouraged. He trusts in God; and the purpose of his heart, the purity of his motive, is made manifest. The eye of God is upon him, a divine hand leads him, and soon we see him come forth from prison to share the throne of Egypt.”¹⁸

THE CALL OF THE HOUR

God has always sought to give us courage and hope in this life we must live.



The call echoes from Heaven: “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:9).

“All through the ages, God has had moral heroes, and He has them now—those who, like Joseph and Elijah and Daniel, are not ashamed to acknowledge themselves His peculiar people. His special blessing accompanies the labors of men of action, men who will not be swerved from the straight line of duty, but who with divine energy will inquire, ‘Who is on the Lord’s side?’ ”¹⁹

May you find that courage needed to do God’s will now in these dangerous times. May the Lord God

give you the courage to reform the weak areas of your life, the ones that give us fear. *R*

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¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com>

² *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 32.

³ *Gospel Workers*, pp. 446, 447.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁵ *The Signs of the Times*, August 10, 1888. [Emphasis added.]

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 119.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁹ *Ibid.* [Emphasis added.]

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 282, 283. [Emphasis added.]

¹² *Prophets and Kings*, p. 157. [Emphasis added.]

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 157. [Emphasis added.]

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 160. [Emphasis added.]

¹⁵ *A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 57.

¹⁶ *Reflecting Christ*, p. 142.

¹⁷ *Battle Creek Letters*, p. 110.

¹⁸ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 321.

¹⁹ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 148.

LEARNING TO LOVE THE LORD

By David Zic

In Scripture, the people of God are represented as a group of strength and valor. We “are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). We can proclaim the gospel with power because we know it is true. “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). An assurance in the “present truth” message seems to bring with it an assurance of salvation. But is this enough? Is it the sum of our experience? Do we end our Christian experience here?

BEFORE THE CROSS: INTRODUCTORY LEVEL CHRISTIANITY

We begin our walk with God through an exposure to the truth, and since Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) we seek to know him more. And how do we know Him more? Exploring His commandments will teach us His character. Jesus says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Like the other apostles, Peter was able to know Christ personally. He saw the character of God walking before Him and could bear witness to the law of God displayed before his eyes. Early in His ministry Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was, and it was Peter who spoke for the group, declaring: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). His answer was correct in every way.

Once I was speaking at a conference and asked the assembled congregation a rhetorical question. “Do you know who Jesus is?” I just wanted them to think about their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I was not expecting anyone to answer—but before I could go on, a woman jumped up and replied, “I know the answer to your question. Jesus is Principle of Faith #2.” Wow! This poor sister is right and oh-so-wrong at the same time. Like so many who profess to know Christ she knows Him as a doctrine. She is correct that in the *Principles of Faith and Church*



Order Jesus Christ is principle number 2. To these persons Christ is a doctrine. Christ is words in a book on a shelf that they pull out from time to time.

A theoretical, doctrinal, theological understanding of Christ is not to be dismissed. Knowing the doctrine is important because it establishes us in our faith, but it is not enough. As a people we must progress beyond this. We must truly know who Christ is in order to fully experience the plan of salvation.

BEFORE THE CROSS: PRINCIPLED CHRISTIANITY

With extended exposure to Christ, the disciples could see that there was so much more to Him than a mere doctrinal acceptance of the Messiah. His life was transformative to everyone around Him. He desired to give living water to all as a free gift. Acceptance of the free gift changed lives, and this quickly became evident to the many disciples Jesus had at that time in His earthly ministry. The natural man resists this change. Many wanted to be followers of Christ but did not want to allow Him to change their lives. They wanted the benefits of salvation while still holding onto their own inclinations and desires. It was inevitable that a separation would occur between those who accepted the transformation of Christ and those who thought of Him only as a doctrine.

As Jesus made it plain that transformation of every aspect of the life was the goal, He declared "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:65). Many refused to accept the transformative gift Jesus was offering and "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). How sad that such ones would prefer to continue in sin than to allow Christ to change their lives. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou

hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:67-69).

On the other hand, Peter proclaims that he knows, and he is "sure" that he now knows, who Christ is. He is committed to following the principles Christ has explained because he sees that they are real, as displayed in the life of Christ. At this point in the Christian experience, we follow the principles because we know that they are true. Following the principles that we believe, will produce in us a character worthy of salvation. We know "that we are of God" because we are doing good things.

Knowing the doctrine is important. Living out the principles is important. But it is still not enough.

AT THE CROSS: TESTED AND BROKEN

Peter was confident that he was part of the people of God. He was confident that he knew the truth. He was confident that he knew who Jesus was. When we come to this same stage in our Christian experience, we think that we have accomplished what is needed for salvation, but actually now comes the greatest test.

Only hours before Christ was to be taken to the cross, He told His disciples that they would abandon Him. Peter was incensed that the Lord would think such a thing of him! He declares with confidence, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matthew 26:33). Knowing that Peter was sincere in his proclamation, but not understanding fully the fulfillment of the plan of salvation, Jesus makes a prophecy: "Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice" (Matthew 26:34). Now remember, Peter has just declared that He knows that Jesus is the Son of God. And then the Lord makes a prophecy, to which Peter declares, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee" (Matthew

26:35), basically stating that the Lord is wrong! He cannot acknowledge Christ as Lord and then tell the Lord that He is wrong!

As the other disciples clamored to declare their loyalty, the interchange between Peter and Christ is interrupted. A short while later they have an opportunity to speak more privately, and Jesus wants to give assurance to His disciple that He will be with him through the coming trial. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31, 32).

This expression, "when thou art converted," should not be taken to indicate that Peter does not have a genuine experience with Christ. Christ is not saying that Peter is lost, He is encouraging him to know that he can rise to a higher understanding of God's love. At this moment then, although Peter's experience is real, it is not yet complete. There will be a deeper experience to come, if he will take the path Christ is laying before him.

When Jesus is captured and taken to the judgment hall, the prophecy to Peter is fulfilled. Peter does not stand beside Christ in the judgment hall. He follows "afar off" (Luke 22:54). The disciple who said "I know who Jesus is" (introductory level Christianity), and emphatically declared "I really know who Jesus is" (principles Christianity), now makes a new declaration. Sitting among the people and looking from far away, he is accused by a young maid of being one of Christ's disciples. "And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not" (Luke 22:57). He is confronted the second time, and then again the third time, when he declares once more: "I know not" (Luke 22:60). The prophecy of Christ of Peter's three denials is fulfilled.

At this point we turn with disgust on Peter. How can he lie?! Why is he ashamed to say the truth? The disciple who declared, "I know who He is," now says "I know Him not." But I wish to

propose a different scenario. While he is lying that He does not know Christ, in a way he is telling the truth. He actually does not know who Christ is.

In saying "I know Him not," Peter was declaring the truth that to know Christ is so much more than a doctrine, so much more than a set of principles. This is a Christ ready to sacrifice all for the salvation of souls. Broken of self, broken of spiritual pride, broken of earthly desires, Peter can now experience forgiveness in its most divine and genuine form. He recognizes that to know Christ is to lay aside everything and be completely dependent on the Saviour. He flees away from the scene of the trial and goes to a private place to weep "bitterly" (Luke 22:62).

But wait! Before he left the scene something happened. Something amazing and utterly beautiful. In the judgment hall the plan of salvation for all of humanity was unfolding, but Jesus will pause the entire plan of salvation, just to save Peter! Knowing the despair of His disciple at this very moment, knowing that Satan is ready to pounce on him and is already condemning him and accusing him that he is a lost soul, "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter" (Luke 22:61). The Lord paused the whole plan of salvation, just to save Peter! How great is the Saviour's love!

"When in the judgment hall the words of denial had been spoken; when Peter's love and loyalty, awakened under the Saviour's glance of pity and love and sorrow, had sent him forth to the garden where Christ had wept and prayed; when his tears of remorse dropped upon the sod that had been moistened with the blood drops of His agony — then the Saviour's words, 'I have prayed for thee: . . . when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren,' were a stay to his soul. Christ, though foreseeing his sin, had not abandoned him to despair.

"If the look that Jesus cast upon him had spoken condemnation instead of pity; if in foretelling the sin He had failed of speaking

hope, how dense would have been the darkness that encompassed Peter! how reckless the despair of that tortured soul! In that hour of anguish and self-aborrence, what could have held him back from the path trodden by Judas?

"He who could not spare His disciple the anguish, left him not alone to its bitterness. His is a love that fails not nor forsakes."¹

AFTER THE CROSS: CHRISTIANITY FULFILLED

When we come to the cross of Christ, we realize our complete dependence on Him. Broken we come before Him — and He assures us that He will heal us. The forgiveness of God is full, it is complete, it is transformative, it is refreshing, it is the embodiment of His love for His church. They are His people not because they are good, but because they have surrendered to Him fully in acknowledgement that **He** is good.

"It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Job 14:4; Romans 8:7. Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness."²

Peter knew the doctrine of Christ, he knew the principles by which a Christian should live, but he did not yet have a personal experience with the forgiveness of Christ. The cross broke Peter's "self" and he now surrendered himself fully to be the child of God. This

experience of forgiveness changed Peter from "knowing" Christ to "loving" Christ. Face to face with his Redeemer once more he can now declare to Christ "thou knows that I love thee" (John 21:15). He is now ready to give the gospel.

"The first work that Christ entrusted to Peter on restoring him to the ministry was to feed the lambs. This was a work in which Peter had little experience. It would require great care and tenderness, much patience and perseverance. It called him to minister to those who were young in the faith, to teach the ignorant, to open the Scriptures to them, and to educate them for usefulness in Christ's service. Heretofore Peter had not been fitted to do this, or even to understand its importance. But this was the work which Jesus now called upon him to do. For this work his own experience of suffering and repentance had prepared him."³

PREPARED FOR THE FINAL WORK

Like Peter, the Lord is preparing His final remnant people to enter into a great work. He is fitting us now who will cast self aside and become fully dependent on Him. We are thankful that the Lord has given to us a knowledge of truth. We are thankful for the principles He has laid out for us so that we can live full lives of grace. Now we plead with Him to accept us as a people around His cross. We pray for Him to fit us for the final work that all hindrances would be removed from us so that He can work through us.

With Peter we want to declare, we "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9). *R*

References:

¹ *Education*, pp. 89, 90.

² *Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 812.



The Perils of the Last Days

By E. G. White

From The Bible Echo, February 1, 1897

“As it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”

Christ sees the wickedness on the earth today. He sees that the sins of Noah's and Lot's time are being repeated. What terrible revelations of crime are being made. Everything seems to be stirred up with an intense activity from beneath. Excitement is continually kept up. Feasting, buying, and selling, are brought into the churches. The watchman cries, “The morning cometh, and also the night.” The night symbolizes prevalence of error, misinterpretation and

misapplication of Scripture. Every species of delusion is now being brought in. The plainest truths of God's word are covered with a mass of man-made theories. Deadly errors are presented as the truth to which all must bow. The simplicity of true godliness is buried beneath tradition.

FALSE DOCTRINES

The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is one error with which the enemy is deceiving man. This error is well-nigh universal. But who told men that they would not die? Who told them that God has reserved a portion of His universe where the wicked are to suffer, through the ceaseless ages of eternity, without a particle of hope?—It was the serpent. God said that sinners would die. Satan declares that they will not die. Many believe the oft-repeated lies of the serpent to be genuine truth. They echo his words when they assert that God has ordained that sin shall be immortalized in a place of torment.

This is one of the lies forged in the synagogue of the enemy, one of the poisonous draughts of Babylon. “All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Another false doctrine is that the first day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord. By traditions received from the Roman Catholic Church, the fourth commandment of the decalogue is made of none effect. By their acceptance of a spurious sabbath, men have dishonoured God, and have honoured the usurper, who thought to changed times and laws. Many dangerous errors have been brought in to get rid of the true Sabbath. Men have taken the side of the great rebel, and rather than accept the word of God just as it

reads, have placed themselves in a net of heresy. Satan is bringing the churches and the world into corrupt harmony upon this point. Night, dark and portentous, is enclosing the Christian world. Apostasy from God's commandments is evidence of this night, deep, dark, and apparently impenetrable. Systems that make the truth of God of none effect are cherished. Men are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men; and their assertions are taken as truth. The people have received man-made theories. So the gospel is perverted, and the Scripture misapplied. As in the days of Christ, the light of truth is pushed into the background. Men's theories and suppositions are honoured before the word of the Lord God of hosts. The truth is counteracted by error. The word of God is wrested, divided, and distorted by higher criticism. Jesus is acknowledged, only to be betrayed by a kiss. Apostasy exists, and will enclose the world till the last. Its hideous character and darkening influence will be seen in the maddening draughts dealt out from Babylon.

MESSAGES OF WARNING

But before the Lord punishes men for their iniquity, He sends them a message of warning. Before He visits them with His judgments, He gives them a chance to repent. He remembered the sins of the Noatic world, but He did not punish them without warning them. For one hundred and twenty years this warning was sounding in their ears; but they did not repent. The

last year of their probation found them more stubborn and defiant than ever. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come up before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." The inhabitants of Sodom, also, perished by fire, which was rained upon them from heaven, because they turned from God, and corrupting themselves, filled the earth with their polluted wisdom.

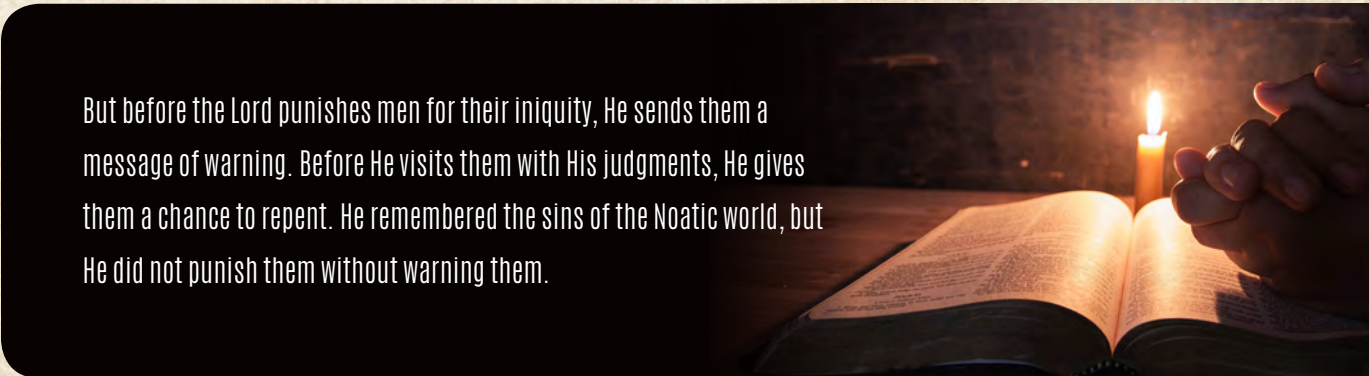
Had these men placed themselves under the control of the Spirit of God, had they cooperated with the heavenly intelligences, what a world of beauty and happiness we would now look upon. Had these long-lived, mentally strong men been vitalized by the Holy Spirit, they would have been a power of God.

HIGHER CRITICISM

Man can be exalted only by laying hold of the merits of a crucified and risen Savior. The finest intellect, the most exalted position will not secure heaven. Satan had the highest education that could be obtained. This education he received under the greatest of all teachers. When men talk of higher criticism; when they pass their judgment upon the word of God, call their attention to the fact that they have forgotten who was the first and

wisest critic. He has had thousands of years of practical experience. He it is who teaches the so-called higher critics of the world today. God will punish all those who, as higher critics, exalt themselves, and criticise God's Holy word.

The world's Redeemer warned His disciples against the false teaching which was, and would continue to be, the greatest obstacle to the progress of the truth. "There shall arise false christs, and false prophets," He said, "and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before." And Peter writes, "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." The leaven of false doctrine will be accepted in preference to the truth. "Beware," writes Paul, "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Under whose banner are we standing? Where are we? and what is Christ to us? By our course of action we decide our own destiny. By the society we choose, we determine what influences shall mould our character. If we choose the world, earthly influences make their imprint upon our minds, and though we may not realize it, we sink lower and lower; for



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Men's theories and suppositions are honored before the word of the Lord God of hosts. The truth is counteracted by error. The word of God is wrested, divided, and distorted by higher criticism. Jesus is acknowledged, only to be betrayed by a kiss.



if we do not grow in grace, we must deteriorate. It makes every difference with the future, eternal well-being of men whether they follow God's way or their own way. Their way may be entirely wrong. Are there many paths to heaven? If so, man may take any path that suits his fancy. But there is only one true way.

ONLY ONE TRUE WAY

Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." The Lord will uplift us if we will consent to be uplifted. He who recognizes God in Christ, who receives Christ as the world's Redeemer, and his personal Saviour, enters in at the door. He does not climb over some other way. Of all such it is written, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." The truth, the light, the life, shining into our hearts, sanctifies and elevates us. What greater elevation can earth present? What greater honour can earthly

potentates bestow? Man is taken from his degradation, cleansed from moral defilement, and made an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. His life is hid with Christ in God, and when He who is his life shall appear, he also will appear with Him in glory. This glory will be revealed at the second appearing of Christ. Then the saints will be exalted indeed. They will sit with Christ on His throne, and with Christ they will judge the world.

"The day is far spent, the night is at hand." The end is near. Soon the Lord will come with ten thousands of His saints, and Satan's system, which has destroyed so many that Christ came to save, will be broken up. Despotism is now seeking to obtain a foothold in every clime, but its day will soon be ended. "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. . . . Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Satan is in controversy with Christ, and with all who follow

in His footsteps. This conflict will continue until the voice is heard, saying, "It is done." "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." *R*



CHERISHING GOD'S WORD

By Barbara Montrose

IN THE POSTMODERN AGE

What a year! Everyone seems to be telling us that someone else (nearly everyone else!) is lying. Unfortunately, it's too often the case. Whom can we believe? Who is trustworthy?

Information everywhere, yet what is the truth? The only 100% trustworthy, reliable source is the One who indeed is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)—Jesus Christ as revealed in His Word, a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105) even in an era of postmodern skepticism. Yet why are so many not finding Him?

It all reminds us of the famous poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, where the 19th-century poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge described the way of life in seemingly endless days on the ocean, bemoaning the

plight of beholding saltwater in every direction as far as the eye could see, knowing well that none of it was potable:

*"Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink."*

Perhaps we might adapt that little verse to the current situation today:

*"Info, Info everywhere,
And all the news doth stink;
Info, Info everywhere,
Yet we are on the brink!"*

Yes indeed—on the brink of moral, physical, and spiritual collapse.

Mere information, science, and technology are not providing what is needed most. And even greater than the beauty of classic, insightful poetry is a prophecy found in Scripture of a real spiritual crisis looming on the horizon:

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst" (Amos 8:11-13).

How could such a famine exist in these last days when there are



“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it” (Amos 8:11, 12).

over 450 complete translations of the Bible² and over 900 portions and paraphrases³ just in English alone? We have plenty of translations in English, averaging a new one every six months⁴—but are we cherishing it as we should?

Meanwhile, according to Christian Lingua, the world’s largest Christian translation provider, out of the 6,500+ languages spoken around the world, only around 1,500 of these languages have the complete Bible in their native tongue.⁵

Other sources, such as the Wycliffe Global Alliance, show different estimates, but the proportions they cite in their statistics are similarly alarming—and a definite

wake-up call to action for believers. Just a thought: Might it not seem like a waste of resources to be concentrating so busily on more and more and more English translations while precious souls in so many places around the planet are languishing without having even a portion of the scriptures in their own tongue?

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Why the continual frenzy for more and more English translations? Could it be partly the lure of copyright royalties from prosperous English-speaking nations? Who knows, that might be one factor—but it’s also an admission that at least some of these words must be coming from a human rather than heavenly source, since no one can presume to copyright beyond planet earth. The early English translations from the 1500’s and 1600’s had no copyright. The aim in those days was simply to get the Word of God to the people, not to gain fortune or fame. Souls were won to Christ, lives were transformed by reading those early English Bibles. And yes, that can still happen today if our focus is sound and our motives sincere.

The Bible, of course, was not written first in English. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew (the Masoretic text, meticulously preserved by God-fearing Levites) and

the New Testament in the (Koine) Greek that was commonly used when Jesus came as the Son of man on earth. Scribes reverently copied these manuscripts with the utmost care.

“The Waldenses were the first of all the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of years before the Reformation, they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution.”⁶

“For a few years, under the guidance of the noble apostles, believers in Christ were privileged to have the unadulterated Word of God. But soon the scene changed; the fury of Satan, robbed of further opportunity to harass the Son of God, turned upon the written Word. Heretical sects, warring for supremacy, corrupted the manuscripts in order to further ends. . . . **The true church fled into the wilderness, taking pure manuscripts with her.**”⁷

“The history of the Protestant world is inseparable from the Received Text. A single nation could break loose and plunge into anarchy and license. The Received Text shone high in the heavens to stabilize surrounding peoples. Even many nations at one time might fall under the shadow of some great revolutionary wave. But there stood



the Received Text to fill their inner self with its moral majesty and call them back to law and order.”⁸

Through the careful stewardship of faithful believers, by the year 1516, the Textus Receptus (Received Text) of the New Testament was printed—not handwritten—thus allowing for a continually high level of accuracy and consistency. Besides being the source for other great translations of the Reformation (such as Martin Luther’s translation into German and the Reina Valera for Spanish), starting with William Tyndale’s translation in 1525, the Received Text continued as the tried-and-true basis of English translation among Protestants for the next 360+ years. Over 95%—more than 5,650 copies from the early years of the Christian faith—match up with the Received Text, often referred to as the “Majority Text” that had been preserved by those who had fled into the wilderness during the Dark Ages.

“The defenders of the Textus Receptus were of the humbler class who earnestly sought to follow the early church.”⁹

“Because of its purity, the Majority Text was used by all the 15th, 16th and 17th century Protestant Reformers of Europe to make their translations.”¹⁰

THE MID-1800’S

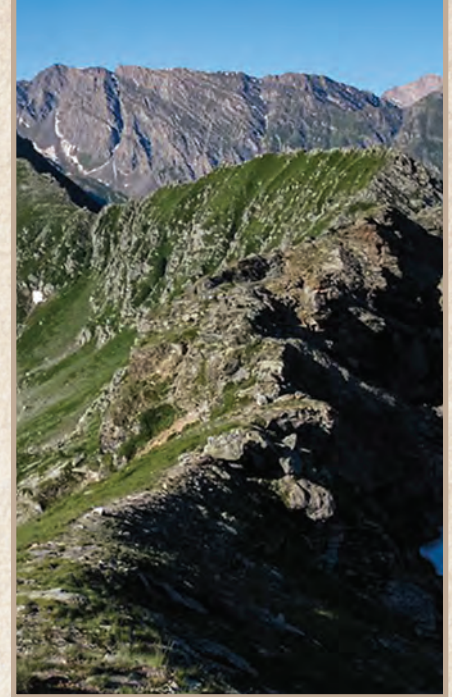
In the mid-1800’s, the everlasting gospel including the judgment hour message began to be proclaimed with power, preaching with a loud voice “unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, say-

ing with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:6, 7).

Almost as if in rebellious retaliation, another voice triggered some disruption and distraction soon after the proclamation of this vital message began. Instead of giving glory to the One “that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters,” Charles Darwin penned *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Besides being alarmingly racist by the standards of anyone today who might pause to notice the blatant implications in the title, the aim of Darwin’s scope seriously undermined the authority of the Genesis account in Scripture as well as an appreciation of God’s love for all dwellers on the earth.¹¹ It was not long before Darwin’s evolutionary theory grossly overshadowed a large degree of faith in the Creator and replaced it with the fallible god of secular humanistic scientism to be a new supposed authority, dominating educational systems across the globe. Despite its flaws, prominent scientists have juggled with adept determination over the years to try to keep afloat some level of credibility in the unproven evolutionary theory.

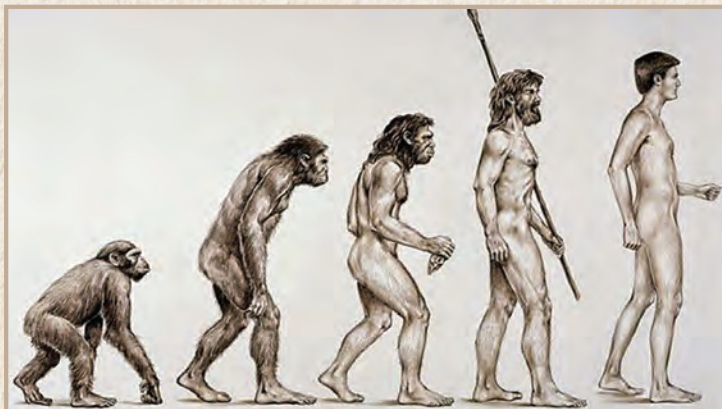
ANOTHER TWIST

Around this same time came along another harbinger of doubt. At the apex of “textual criticism” in Ger-



many, University of Leipzig scholar Konstantin von Tischendorf (1815–1875) had been taught by his professors that the Bible was unreliable—full of errors and falsification. So, in a search for some “better” manuscript, Tischendorf claimed to have found in 1844, by chance, 43 leaves in a tinder pile intended to heat the premises of a monastery renamed for St. Catherine of Alexandria, Egypt.¹² For centuries, the monastery had had three Bibles which they had carefully kept on their premises—not a fourth—so the plausibility of a chance account to find something this different is not so likely, also since the fine quality vellum was made of animal skins, which would surely have caused quite a stench in the building if the monks had really discarded it for burning.

Whatever the case, enter Codex Sinaiticus. The claim was soon made





that this codex (originating virtually from the headquarters of Gnosticism) was boasted of as older and better than the Received Text. Strangely enough, the snow-white parchment mysteriously changed to a dark-stained hue soon afterwards.^{13, 14}

Another cause for concern was that Constantine Simonides, a highly skilled calligrapher, testified in writing (with a Greek monk as witness) that he himself was the one who had penned the codex in 1839 as a gift for the Russian czar.¹⁵ Either way, their conflicting stories have continued to trigger much debate, of course, as do the tens of thousands of corrections scribbled throughout, the transposed sequences, plus an odd mixture of Koine and Modern Greek found within the manuscript.^{16, 17, 18}

The codex became known as *Aleph*.

In his travels throughout the Mediterranean world, Tischendorf also learned of another manuscript called Codex Vaticanus. Its roots also appear to be traced to Alexandria, Egypt and it became known simply as *B*.¹⁹

Dean Burgon describes: “Codex B comes to us without a history: without recommendation of any kind, except that of its antiquity. It bears traces of careless transcription in every page. The mistakes which the original transcriber made are of perpetual recurrence.”²⁰

These two manuscripts, *Aleph* and *B*—which don’t agree with each other in over 3,000 places in the Gospels alone—form the primary essence of what is referred to as the “modern critical” text.²¹ Some scholars say that neither of these manuscripts were originally Greek, but having come

from Egypt, were first in the early Egyptian Coptic language.²²

Honestly now, knowing Bible history, would Egypt—a place where Paul never wrote to nor visited even once in his three missionary journeys to scores of cities—really likely be a better, more reliable source of Inspiration than where most of the early Christians dwelt in Judea and Antioch?

The Lord declares: “And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor [the Nile]? . . . Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria” (Jeremiah 2:18, 36). “Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor. The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her. They shall not dwell in the LORD’s land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria” (Hosea 9:1–3).

A LESSON FROM FINE ART

In the world of fine art, famous, world-class auction houses take great pains to ensure that whatever is presented for sale is authentic. It must have:

1. Provenance (verified by witnesses as to the history of where it came from).
2. Chain of custody (a meticulous record of every place and in whose care it has been before arriving at the auction house).

3. Forensic-style chemical analysis to verify actual age and composition.

If the secular world of fine art is this careful and conscientious in verifying the authenticity of a product, how much more must we be with the sacred Word of the living God? For some reason, **these basic prerequisite steps were never done**, neither in Tischendorf’s discovery nor in the continuation of the story:

In the 1880’s, two British scholars and textual critics (Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort) caused a worldwide stir in their subsequent **belittling** of the Received Text. Firsthand biographical information about their lives reveals that they heartily embraced Darwin’s evolutionary theory rather than the biblical creation account in Genesis. Hort detested as “villainous” and “vile” the Authorized King James Bible, and both even seriously dabbled in the occult.^{23–29}

According to 19th-century conservative textual expert John William Burgon, besides adding 2,213 words plus apocryphal as well as outright heretical books, the result was an alarmingly butchered Greek text from their influence, which removed 3,704 words and substituted 2,121, transposed 3,471 and 1,772 modified, totaling 13,281 changes to the Received Text.³⁰ The aim was to cast doubt on the Received Text, dismissing it for not having been the Egyptian manuscripts they promoted.³¹ Among the more than 5,650 fragments of New Testament manuscripts in Greek still in existence, this “modern critical” text matches only about 1% of that total.

Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, the other 99% of existing manuscripts which support the Received Text are often set aside today, typically mocked and scoffed at even at seminaries training clergymen around the world. Extensive deletions and footnotes are increasingly being added as caveats and disclaimers calling into question certain portions of Scripture, thus inciting cynicism against the Received Text that had brought forth the truths of the Great Reformation. **Too often, textual “criticism” thus becomes exactly what the word “criticism” implies—not a path to faith but a path to doubt.**

The 20th century has brought new generations and even more textual criticism and revisions—including by some editors who do not even believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God at all.³²

This might perhaps explain another factor that could be contributing to more and more translations into English: Since the Bible is so readily available to people, the enemy uses different tactics to limit its influence by subtly undermining confidence in it. As English is the most widely used language today, to sit in a circle with a group reading the Bible, ironically enough, can actually become a bit confusing when everyone has a different twist from a different translation. So, it would appear that what the enemy could not do in his suppression of Scripture in the Dark Ages he attempts by triggering Babylonian confusion with an overwhelming mass of new translations, nearly all based on Westcott & Hort and the Jesuit Bible of 1582 designed to counteract the Protestant Reformation.³³

Ultimately, it becomes evident that one fruit that has resulted is a subtle casting of doubt on the Word of God, basically echoing the challenge of the serpent to Eve in Eden: “Yea, hath God said?” (Genesis 3:2) rather than simply treasuring what the Majority Text had provided to the reformers for centuries.³⁴

YES, “PROVE ALL THINGS”— BUT WITH FAITH!

This miasma of doubt in Scripture that began escalating in the

1880’s may have partly been what prompted Ellen G. White to pen some inspired words in 1886:

“There are men who strive to be original, who are wise above what is written; therefore, their wisdom is foolishness. They discover wonderful things in advance, ideas which reveal that they are far behind in the comprehension of the divine will and purposes of God. In seeking to make plain or to unravel mysteries hid from ages from mortal man, they are like a man floundering about in the mud, unable to extricate himself and yet telling others how to get out of the muddy sea they themselves are in. This is a fit representation of the men who set themselves to correct the errors of the Bible. **No man can improve the Bible by suggesting what the Lord meant to say or ought to have said.**

“Some look to us gravely and say, ‘Don’t you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?’ This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God. Yes, they would just as easily stumble over plain facts that the common mind will accept, and discern the Divine, and to which God’s utterance is plain and beautiful, full of marrow and fatness. All the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth.

“God committed the preparation of His divinely inspired Word to finite man. This Word, arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them that, by studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way to heaven.

“Those who think to make the supposed difficulties of Scripture plain, in measuring by their finite rule that which is inspired and that which is not inspired, had better

cover their faces, as Elijah when the still small voice spoke to him; for they are in the presence of God and holy angels, who for ages have communicated to men light and knowledge, telling them what to do and what not to do, unfolding before them scenes of thrilling interest, waymark by waymark in symbols and signs and illustrations.

“And He [God] has not, while presenting the perils clustering about the last days, qualified any finite man to unravel hidden mysteries or inspired one man or any class of men to pronounce judgment as to that which is inspired or is not. When men, in their finite judgment, find it necessary to go into an examination of scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us.

“I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible. Men arise who think they find something to criticize in God’s Word. They lay it bare before others as evidence of superior wisdom. **These men are, many of them, smart men, learned men, they have eloquence and talent, the whole lifework [of whom] is to unsettle minds in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures.** They influence many to see as they do. And the same work is passed on from one to another, just as Satan designed it should be, until we may see the full meaning of the words of Christ, ‘When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?’ (Luke 18:8).

“Brethren, let not a mind or hand be engaged in criticizing the Bible. It is a work that Satan delights to have any of you do, but it is not a work the Lord has pointed out for you to do.

“Men should let God take care of His own Book, His living oracles, as He has done for ages. They begin to question some parts of revelation, and pick flaws in the apparent inconsistencies of this statement and that statement. Beginning at Genesis, they give up that which they deem questionable, and their

“Those who think to make the supposed difficulties of Scripture plain, in measuring by their finite rule that which is inspired and that which is not inspired, had better cover their faces, as Elijah when the still small voice spoke to him; for they are in the presence of God and holy angels.”



minds lead on, for Satan will lead to any length they may follow in their criticism, and they see something to doubt in the whole Scriptures. Their faculties of criticism become sharpened by exercise, and they can rest on nothing with a certainty. You try to reason with these men, but your time is lost. They will exercise their power of ridicule even upon the Bible. They even become mockers, and they would be astonished if you put it to them in that light.

“Brethren, cling to your Bible, as it reads, and stop your criticisms in regard to its validity, and obey the Word, and not one of you will be lost.”³⁵

“When men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture on sacred, holy ground, and had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. **God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired.**”³⁶

(While Ellen G. White on occasion made sparing use of the Re-

vised Version—which is no longer available today—as well as employing other translations in some rare instances in a few of her books, she chose to discontinue that practice altogether in later years.)

SO, WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

Jesus bids us, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

We need to search the Scriptures and study with a pure heart longing for God’s will. The Bible version we choose should extol the divinity of Jesus as God as Creator,³⁷⁻⁴⁰ and the efficacy of His blood to save sinners, empowering us to be overcomers through His strength. It should reveal that He is now in Heaven, interceding in our behalf. Nothing that undermines or deletes these vital truths or discredits or

belittles the work of the Reformation simply because it does not suit the fancy of Westcott and Hort with their dangerous Alexandrian mentality of doubt should be deemed acceptable.⁴¹ Nothing that subtly waters down the Word to promote today’s sprawling axis of one-world religion⁴² should be considered pure.

“Where is to be found the cause of the widespread infidelity, the rejection of the law of God, and the consequent corruption, under the full blaze of gospel light in an age of religious freedom? **Now that Satan can no longer keep the world under his control by withholding the Scriptures, he resorts to other means to accomplish the same object. To destroy faith in the Bible serves his purpose as well as to destroy the Bible itself.** By introducing the belief that God’s law is not binding, he as effectually leads men to transgress as if they were wholly ignorant of its precepts. And now, as in former ages, he has worked through the church to further his

“When men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture on sacred, holy ground, and had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired.”

designs. The religious organizations of the day have refused to listen to unpopular truths plainly brought to view in the Scriptures, and in combating them they have adopted interpretations and taken positions which have sown broadcast the seeds of skepticism.”⁴³

“The truths of the Bible are as pearls hidden. They must be searched, dug out by painstaking effort. **Those who take only a surface view of the Scriptures will, with their superficial knowledge, which they think is very deep, talk of the contradictions of the Bible, and question the authority of the Scriptures. But those whose hearts are in harmony with truth and duty will search the Scriptures with a heart prepared to receive divine impressions.** The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread. Sharp contentions over the Bible have led to investigation and revealed the precious jewels of truth. Many tears have been shed, many prayers offered, that the Lord would open the understanding to His Word.”⁴⁴

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Psalm 12:6). When re-acquainting the Hebrew people with Scripture after their long captivity in Babylon, Ezra could have made a new, altered, Revised Babylonian Version of the scriptures to please his congregation likely entrenched in non-biblical habits. But he did not do that. Instead, he re-educated his hungering people the good, old-fashioned way by patiently teaching them: “So

they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading” (Nehemiah 8:8).

THE GREAT COMMISSION

We are bidden: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 18:18–20).

“Go” and “teach” are essential action words found here in the King James as well as in Wycliffe, Tyndale, Cranmer, Geneva, and Bishops translations dating from 1380–1611. It cannot be replaced with “make disciples.” We cannot make disciples—only God can do that. But we are called to search and to teach what we have learned from God’s word.⁴⁵ The path is narrow (Matthew 7:14), yet with the creative power of God’s Word that brought the entire universe into existence, it is neither difficult nor discouraging, despite what some have tried to adjust the Bible to say.⁴⁶

“The Word of God, even when it is injured and mutilated, and even misrepresented, is still the Word of God. Man cannot alter its nature by hacking away at it. If you injure a man, he does not become a snail or an elephant through that injury. He remains a man still, even as the Word of God remains the Word of God whatever injuries man may inflict upon it. And we need to note the irony of the fact that, though Westcott and Hort and the entire army of their colleagues, predeces-

sors and successors, hoped to blind the entire world by corrupting the Word of God, millions are still turned to Christ by it even though all they have to guide them is this ‘revised’ text of the Bible. Moreover, the global effort to swamp out the Textus Receptus has led to a great multiplication—shall we say an explosion—of Bibles being marketed around the world. . . .

“That is not to say that the W&H [Westcott & Hort] text is in any way authenticated or is any way to be preferred. The fact that after mutilating the Word, W&H were still left with the Word, albeit in bits and tatters, in no way exonerates them. On the contrary, it condemns them utterly. But the Word it remains, and it still has power to save in spite of all their efforts, and if that living power is not the grandest mark of its Authenticity, then I don’t know what is. . . . Being the Living Word of the Living God, **the Bible has a living power that its enemies can only dream of.**”⁴⁷

How great is the power of God’s divine Providence!

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book**” (Revelation 22:17–19,

emphasis added).

What a privilege is ours to have access to God's Word, the Holy Book of heavenly writ—praying “without wrath and doubting” (1 Timothy 2:8)! Let us truly cherish it! *R*

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THE ANVIL

A POEM BY JOHN CLIFFORD

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Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

“How many anvils have you had,” said I,
“To wear and batter all these hammers so?”
“Just one” said he, and then, with twinkling eye,
“The anvil wears the hammers out you know.”

And so, thought I the anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone!



HOW CAN I DO IT?

By Eli Tenorio

CALLED TO STAND FOR GOD

We are called to be shining lights in this world of darkness, a special people. Jesus makes the appeal to all His followers, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16).

The apostle Paul reflects this thought by giving a practical explanation, bidding us: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse na-

tion, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:12–15).

In other words, we are called to be perfect and righteous, standing as faithful witnesses for the Lord in all circumstances. But how can imperfect humans live up to the righteous standard of God?

WE CANNOT! . . .

In the time of the Exodus movement, “Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins” (Joshua 24:19).

“It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own

with which to meet the claims of the law of God.”¹

Alone it is impossible for us to attain perfection, yet the Bible is clear that we will not make it to heaven unless we become righteous and stand for God, witnessing for Him despite unfavorable circumstances. So, what now?

. . . BUT WE CAN!

The reference quoted above finishes with these words:

“But Christ has made a way of escape for us.”²

In 2000, a pastor moved to the United States to work there, but he did not speak English fluently. He wanted and needed to learn it as fast as possible to be more efficient in his pastoral work.

He started studying earnestly—two hours every day at ESL (English as a Second Language) school and many more hours at home.

But it was frustrating for him to see how slowly he was progressing. One day, he called the General Conference office, and a sister picked up the phone.

"How is your English doing?" she asked.

"I don't know what is happening," he answered. "I am studying for hours every day, but it seems I am not learning much."

"Have you prayed to ask the Lord to help you with this matter?" she asked.

The brother went silent before replying, "That is probably what is missing."

To him, learning English was his obligation, something he had to do. But, in his despair to learn quickly, he forgot something important—the words of Jesus: "... for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

After that conversation, he prayed that God would help him learn the language faster. He rejoiced to see God's intervention when, within three months of hard work, he could read and speak English and translate it into two other languages!

A similar experience may happen with our desire to grow spiritually:

"Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness—all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly—by abiding in Him—that we are to grow in grace."³

Yes, we can do it, but not alone! The apostle Paul gives the secret:

- "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).
- "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

DISCOURAGED BY FAULTS

When I was sixteen years old, my brother and I passed by the church

on a weekday and found an elderly brother crying like a child in one of the back rooms of the church.

Surprised, we went to him, trying to understand what was happening. Crying, he said: "I am a shameless old man, because after being in the church for over forty years, once again I have sinned."

This brother was a sincere soul. He was a work in progress, whom Satan was trying to lead into despair, tempting him to give up.

The enemy tries the same with you and me. He tempts us to give up, whispering thoughts into our mind such as:

"You have been in the church for such a long time and you are still not perfect. You will never be able to do it. God is disappointed in you; the church is disappointed in you. You are deceiving yourself. You had better give up."

Don't believe the enemy! He is lying!

You are a work in progress that God started, and He will finish it:

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

"There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God."⁴

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO THESE DAYS?

Maybe you are learning a new language, trying to lose weight or improve your health reform, attempting to be patient, keep the Sabbath, get married, graduate, or serve the Lord more faithfully.

Have you prayed about it?

Nothing is too small for Him if it matters to you. Nothing is too big for Him that He cannot do it.

GOD WORKS AND MAN WORKS

"Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness."⁵

NEVER GIVE UP!

Jesus was betrayed by one of His disciples, denied by one of His most zealous followers, mocked, crowned with a crown of thorns, and scourged. He was forced to bear the burden of the cross and felt the bitterness of sin as no other being could feel it.

He was pure, holy, and undefiled, yet arraigned as a criminal. Step by step He humbled Himself to die—but what a death! Death upon the cross as a malefactor was the most shameful, the cruelest. He did not die as a hero in the eyes of the world, laden with honors as men in battle.

He died as a condemned criminal, suspended between the heavens and the earth—a lingering death of shame, exposed to the insults and abuses of a debased multitude!

Yet He never gave up—because He had you in mind. He withstood for a purpose: to save you!

The promise He makes is not for the best or the strongest, but for those who will persevere until the end, walking—not alone—but with Him, trusting in the power of His blood to save.

He assures us that "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

Job knew this secret: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him" (Job 13:15).

When you are tempted to give up, listen to the hopeful encouragement of Jesus through His Holy Spirit:

“YES, YOU CAN DO IT!”

The apostle Paul relates an experience when he was tempted to be discouraged: He explains, “There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:7–12). [Emphasis added.]

“Many are in the greatest danger of failing to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. . . . They do not watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation. If they would watch, they would become acquainted with their weak points, where they are most likely to be assailed by temptation. **With watchfulness and prayer their weakest points can be so guarded as to become their strongest points,** and they can encounter temptation without being overcome.”⁶

Look at these reassuring words from the pen of Inspiration, that apply to every tempted soul while probation lingers:

“The Lord has not left you. He is a God of tender compassion and wonderful loving-kindness, and He does not desire you to walk in darkness. You need not cast yourself away; for the Lord says, ‘His life need not be a failure. I will make him Mine. I will show him that I prize his soul. I will strive with him, and lift him up. He must not perish. I have a special work for him to do. **If he will unite with Me, believe in Me, and work for Me, his weakest points of character, notwithstanding his past failures, will become his strongest points.**”⁷

IS THIS YOU?

“You desire to make your life such as will fit you for heaven at last. You are often discouraged at finding yourself weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and con-

trolled by the habits and customs of your old life in sin. You find your emotional nature untrue to yourself, to your best resolutions, and to your most solemn pledges. Nothing seems real. Your own instability leads you to doubt the sincerity of those who would do you good. The more you struggle in doubt, the more unreal everything looks to you, until it seems that there is no solid ground for you anywhere. Your promises are like ropes of sand, and you regard in the same unreal light the words and works of those in whom you should trust.”⁸

WHAT’S THE ANSWER?

“You will be in constant peril until you understand the true force of the will. You may believe and promise all things, but your promises or your faith are of no value until you put your will on the side of faith and action. If you fight the fight of faith with all your will power, you will conquer. Your feelings, your impressions, your emotions, are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable, especially with your perverted ideas; and the knowledge of your broken promises and your forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in yourself, and the faith of others in you.

“But you need not despair. You must be determined to believe, although nothing seems true and real to you. I need not tell you it is yourself that has brought you into this unenviable position. You must win back your confidence in God and in your brethren. It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ; and as you do this, God will immediately take possession, and work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Your whole nature will then be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; and even your thoughts will be subject to Him.

“You cannot control your impulses, your emotions, as you may desire, but you can control the will, and you can make an entire change in your life. **By yielding up your will to Christ,** your life will be hid with Christ in God, and allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. **You will have strength from God** that will hold you fast to His strength; and a new

light, even the light of living faith, will be possible to you. . . .

“Will you not say, ‘I will give my will to Jesus, and I will do it now,’ and from this moment be wholly on the Lord’s side?”⁹

DO NOT DELAY!

“Do not listen to the enemy’s suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better, until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait till then, you will never come. You might wait till the judgment, but you would not be fit to come to Christ. It is today that you are to yield to the drawing power of Christ, and come to Him as you are. He will continue to draw you as you come, until every thought shall be brought into captivity to Him. When the enemy seeks to keep you from your Saviour, tell him that Jesus has said, ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ And why does Christ draw you to Himself? — It is that He may make you more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. One soul is of more worth to Jesus than the whole world.

“Then if we are so precious to Jesus, shall we not seek to come into as close relation to Him as is the branch to the vine? Shall we not abide in Him as He has commanded us to do? The moment we separate from Jesus, the enemy knows it, and he begins to cast his shadow across our pathway, that we may lose sight of Jesus. Satan presents his specious temptations, that we may fall into sin, and then when we yield to his allurements, he has more power over us, and will keep the mind in darkness. **Oh, let the tempted soul rise up, and in the strength of Jesus say: ‘I will have no more connection with the enemy. I stand under the blood-stained banner of the Prince Emmanuel.’**”¹⁰ Amen! *R*

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Linked with Heaven

By Septimiu D. Muresan

“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psalm 34:7).

THE MISSION TO DOTHAN

In time of war, every leader must plan and strategize in order to succeed. In the days of the prophet Elisha, “the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp” (2 Kings 6:8).

God’s people had been facing a series of troubles: “Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria

hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones” (Jeremiah 50:17).

“Judgment upon judgment had befallen the Israelites during the reign of Hazael the Syrian, who had been anointed to be the scourge of the apostate nation. The stern measures of reform instituted by Jehu had resulted in the slaying of all the house of Ahab. In continued wars with the Syrians, Jehoahaz, Jehu’s

successor, had lost some of the cities lying east of the Jordan. **For a time it had seemed as if the Syrians might gain control of the entire kingdom. But the reformation begun by Elishah and carried forward by Elisha had led many to inquire after God.** The altars of Baal were being forsaken, and slowly yet surely God’s purpose was being fulfilled in the lives of those who chose to serve Him with all the heart.

“It was because of His love for erring Israel that God permitted the Syrians to scourge them. . . . God in His wisdom foresaw that if temptation were removed, some would forsake heathenism and turn their faces heavenward, and this is why He permitted calamity after calamity to befall them. His judgments were tempered with mercy; and when His purpose was accomplished, He turned the tide in favor of those who had learned to inquire after Him.”¹

“Thus [Elisha] the man of God continued to labor from year to year, drawing close to the people in faithful ministry, and in times of crisis standing by the side of kings as a wise counselor. The long years of idolatrous backsliding on the part of rulers and people had wrought their baleful work; the dark shadow of apostasy was still everywhere apparent, yet here and there were those who had steadfastly refused to bow the knee to Baal. As Elisha continued his work of reform, many were reclaimed from heathenism, and these learned to rejoice in the service of the true God. The prophet was cheered by these miracles of divine grace, and he was inspired with a great longing to reach all who were honest in heart. Wherever he was he endeavored to be a teacher of righteousness.”²

Indeed, as long as Israel was faithful and believed the prophets, they prospered. God’s assurance

came through king Jehoshaphat: “Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper” (2 Chronicles 20:20).

What are the responsibilities of a true prophet? By inspiration of God, prophets bring messages of enlightenment, comfort, appeal, and warnings as appropriate. This is what Elisha did:

“And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice” (2 Kings 6:9, 10).

Thus the Lord used His prophet to protect the nation, but what did the king of Syria—whose strategies were foiled—automatically assume?

“Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?” (2 Kings 6:11).

Was there really any traitor? Let’s see what the answer was:

“And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: **but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber**” (2 Kings 6:12).

Aha! So here was the problem! Through the omniscience of God, Elisha was made known the secret plans the enemy was making, so the prophet repeatedly let the leader of His people know how to avert the danger to the nation. When the Syrian king realized what was happening, what did he set out to do?

“And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan” (2 Kings 6:13).

This is the same Dothan that young Joseph went to when he was searching for his beloved brethren to bring them food. But now on this occasion, the king of Syria had a very different purpose in his mission to Dothan:

“Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about” (2 Kings 6:14).

If you were in Dothan, what would be your reaction in the morning?

“OPEN HIS EYES!”

“When the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?” (2 Kings 6:15).

Who was this servant? Was it Gehazi?



In the previous chapter we see Elisha's dismissal of Gehazi: "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he **went out** from his presence a leper as white as snow" (2 Kings 5:27).

God through Moses had given the Hebrews specific instructions regarding lepers: "All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be" (Leviticus 13:46).

So, this servant must be someone else, not Gehazi.

"And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?" (2 Kings 6:15).

(Just imagine the fear! Looking at our world today, does this sound similar to the fear that so many are currently experiencing?)

Thankfully, the prophet of God had words of assurance and hope:

"And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:16, 17).

Why? "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7).

"Between the servant of God and the hosts of armed foemen was an encircling band of heavenly angels. They had come down in mighty power, not to destroy, not to exact homage, but to encamp round about and minister to the Lord's weak and helpless ones."³

"**The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels:** the LORD is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place" (Psalm 68:17).

Elisha was used to seeing a chariot and horses of fire! Remember his experience with Elijah in 2 Kings chapter 2. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and



talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11).

We always need to keep in mind that earthly chariots are no comparison to that which is supplied by the God of Heaven. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but **we will remember the name of the LORD** our God" (Psalm 20:7). [Emphasis added.]

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD:

Elijah rebuilt the altar (1 Kings 18:32).

David overcame Goliath (1 Samuel 17:45).

We are washed, justified and sanctified (1 Corinthians 6:11).

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10).

"And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, **the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha**" (2 Kings 6:17).

THREE TIMES A DAY

The prophet prayed, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes!"

Guidance is given in Scripture as to how often we should kneel in prayer:

"Now when Daniel knew that

the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10).

How does Satan react when we pray like Daniel did?

"Daniel prayed unto his God three times a day. **Satan is enraged at the sound of fervent prayer**, for he knows that he will suffer loss."⁴

On account of his praying to God, Daniel was cast into the lions' den:

"Evil angels accomplished their purpose thus far. But Daniel continues to pray, even in the den of lions. . . . Did God forget him there? Oh,

no; Jesus the mighty Commander of the host of heaven, sent His angel to close the mouths of those hungry lions that they should not hurt the praying man of God, and all was peace in that terrible den."⁵

"As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history. . . .

"In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a 'God of gods,' able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him."⁶

THEY THAT BE WITH US ARE MORE

Jacob—Wherever you go, the Lord is present!

“And [Jacob] dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. . . . And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not” (Genesis 28:12, 16).

John—You are not alone!

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet” (Revelation 1:10).

Philip—You have a mission!

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, **Arise, and go** toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship” (Acts 8:26, 27).

Gideon—“My family is poor . . . and I am the least in my father's house.”

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, **The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour**” (Judges 6:12).

Joshua—You receive instruction: “Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but **as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come**. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?” (Joshua 5:13, 14).

Elijah—No depression; eat and go!

“He requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat” (1 Kings 19:4, 5).

Balaam—When we are stubborn

“Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

But was **rebuked** for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice **forbad the madness of the prophet**” (2 Peter 2:15, 16).

Missionary spirit lacking—
“Curse ye Meroz”

“As an illustration of the failure on your part to come up to the work of God, as was your privilege, I was referred to these words: “**Curse ye Meroz**, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” (Judges 5:23) *What had Meroz done? Nothing. And this was their sin.* They came not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”⁷

Minister—(*archaic*) A person or thing used to achieve or convey something.

“But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1:13, 14).

Peter—you still have work to do!

“And, behold, the angel of the LORD came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so, he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.” (Acts 12:7, 8).

David—the angel of God is your protection!

“While the young man was playing before the king, filling the palace with sweet harmony, Saul's passion overcame him, and he hurled a javelin at David, thinking to pin the musician to the wall; but the angel of the Lord turned aside the deadly weapon.”⁸

“A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one.”⁹ “All show the closeness of the connection between heaven and earth.”¹⁰

“Today, as verily as in the days of the apostles, heavenly messen-

gers are passing through the length and breadth of the land... We cannot see them personally; nevertheless they are with us, guiding, directing, protecting.”¹¹

CONCLUSION

“These angels of light create a heavenly atmosphere about the soul, lifting us toward the unseen and the eternal.”¹²

“**Through Christ, earth is again linked with heaven.** With His own merits, Christ has bridged the gulf which sin had made, so that the ministering angels can hold communion with man. Christ connects fallen man in his weakness and helplessness with the Source of infinite power.”¹³

“The Lord showed Jacob the open heavens. **He beheld earth linked with Heaven**, and saw the bright array of angels and the majesty of Deity. A divine voice addressed the repenting, discouraged one in words of gracious assurance, and spoke to him of great things to come. And so, through the merits of our Redeemer, the Father looks upon us with tender compassion, and speaks to us hopefully the language of forgiveness and love.”¹⁴

“Again and again have angels talked with men as a man speaketh with a friend, and led them to places of security. Again and again have the encouraging words of angels renewed the drooping spirits of the faithful and, carrying their minds above the things of earth, caused them to behold by faith the white robes, the crowns, the palm branches of victory, which overcomers will receive when they surround the great white throne.”¹⁵

Amen! *R*

References:

¹ *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 254, 255.

² *Ibid.*, p. 259.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁴ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 295.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁶ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 513.

⁷ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 247.

⁸ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 652, 653.

⁹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 512.

¹⁰ *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 152, 153.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹³ *Steps to Christ*, p. 20. [Emphasis added.]

¹⁴ *The Signs of the Times*, July 31, 1884. [Emphasis added.]

¹⁵ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153.

Missionary Work in St. Lucia

On April 15–19, 2022, the brethren in Saint Lucia, an island nation in the Caribbean, held a spiritual retreat, "The Sanctuary Service" at their Mission headquarters obtained with a donation from a brother from neighboring Martinique. The believers have been active in regular literature distribution as well as online and in-person Bible studies—and two new souls were baptized on May 15.



Music Camp and Concert in Moriah Heights, USA

From July 6–17, 2022, musicians from around the world attended a two-week music camp held in Moriah Heights, California. The two weeks were spent in practice for the grand finale: an outreach concert held on July 17. The theme for this year's music camp was "Redeemed."





International Youth Convention in Maruševac, Croatia

Approximately 100 young people gathered in Maruševac, Croatia, for a beautiful youth convention held from July 12–17, 2022. They came from 16 countries, speaking 12 languages. The theme was "A Light Unto My Path" from Psalm 119:105. Topics included friendships, relationships and marriage, education, choosing a

profession and place to live, baptism, principle of serving, unity, etc. A special program was held for children as well. An international choir was formed and instrumental musicians filled the atmosphere with joyful songs. Free time was spent socializing, walking, talking, participating in recreational activities, and an excursion to the Trakoscan Castle. Around 250 people from Croatia and other countries were present on Sabbath.

Vacation Canvassing in Xaxim, Brazil

In July 2022, fourteen participants from various states in Brazil and other countries spent 10 days of their winter vacation taking truth-filled literature door-to-door in Xaxim, Santa Catarina state. Prayers and Bible verses were offered at every home and 173 books were sold.



Baptism in Rwanda

Mahoko, Rwanda—On July 16, 2022, the brethren gathered at the church property in Mahoko for a special conference entitled: "Our Time in Prophecy." Brother John Bosco, GC Regional Secretary

for North Africa, was the speaker on Sabbath. On Sunday, July 17, thirty-one souls were baptized in the SDARM Mahoko Church in Rwanda. The baptism was performed by Pastor Manitagaba Jerald and Pastor Jean Piere. May God bless our new brethren!



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MOVING? Please let us know.

KNOWING WHEN TO KNEEL

A new law had just been passed by the king of Babylon. All the important people had to go to the plain of Dura for a special dedication of a statue the king had set up.

The statue was huge! Solid gold, about 90 feet tall. That's about 5 or 6 times as tall as a giraffe!

The king had a very strict rule about this statue:

"To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up" (Daniel 3:4).

As soon as the music started to play, everybody had to bow down and worship this golden statue. Worship? Really? Yes, that's what the king said.

What does it mean to worship someone or something? It means to adore and honor as we would to the only One worthy of worship—the Creator of everything in the whole universe. God's Ten Commandments say, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them" (Exodus 20:3–5, first part).

Would you bow down and worship a statue? Would that be right, even if the king said you had to do it? Look what he said next: "And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" (Daniel 3:6).

Three young men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—were faithful to God, so they would not bow down to the statue, even if they had to be thrown into the fiery furnace. They told the king, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:17, 18).

That made the king very angry, so he heated up the furnace seven times hotter and had them thrown into the furnace. So, in they went. The flames were so hot that the men who threw them in got burned up themselves just by being close!

But suddenly, the king was amazed to see a fourth person in the furnace. Look! Jesus was in there with the faithful ones, protecting them!

So, the king told the three young men to come out of the fire. "And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them" (Daniel 3:27).

The three young men had not known whether God would save them in the fire or not. But they were not worried. Even if they had to die for obeying God, they were willing to do it. But Jesus saved them from the fire and the king had to say, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God" (Daniel 3:28). Let's worship only Him, too!—*BHM*

