

The background of the cover is a stylized, glowing Earth. The planet is depicted with a dark, textured surface, possibly representing a digital or futuristic world. Bright blue and orange light streaks and flares emanate from the planet, creating a sense of dynamic energy and movement. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues, oranges, and yellows.

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Vol. 64, No. 3

THE FIRST ANGEL'S *Message*

An Angel Came | "The Hour of His Judgment Is Come" | "Worship Him"

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Volume 64, Number 3

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Have you ever thought of distributing The Reformation Herald among those you meet or already know? More and more, this magazine is being designed to answer the real spiritual hunger of people in today’s society, tapping into the exact train of thought being triggered by current events. As Bible prophecy unfolds before our eyes, why not keep some of these magazines on hand in a large ziplock bag, ready to share with honest, thinking people who fear God and are eager to know what in the world is going on?

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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.

Editor L. Tudoroiu
Assistant to the Editor B. Montrose
Layout and Design D. Conceição

Web: <http://www.sdarm.org>; E-mail: info@sdarm.org

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THE EVERLASTING

Gospel

In Revelation 14:6–13 we find three “angels” with a set of messages having a specific purpose: To warn the inhabitants of the whole world in regard to the imminent divine judgment and to prepare them for the second coming of Jesus to this planet.

The first angel brings the “everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Verse 6) and the announcement of the divine judgment.

As we consider the work of this “angel,” we understand that he represents a worldwide movement to reach all the inhabitants of the world.

It is indeed a very serious message that needs the careful attention of the whole world. Who is this angel mentioned in verses 6, 7? What is the purpose of his message?

The movement represented by this angel started when William Miller began to preach the exact message foretold in the prophecy. William Miller was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Though born in a Christian home, he later became Deist under the influence of his friends. But his new beliefs brought him no peace. In 1816 he gave his heart to Christ and started studying the Bible in a very deep way to refute his Deist friends.

He declared: “I saw that the Bible did bring to view just such a Saviour as I needed; and I was perplexed to find how an uninspired book should develop principles so perfectly adapted to the wants of a fallen world. I was constrained

to admit that the Scriptures must be a revelation from God; they became my delight, and in Jesus I found a friend.”¹

Mr. Miller’s deep Bible research took him to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, and he came to the conclusion that Christ would return around 1843.

Convinced of the duty of presenting his conclusions to others, he tried to excuse himself on the ground that he was not a public speaker. Eventually, in 1831, he made a covenant with God that “if I should have an invitation to speak publicly in any place, I will go and tell them what I find in the Bible about the Lord’s coming.” He was sure that none would invite him. However, very soon the invitation came. After struggling with God, he decided to obey His voice, and a powerful movement began and became known as the “advent movement.”

The movement that started with Miller and his associates fulfilled the prophecy in regard to the first angel registered in verses 6, 7.

“William Miller began to unfold to the people the mysteries of the kingdom of God, carrying his hearers down through the prophecies to the second advent of Christ. With every effort he gained strength. As John the Baptist heralded the first advent of Jesus and prepared the way for His coming, so William Miller and those who joined with him proclaimed the second advent of the Son of God.”²

In this issue of *The Reformation Herald*, we will give special attention to the first angel’s message. Let us reason together! *R*

References:

- ¹ *Apology and Defense*, p. 5.
² *Early Writings*, pp. 229, 230.

The three angels of Revelation 14 have a specific purpose: To warn the inhabitants of the world of the judgment and to prepare them for the second coming of Jesus.



BIBLE RESEARCH –

OUR ADVENT HERITAGE

Over 4,000 years ago Noah and his family ventured out of the ark into a whole new world. The earth had been washed clean. The wicked population had all been buried by the Flood. This was a fresh start and a new opportunity for human beings to live according to God's revealed will.

It did not take long, however, for things to go wrong. God had commanded them to "replenish the earth" (Genesis 9:1), but people soon decided to create a mega-metropolis to live in, instead of being "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4).

This city was called Babel—the beginnings of old Babylon. The reli-

gion of Babel was a mixture of truth and error. Its people set their own will in the place of the will of God. But the Lord intervened to scatter them by confusing their language. In this way they unwittingly fulfilled the command He had given.

In this issue of *The Reformation Herald* we examine the message of the second angel, which refers to apostate modern Christianity as "Babylon."

NEW BABYLON

The first Babylon and last Babylon have some interesting things in common. The first Babylon ended

when their language was confounded—everyone spoke something different. This demonstrated that in human nature there is no true tendency to unity with one another, apart from unity in opposition to God.

Modern Babylon presents a confusing array of conflicting doctrines, and displays no unity except in its opposition to the commandments of God. This situation is foretold in Isaiah 4:1, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name."

The remnant, on the other hand,

are distinguished by their unity in spirit and action. Jesus' desire is "that they may be made perfect in one," producing in them the result that "they shall see eye to eye," so much so, in fact, that it becomes a powerful evidence "the world may know" that Jesus is the Saviour of the world (see John 17:21, 23 and Isaiah 52:8).

How can the remnant come to this remarkable condition? How can they be united in a pure faith? And how was it that the Advent movement could denounce Babylon and stand free of error?

OUR ADVENT HERITAGE

The answer to these questions is found in the principles of study which led Advent believers in the discovery of truth. Are you familiar with the story of William Miller? Let's notice some things about how he studied the Scriptures.

What were William Miller's study aids? Because there were so many different interpretations of the Bible, promoted by the many different denominations and theologians, Miller "saw that he must distinguish between the Bible and all the peculiar and partisan interpretations of it." His biographer records that "[Miller] laid aside all commentaries and used the marginal references and his concordance as his only helps."¹

Later in the book the biographer relates the story of a clergyman who



once went to visit William Miller and was disappointed to find that he was not home at the time. Since he could not meet with Mr. Miller, he asked if he could at least see his library. Miller's daughter led the way to his study and, to the visitor's amazement, showed him the two books on Miller's desk and said, "That is his library." His Bible and his concordance were the only theological books that he had. (See Bliss, p. 245.)

Miller studied through the Bible verse by verse, comparing Scripture with Scripture. "When he found anything **obscure**, it was his custom to **compare it with every other text** which seemed to have **any reference to the matter** under consideration. **Every word** was permitted to have its proper bearing upon the subject of the text, and **if his view of it harmonized with every collateral passage, it ceased to be a difficulty**. Thus **whenever he met with a passage hard to be understood** he found **an explanation in some other portion of the Scriptures**."²

It was not just William Miller who studied like this. Those who followed on into the third angel's message were still "searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted." They followed the same principles that he set out in his book *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology*. Some of the most important principles found there are:

"1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible.

"2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study.

"3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering.

"4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error.

When you walk with Jesus, you never stop learning truth from His Word. God's people need to keep studying for greater revelations of truth.

"5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible."³

J. N. Andrews, an Advent preacher, once wrote, "We have the truth concerning any doctrine of the Bible when we are able to present a divine harmony of all the scripture testimony pertaining to that subject"⁴

We today need to take the same approach to Bible study. The apostle wrote, "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).

Let's talk a little more about some important things to keep in mind while researching in God's Word.

ADVANCING LIGHT

What is a characteristic of those who keep following God's guidance? Proverbs 4:18 says that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." This means that when you walk with Jesus, you never stop learning truth from His Word.

God's people need to keep studying for greater revelations of truth. "Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth

to be revealed. . . . Many gems are yet scattered that are to be gathered together to become the property of the remnant people of God."⁵

Of course, new light will never contradict the old. We need to "prove all things," and then to "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). But just because we have a solid foundation of truth does not mean that we don't need to keep studying.

In fact, not studying for new light is a Babylonish characteristic. This is why the Advent believers met and which led them to proclaim the message of the second angel and to separate from the apostate churches. They experienced firsthand that "as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative and seek to avoid discussion."⁶

STUDY FOR YOURSELF

Why is it important to study individually to understand the truth? The verse we read earlier says, "Study to shew *thyself* approved unto God." (Emphasis supplied).

This means that "we are not safe when we are content to float along with the current, believing because some one else believes. . . . We must, through fervent prayer and deep and earnest research, become established and settled, rooted and

grounded in the faith, and know, each for himself, that we have the truth."⁷ "We are nearing the time when we shall stand individually alone to answer for our belief."⁸

It's like when you were a newborn baby—your "food" was actually eaten for you by your mother and given to you in another form. But eventually you had to start eating for yourself. "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:13, 14). When we first learn the truth, we get it from someone else. But as we grow spiritually, we begin to study God's word for ourselves.

Who then can God teach? "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts" (Isaiah 28:9). This means people who are not just taking someone else's word for it! "We should not take the testimony of any man as to what the Scriptures teach, but should study the words of God for ourselves."⁹

ATTITUDE

However, in order to be able to study for ourselves, following the same principles as those first Advent believers, we need the right attitude.

What makes us able to learn? The psalmist wrote, "The meek will

he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalm 25:9). God can only teach humble people. In fact, our attitude determines what kind of help we will get to study the Bible. "The *spirit* in which you come to the investigation of the Scriptures will determine the character of the *assistant at your side*. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance. But if the Bible is opened with irreverence, with a feeling of self-sufficiency, if the heart is filled with prejudice, Satan is beside you, and he will set the plain statements of God's word in a perverted light."¹⁰

This is how you can lay aside preconceived ideas, like Miller determined to do. This is very important, because many times we will find our ideas are challenged by our study of the Bible. So do this: "If, as you read, conviction comes, and you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the word, do not try to make the word fit these opinions. Make your opinions fit the word."¹¹

ALL THE EVIDENCE

It is the practice of Babylon, on the other hand, to start with a theory, and then set out to prove it from the Bible. See how a false doctrine can start? "The **discord** and **division** which exist among the churches of Christendom are in a great measure due to the **prevailing custom of wresting the Scriptures to support a favorite theory.**"¹²

This is why it's important to look at all the evidence on a given subject. The apostle wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruc-

tion in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). This means that every verse is important. We should treasure and examine "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

DOUBT

How do we weigh the evidence that we find? "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10). We must be careful that we get the line upon line and the precept upon precept—not just here a little, and there a little!

Many times when we are trying to weigh evidence, we realize that there are questions which don't seem to have answers. Why would God do this to us? "Divine inspiration asks many questions which the most profound scholar cannot answer. These questions were not asked that we might answer them, but to call our attention to the deep mysteries of God and to teach us that our wisdom is limited."¹³

So, be prepared to always have more questions than answers, but don't let this stop you from making up your mind. "God has made ample provision to establish the faith of all men, if they will decide from the weight of evidence. But if they wait to have every seeming objection removed before they believe, they will never be settled, rooted, and grounded in the truth. God will never remove all seeming difficulties from our path. Those who wish to doubt may find opportunity; those who wish to believe will find plenty of evidence upon which to base their faith."¹⁴

LIVE BY IT

What was the problem with many people in the time of Jesus? The leaders, He said, would "say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3). So we may have the right teaching but the wrong spirit. "Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing,

heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world."¹⁵

Jesus remarked, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

There is no way around it—we have to live by what we preach. "Many keep the truth in the outer court. . . . A faultless creed and a carnal life are too often found together in professed believers. To be a means to a saving end, the word of God must be intelligently and practically understood and obeyed."¹⁶

"A true knowledge of the Bible can be gained only through the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given. And **in order to gain this knowledge we must live by it.** All that God's word commands, **we are to obey.** All that it promises, we may claim. **The life which it enjoins** is the life that, through its power, **we are to live.** **Only as the Bible is thus held can it be studied effectively.**"¹⁷

A POWERFUL RESULT

In a future issue we will discuss more about what happens when the second angel's message is repeated by "that other angel" of Revelation 18. But for now let's think about this point: Why does God want each of us to be diligent Bible students and to follow the principles outlined above?

What will happen in the process of putting truth into practice? Jesus' last prayer for His disciples included these words: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

What do you think will happen to the church as a whole when it becomes sanctified through the truth? "That he might *sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:26, 27 [Emphasis Supplied]). This is God's purpose for you.

When we are sanctified by the truth, then the part of Jesus' prayer

about unity will also be fulfilled. "When the laborers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when all selfishness is dead, **when there is no rivalry, no strife for the supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves**, so that love for one another is seen and felt, *then the showers of the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them.*"¹⁸

It is this experience, promoted by the principles we were taught in the first and second angels' messages, that prepares the way for the final reception of the third. Notice the grand result: "When the **human agents shall exercise their faculties to acquire knowledge**, to become **deep-thinking men**; when they, as the greatest **witnesses** for God and the truth, shall have **won** in the **field of investigation of vital doctrines** concerning the salvation of the soul, that glory may be given to the God of heaven as supreme, **then** even judges and kings will be **brought to acknowledge**, in the **courts of justice**, in **parliaments and councils**, that the God who made the heavens and the earth is the **only true and living God**, the **author of Christianity**, the **author of all truth**, who **instituted** the seventh-day **Sabbath** when the foundations of the world were laid."¹⁹

May we therefore be faithful and diligent students of God's Word. May we be prepared in our own heart to serve God fully, going forth armed with the principles of truth for a world that needs to hear them. *R*

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- ¹ *Memoirs of William Miller, Sylvester Bliss*, p. 69.
- ² *The Great Controversy*, p. 320. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ³ *The Review and Herald*, November 25, 1884.
- ⁴ *The Commandment to Restore and to Build Jerusalem*, J. N. Andrews, pp. 7, 8.
- ⁵ *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 34.
- ⁶ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 706, 707. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁷ *The Review and Herald*, September 4, 1888.
- ⁸ *Evangelism*, p. 69.
- ⁹ *Steps to Christ*, p. 89.
- ¹⁰ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 108. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹¹ *Messages to Young People*, p. 260.
- ¹² *The Great Controversy*, p. 520. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹³ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 431.
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- ¹⁵ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 310.
- ¹⁶ *The Review and Herald*, October 1, 1901.
- ¹⁷ *Education*, p. 189. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁸ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 178. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁹ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 374, 375. [Emphasis supplied.]



By Nathan Tyler

WHAT IS AN ANGEL?

When my brother and I were small, our parents sometimes made family fun-time by sending us back and forth as their messengers. One parent would sit in one room, the other parent would sit in another room, somewhere else in the house. Then they would think up messages for us to take back and forth. We learned to be good messengers and to tell the message exactly as we heard it.

The word for “messenger” in the New Testament is the Greek word *angelos*. It comes from a root meaning “to bring good tidings.” This same word is also translated “angel.” This simply means that angels are messengers.

As we study prophecy, particularly the book of Revelation, we encounter the use of symbolism in the mission of angels. The most prominent examples are the three angels and their special messages as brought out in Revelation 14.

LITERAL ANGELS

Angels are mentioned over 70 times in Revelation. Sometimes the word is symbolic, sometimes literal.

There are times when an angel from heaven interacts with the prophet himself. This is because the prophecy was delivered to him by an angel, as noted in the very first verse of Revelation: “The Revelation

of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”

Other times the literal, heavenly angels are only referred to in passing, such as when war broke out in heaven: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels” (Revelation 12:7).

There are several times when an angel is the focus in the vision the prophet is having. There is the scene in heaven involving the sealed book: “And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to

loose the seals thereof?" (Revelation 5:2). Another example is the chaining of Satan during the thousand years: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand" (Revelation 20:1).

ANGELS AS SYMBOLS

All of the examples above involve angels from heaven who are actual angels. However, there are also symbolic uses of the word *angelos*, referring to something besides "angels" per se.

In both the Old and New Testaments, Jesus is sometimes called an angel. He was with Israel in the wilderness. "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them" (Exodus 14:19). The Lord said to them, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared" (Exodus 23:20).

Christ is the One who appears as the angel with the little book in Revelation 10. "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth" (verses 1, 2). We know this to be the Son of God by comparing this description with Revelation 1:13–15, "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters."

In some cases a symbol may be used to explain something that is also designated by another symbol. For example, in Revelation 1 the symbol of a star is used to represent the symbol of an angel. The messengers, or ministers, of the churches are referred to as stars and as angels.

Throughout the letters to the churches presented in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, the message is directed to the "angel" of each church.

Then there are the seven angels with the trumpets, and seven angels with vials of God's wrath—the seven last plagues. Angels hold back the winds of strife until the sealing angel can finish his work. Some of these may be literal and some are symbolic.

There are four times in Revelation when an angel is seen flying over the earth with a message to give to all the people of the world. Three angels appear in Revelation 14, and the fourth is the "other angel" in chapter 18. Who are these angels? What do they represent?

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK?

First, let's consider what happens when God wants to send a message to the whole earth. Before He takes an action that affects this planet, what does He do? Amos 3:7 says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." God sends a message via His prophets before doing anything.

The job of the prophet is to tell God's message to His people—to the church. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore **hear the word** at my mouth, and **give them warning** from me" (Ezekiel 3:17). [Emphasis supplied.]

The job isn't done yet. The prophet has told the church, but the church also has a work to do. The people of the world need to hear the message from God. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent" (Romans 10:14, 15)? This is why the Lord said to Israel, "Ye are my witnesses" (Isaiah 43:10).

It is not the heavenly angels who do this work of witnessing to the world. It is the church. "The Lord has given His church a special work of personal service to do. God could have sent angels to work for the reformation of man, but he did not

do this. Humanity must touch humanity."¹

Don't you think angels would have done a better job than we do in preaching the gospel to the world? They would always know just where to go, what to say, and to whom they should speak next. They would never be afraid of persecution, or that someone would not like what they had to say. They would be organized and systematic about taking the gospel to all the world. "If angels occupied the place of man in the administration of the gospel, there would not be whole regions left in darkness and the shadow of death. The work would have been as is represented by the angel flying through the midst of heaven proclaiming the everlasting gospel to them that dwell on the earth. But the Lord does nothing without the cooperation of man. Could the intense interest which the angels have for man be put into voice that would be heard by the human agent, what appeals would be heard in burning words to communicate to others that which heaven had communicated to them."²

Even though angels might be able to do a good job of preaching the gospel, this is the commission that God has given to us. The Lord sends us out into all the world. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The apostles received the instruction, "ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The same witnessing work needs to be done again in the end of time. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

ANGELS, MESSAGES

Therefore, when God sends a message to the world, an angel represents the people who have been entrusted with that message to be preached.

"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them

that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

"The angel represented in prophecy as delivering this message [of Revelation 14:6, 7], symbolizes a *class of faithful men*, who, obedient to the promptings of God's Spirit and the teachings of His word, *proclaim this warning to the inhabitants of earth.*"³

The other three angels that fly in the midst of heaven are symbols that represent people delivering God's message also.

"The third angel, proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, **represents the people who receive this message [of their allegiance to the law of God] and raise the voice of warning to the world**, to keep the commandments of God as the apple of the eye, and that in response to this warning many would embrace the Sabbath of the Lord."⁴

The "other angel" of Revelation 18 lightens up the earth even before speaking. The Spirit of Prophecy records, "Another angel unites his voice with the third angel, and the earth is lighted with its glory. The light increases, and it shines out to all the nations of the earth. It is to go forth as a light that burneth. It will be attended with great power, until its golden beams have fallen upon every tongue, every people, and every nation upon the face of the whole earth. Let me ask you, What you are doing to prepare for this work? Are you building for eternity? You must remember that this angel represents **the people that have this message to give to the world.** Are you among that people?"⁵

AN EXALTED WORK

Why does God use a holy, pure, heavenly angel to represent the work of His people on the earth, proclaiming the last great warning? Several things can be noted from the symbolism of the angel flying "in the midst of heaven" (Revelation 14:6).

"This represents the speed and directness with which the church is to prosecute her work."⁶ "God's messengers are to hold this banner high, and with no feeble voice proclaim to a perishing world the command-

ments of God and the faith of Jesus."⁷

Besides speed and a bold voice, the figure of an angel also represents the character of the work.

"The fact that an angel is said to be the herald of this warning [of Revelation 14:6, 7] is significant. By the purity, the glory, and the power of the heavenly messenger, divine wisdom has been pleased to represent the exalted character of the work to be accomplished by the message and the power and glory that were to attend it."⁸

"The warning of the third angel . . . is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will **command the attention of the world.**"⁹

EARTHLY MESSENGERS, HEAVENLY MISSION

The church that reflects the character of heavenly angels draws the attention of the entire world. Jesus said, "By **this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another**" (John 13:35). [Emphasis supplied.]

This unity of His followers will be the best evidence that Jesus is the Saviour of the world. Jesus prayed, "that they may be made perfect in one; and that **the world may know that thou hast sent me**, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:23). [Emphasis supplied.]

What is it that will really lighten up the earth today? "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15).

"The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ."¹⁰ "The loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth. For it is the work of everyone to whom the message of warning has come, to **lift up Jesus**, to present Him to the world."¹¹

When you and I lift up Jesus in our own personal lives, then we are included in the prophecy that

"all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Numbers 14:21). "The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God (Ephesians 3:10)."¹²

Jesus said to His disciples, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

"Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, *Let your light shine.* If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. . . . **Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ.**"¹³

YOU'RE AN ANGEL

Each of the four angels of Revelation has a message for the people of the earth. Yet "their voices are not heard by the inhabitants of earth, save through the people who carry forward the work as the messengers of God."¹⁴

Just think—the King of the universe, with all His power and unlimited resources, has chosen us to be His messengers!

As I remember the days when my brother and I as two little boys ran back and forth with messages for our parents, I am led to wonder how well I am doing with the message of my heavenly Father. Do you, too, have the same concern for yourself? *R*

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- ² *My Life Today*, p. 304.
- ³ *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 199. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁴ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 77. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁵ *The Review and Herald*, August 18, 1885. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁶ *Medical Ministry*, p. 131.
- ⁷ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 432.
- ⁸ *The Great Controversy*, p. 355 (1888).
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 450. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹⁰ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.
- ¹¹ *The Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ¹² *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.
- ¹³ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 420. [Emphasis supplied.]
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By Tobias L. Stockler

AN ANGEL CAME

Almost every belief of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement was the belief of the majority of Christians at sometime in the past. Nearly all our doctrines were mainstream theology and practice in Christianity's history. This includes doctrines such as our refusal to be involved in killing other humans through war, the seventh-day Sabbath, health conscientiousness, and a pre-advent judgment.

What separated us? Why do we continue to hold these truths when our fellow Christians walked away from their own former doctrines? This separation happened in the mid-1880s. For many, it started in June, 1840. An article, written by Josiah Litch, appeared in many local

newspapers across the eastern and southern United States. His article stated that the mighty Ottoman Empire of the Middle East would end by August 11 of the same year. Litch based his conclusion on the prophecy of the seven trumpets in Revelation chapters 8 and 9. For the readers to hear of the fall of Turkey was no surprise, for many already expected it. What was unusual was the prediction of that fall on a specific date.

TURKEY IN THE BALANCE

Turkey had dominated southeast Europe, northern Africa, and the Middle East for centuries. Hundreds of thousands of people feared

the power of the Turks. At one point, it was even feared that Turkey would conquer all of Europe. But by 1838 that mighty empire was falling apart. The leadership in Constantinople grew weaker and weaker, as whole nations broke free and declared their independence. In 1838, Egypt decided not only to seek independence, but to conquer Turkey. By land and sea, Egypt gained several victories, and by the summer of 1840 it appeared that Egypt would win. Egypt's success concerned several European nations who preferred the weak Ottoman Empire to a victorious Egypt as their southeastern neighbor. People talked about what to do. Four European nations decided to intervene.

Three of these nations would be directly affected by whatever happened to their Turkish neighbor: Russia, Austria, and Germany (Prussia). The fourth nation, Great Britain, was then the world's most powerful country. Whatever affected the other three European countries affected Britain.

These countries made a proposal to Turkey to stop Egypt and force it to go back home. By September the same newspapers that published Litch's article were publishing more news about Turkey. The Ottoman Empire surrendered for the first time in centuries to those four European nations on August 11, 1840.

Today we recognize that the final fall of the Ottoman Empire happened in 1922, forming the modern country of Turkey. But that initial surrender happened exactly the day Josiah Litch's newspaper article predicted in 1840.

The result was powerful. Over 1,000 former atheists personally contacted Josiah Litch to tell him that, because of the fulfillment of this prophecy, they now trusted the Bible and the God of the Bible. Hundreds of thousands of Christians all over eastern America committed themselves to God with new devotion. The certainty that the Bible could be trusted became even more accepted around the nation. People realized with fresh conviction that God's Word should be taken as accurate, understood personally, and used as its own interpreter.

WHERE IS THAT FERVOR TODAY?

The zeal for Scripture manifested by the population in 1840 is hard for us to understand today. Why? In our day we are overwhelmed with information from the internet, television, radio, and thousands of books and magazines. We are surrounded by so many distractions and curiosities that we do not take any of the information as seriously as our ancestors did.

The 1840s were different. Back then, the churches had more employees than the federal and state governments combined. It was much more common to hear a sermon than receive a piece of mail. There were few institutions in society besides churches and religious associations. The only media was local newspapers. Knowledge was primarily gained from experience and observation. Thousands of Americans were migrating westward and leaving their families, friends, and churches behind. Many of these families had only one book in the whole house, a Bible provided by the recently organized Bible Society. Many children learned to read from that Bible.

Farmers and carpenters, blacksmiths and business people discussed the Bible, for that was the intellectual world of many Americans. In the newspapers, over dinner, on front porches, and down at the stores where everyone talked about issues, the real debate was about the meaning of the Scrip-

tures. The events of August 1840 confirmed to a significant part of the United States population that the Bible was full of truths that could be trusted completely.

This led to discussing other parts of the Bible. History books were becoming available and people were comparing history and Bible prophecy to see what was already fulfilled and what other prophecies would be fulfilled in the near future. Daniel 2 and 7 were subjects the family talked about over dinner. Many understood the prophecies of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. It was popular to understand the seventy weeks of Daniel 9. Most believed the 70 weeks ended with Christ's death on the cross, which they understood was in A.D. 33. (Later research would uncover the mistake and demonstrate that Jesus died in A.D. 31.)

Only a few understood the longest time period in the book of Daniel: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14). People puzzled over when that 2300 days would start. Many couldn't figure it out. A few here and there did. As had the greatest Bible students of Protestant history such as Martin Luther, Isaac Newton, John Wesley and Adam Clarke. But William Miller did more to help explain the answer to that puzzle than any other person. Yet he found this answer by "accident."

WILLIAM MILLER'S DISCOVERY—AND HIS DOCTOR

As a young adult, William made fun of the Bible. Later, he found the same book to be the best revelation of Someone who could solve his fear of death. Friends asked William how it was that he could trust a book that he used to make fun of. In the process of answering his friends, Miller found an explanation of the two-thousand-three-hundred-day prophecy.

The discovery bothered the farmer. He talked to local ministers and to friends. But no one could find a mistake in his conclusions. Soon he was invited to preach in local churches on this subject.



The foundational principle of the movement of the first angel was that the Bible was for every person. The Scriptures did not need preachers and theologians to explain it.

His sermons were more than just prophecy. Miller was too interested in Jesus to just talk about prophecy. He showed how prophecy talked about the same Jesus who went about healing the sick and helping the hurting some eighteen hundred years before. The more he talked of Jesus, the more he was invited to preach across the United States about the prophecies of Jesus.

Soon people began to attack his character. But no one could offer a better explanation or even show where Miller was wrong. The criticism was frustrating, especially when some started claiming he had "monomania." Miller decided to get help the next time the doctor came over.

When he had a chance, Miller asked the doctor, "Do I have monomania? How do you diagnose it?"

"Monomania is a mental illness where someone is rational on everything but one subject; and, when you mention that particular subject, he will become crazy," replied the doctor.

William said, "Sit down with me for two hours, while I present to you the subject of Jesus' coming again. If I am a monomaniac, please treat me and cure me. You can charge me for your time."

The doctor remembered having called Miller a monomaniac and found the interview a little uncomfortable. But they began. William asked the doctor to read Daniel chapter 8 and explain what the animals described there mean. The doctor said they represented Persia, Greece, and Rome. Then Miller asked him how long this vision of the great world empires was supposed to last.

"2,300 days," the doctor responded.

Did those nations only last 2,300 days (i.e. six and a half years)?

"No, those days are years, according to all commentators; this vision describes those nations over 2,300 years." [As the doctor said,

most Bible commentaries in 1840 explained the two thousand three hundred days as two thousand three hundred years.]

When will those years begin or end? The doctor didn't know.

Then they started reading chapter 9 of Daniel. William asked, what vision is meant in verses 21 and 23? The doctor replied that it was the vision of Daniel 8.

What are the seventy weeks of chapter nine part of? "The seventy weeks are part of the 2,300 days."

Do the two-time-periods start together at the same time? "Yes," said the doctor.

When did the seventy years end? "In A. D. 33."

How far would the 2,300 years extend past A.D. 33? The doctor subtracted 490 from 2,300 and replied, "1,810." The doctor realized that 1,810 years should be added to A.D. 33. He did the addition and it came to 1843. This shocked the doctor. (Later, he admitted that he never saw where the discussion was headed until he finished adding and found the answer to be less than ten years away.) Angry, the doctor grabbed his hat and left the house.

The next day he was back. "Mr. Miller, I am going to hell. I didn't sleep since I was here yesterday. I have looked at the question in every light, and the vision must end about A.D. 1843; and I am unprepared, and must be going to hell."

Each day of the next week, the doctor visited Mr. Miller, as the farmer pointed him to Jesus who can save us from the frustration and fear in our souls. The doctor found peace and went on his way rejoicing, as great a monomaniac as Mr. Miller.

THE MESSAGE SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE!

This simple experience of explaining the 2,300 years to the doctor was repeated over and over again with many others. People hadn't noticed the connection between Daniel chapters 8 and 9. It was there, but it went unnoticed for centuries. And when people heard the explanation and did the calculation, it led them to the same conclusion as the doctor arrived at. They became monomaniacs for Jesus. They wanted to be ready to meet Him. They read the Bible to know Him and to hear Him.





They then became like the Samaritan woman at the well. They ran home to tell their family, their friends, and their neighbors about Jesus. It was easy to do the math and see that something was happening in their own lifetimes. No one found a mistake with the numbers. Famous professors and theologians disagreed over which event should be expected, but they couldn't disagree with the math.

Nor was Miller the only person to reach this conclusion. "Spontaneously" around the world the same message appeared. Joseph Wolff took a similar message to the Middle East and all the way to India. In Palestine he found people already teaching Jesus would return about 1840.

Others in Germany, Russia, and Holland proclaimed the same message. A large group of ministers in England, and Manuel Lacunza in South America spread the news of Jesus' soon coming.

"As early as 1842, second advent publications had been sent to every missionary station in Europe, Asia, Africa, and in America, both sides of the Rocky Mountains. . . . The commanders of our vessels and the

sailors tell us that they touch at no port where they find this proclamation has not preceded them, and frequent inquiries respecting it are made of them." — *The Great Second Advent Movement*, p. 105.

In Sweden, it was illegal for adults to preach the message of Jesus and the prophecies of His coming, so children did it. John Loughborough later interviewed some of those children and they told him that they spoke without being prepared by adults. When it was time for the service, the adults would help them get up high enough that they could be seen and then they would preach things too wonderful for their six or seven-year-old mind but that made perfect sense to adult minds. After the service these children went right back to playing with the other children.

HEARTS TOUCHED, ATTITUDES CHANGED

This message influenced 10% or more of the adult U.S. population of that time. People became serious, happy, and caring. Silly things were ignored. Important matters

were taken care of. Households endeavored to make sure that all was right with each family member. People got rid of grudges. They prayed regularly, and prayed for the happiness and success of their families, neighbors, and friends.

Poor and rich, educated and ignorant forgot the differences between themselves as they focused on how to share with anyone they could, the story of Jesus coming soon. Rich people donated their wealth. Poor people found a way to work a little extra just to help. People forgot to be selfish. It was more important than anything else to think about Jesus, to tell others about Jesus, and to change their habits so that they were ready to live with Jesus. Every Bible story of Jesus was a story of Someone they were about to see. Every lesson Jesus taught was a lesson for them to understand in order to live with Him. People read the Bible to know Jesus, not just to satisfy their curiosity.

The foundational principle of the movement of the first angel was that the Bible was for every person. The Scriptures did not need preachers and theologians to explain it. Anyone could understand by reading. That book was not just a book of occasional ideas. It was a whole system of truth that could be discovered by studying and searching. A text here and there were not enough. People tried to understand the whole theme of a subject across the Bible. It was a revelation of God's ideas in human language, provided and protected by God.

One's perception of inspiration mattered. The Scriptures were trustworthy and people pointed to historical events and natural phenomenon to demonstrate this as true. The movement attacked higher criticism on one side and verbal inspiration on the other. Neither of those viewpoints recognized the Bible to be the ideas of God, even though it is not His choice of words.

Many could remember the largest shower of falling stars in recorded human history (November 1833), when it looked as if the very sky was falling in on the earth. There were reports of other amazing signs. Not only the dark day of 1780 in the eastern and southern United States, but the strange darkness that lasted several weeks



in Europe around the same time. And more strange things that we have since forgotten about like the spectacle of seeing three suns at the same time in the sky.

A former atheist wrote a letter to the editor of an atheist magazine, telling of how he used to disbelieve in the Bible and in heaven: "Having read every work of note that I could obtain, and having heard many lectures opposed to God and the Bible, I considered myself prepared to overthrow the Christian faith, and feared no argument that could be brought from the Bible. With these feelings, I attended a full course of Mr. Miller's lectures. He gave his rules of interpretations, and pledged himself to prove his position. I approved of his rules—to which I refer you—and the result was, he established the fact that the Bible is what it purports to be—the word of God—to my mind, beyond a doubt; and I have taken it as the man of my counsel. I am personally acquainted with nearly one hundred former atheists, who were converted under the preaching of Mr. Miller; and we did not yield the point without a struggle, nor without due consideration. Each and every prop and refuge of infidelity and unbelief was taken away from us, and our sandy foundation was swept by the truth of the Almighty as chaff is driven by the wind. Yet we parted with them much as a man parts with a diseased tooth. We tried to cure and keep it there, and when made to know that the root and foundation was rotten, it was painful to part with; but we rejoiced and felt better after the separation." —*Life Incidents*, p. 64.

THEN WHAT?

With such a significant interest in the United States and the world, in Jesus' return around the year 1843, what happened? Nothing that anyone could see. In the United States, people expected something to happen by March 21, 1844. Yet March 22 dawned as just another day. Suddenly, thousands became confused.

Their disappointment was as strong as their hope had been. Why didn't Jesus come? Were we wrong to believe the Bible? What should we do? No one could explain. And

so each person came to a personal choice. Should I look back on a belief and experience that made me the best person I've ever been and continue to believe I was right? Should I consider that I may have made some mistake, but that not everything was a mistake? Or should I throw away my belief in the Bible itself just because I assumed that Jesus would come before now and nothing has happened. It was one of those little moments when people made big decisions. Many decided to abandon their dependence on the Bible because they could not immediately explain their own mistake.

A "COOLING DOWN" CRISIS

Our western civilization came to a crisis 150 years ago. Most Christians have continued to read the Bible since then but without the same implicit confidence in it. They generally fall into one of two errors about that book. Those who believe that God dictated the scriptures through verbal inspiration tend to depend on religious terminology too much. As long as specific words are repeated, they tend to believe a doctrine is right or a person is holy, even if the ideas or actions contradict the words that are being repeated.

Those who take the Bible as a collection of human stories, without believing God originated and preserved the Bible, fail to take the whole Bible. They place themselves as wiser than God Himself and pick and choose the parts of the Bible that suit them. Both groups of people miss part of the truth and much of the power of the Bible along the way.

REKINDLE THE FLAME!

We are not here to attack those that see differently than we do. Jesus did His best to bless those that disagreed with Him. So must we. Nor are we here to brag. We also have made mistakes. But our compassion and humility will never lead us to abandon these truths: The Bible is the highest authority available to humanity. It was provided as God infused His thoughts into the human writers through thought inspiration. It can be understood by common people. Its truths are revealed to those who humbly search

its pages. Even though we are prone to misunderstand the Scriptures, any idea or fact consistently taught throughout the Bible is trustworthy. Prophecy is fulfilled by literal events and should never be considered as mystical.

Our Adventist forefathers were clearly mistaken about what event would happen in their lifetime, but they were not mistaken to take the Bible seriously and completely. They were not mistaken in the math or application of prophecies except for the specific event. They were not mistaken in trusting God over human opinion. Our forefathers that rejected the Adventist hope also were clearly mistaken. Just because of an embarrassing disappointment, they gave up too much. Let us learn from their mistakes.

May God speak to us through His Word personally. May we commit ourselves to live by its truths at any cost. May we consecrate our lives to submission to God and service to others, in preparation for heaven by living heavenly, based on the Word of God alone. For, "God speaking in the Bible, . . . is the one infallible guide." *R*

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By Eli Tenorio

The EVERLASTING GOSPEL

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).

WHAT IS THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL?

From Genesis to Revelation, the gospel directs sinners to our only hope—Jesus Christ.

“The message proclaimed by the angel flying in the midst of heaven is the everlasting gospel, the same

gospel that was declared in Eden when God said to the serpent, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel' (Genesis 3:15). Here was the first promise of a Saviour who would stand on the field of battle to contest the power of Satan and prevail against him."¹

WHO IS THIS SERPENT?

The serpent here is a symbol of the work of evil that has prevailed on our planet. Let us picture how this problem started:

Satan assumed the form of a serpent and entered Eden. The serpent was a beautiful, golden creature with wings—it did not slither along the ground as snakes do today. This dazzling serpent soared through the air—and landing on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it soon began to eat of the fruit of the tree.

"Eve found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the fruit of the forbidden tree. She saw it was very lovely and was reasoning with herself why God had so decidedly prohibited their eating or touching it. Now was Satan's opportunity. He addressed her as though he was able to divine her thoughts: 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' [Genesis 3:1]. Thus, with soft and pleasant words, and with musical voice, he addressed the wondering Eve. She was startled to hear a serpent speak. He extolled her beauty and exceeding loveliness, which was not displeasing to Eve. But she was amazed, for she knew that to the serpent God had not given the power of speech. . . .

"It was Satan that spoke, not the serpent. . . . That strange voice should have driven her to her husband's side to inquire of him why another should thus freely address her. But she enters into a controversy with the serpent. She answers his question, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' The serpent answers,

'Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil' [Verses 2–5].

"Satan would convey the idea that by eating of the forbidden tree, they would receive a new and more noble kind of knowledge than they had hitherto attained. This has been his special work with great success ever since his fall, to lead men to pry into the secrets of the Almighty, and not to be satisfied with what God has revealed, and not careful to obey that which He has commanded. He would lead them to disobey God's commands, and then make them believe that they are entering a wonderful field of knowledge. This is purely supposition and a miserable deception. They fail to understand what God has revealed and disregard His explicit commandments, and aspire after wisdom, independent of God, and seek to understand that which He has been pleased to withhold from mortals. They are elated with their ideas of progression and charmed with their own vain philosophy; but grope in midnight darkness relative to true knowledge."²

HOW IS THE SCENE REPEATED TODAY?

We may not realize it, but every day of our lives, the archdeceiver dangles before one or more of our five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch) some form of enticement(s) to try to get us to break the law of God. If he can trick us into succumbing to his wiles, he separates us from our Creator, the only Being in the universe capable of loving us with infinite, eternal, everlasting love. By thus stealing our affections away from God, the fallen foe drags us down to the

depths of doubt, discouragement, and degradation.

OUR AUTOMATIC PREDICAMENT

We use the word "automatic" for things that seem to happen naturally and immediately, without any external assistance. The tragic reality is that, from the very dawn of consciousness, here is what comes "automatically" to every human being: We all tend to be self-centered, unthankful, and inconsiderate of others, just like Satan is. It's frightening to realize it!

Once our first parents fell prey to Satan's deception in Eden, human nature became depraved. Since then, the human race has naturally gravitated toward iniquity—transgression of God's holy law of Ten Commandments. The psalmist describes our natural human condition: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Likewise, the apostle describes the natural state even of one whose conscience is pricked by the law of God: "We know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Romans 7:14, 15).



Our senses today are betraying us into sin. So much of what looks dazzling to the eyes, enchanting to the ears, noteworthy to the nose, tantalizing to the taste, or pleasing to the touch—can be part of a strategic ploy of Satan to lead us downward to spiritual ruin. The archdeceiver makes extensive use of electronic media to place before us bewitching films and degrading styles of music. He uses sophisticated technology to produce tasty foods deficient in nutrients and laced with health-destroying elements. He uses human agents similar to Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:7) to attempt to lure the godly into fleshly lusts which war against the soul. The list goes on and on. . . . He may even use our best friend or closest relative as his agent to spoil our relationship with God!

"In Eden Satan used the serpent as his instrument. Today he makes use of the members of the human family, striving by means of every species of cunning and deception to hedge up the path of righteousness cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in."³

The apostle Paul recognized how vulnerable and helpless is humanity in the face of all this bombardment and cried out in despair: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:22-24).

Wretched indeed is the condition of all who long to live in spiritual victory yet find themselves in this helpless condition. "You are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you."⁴ Do you feel like that sometimes? Then the everlasting gospel is just what you need.

The first gospel promise given to humanity is found in Genesis 3:15, that God would put enmity between the serpent (the power of Satan—Revelation 12:9) and the faithful church of Christ (symbol-

ized by a woman—Revelation 12:6; Jeremiah 6:2).

Addressing the serpent, God declared: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

WHAT IS THIS "ENMITY"?

What is the enmity that God puts between the serpent and the woman—and why do we desperately need this specific enmity?

As we invite Jesus Christ into our heart and totally surrender to the indwelling of His Holy Spirit, sin no longer holds the same overwhelming attraction it once had.

"There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin. Both became evil through apostasy. . . . It is the grace that Christ implants in the soul which creates in man enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue the captive of Satan, a servant ever ready to do his bidding. But the new principle in the soul creates conflict where hitherto had been peace. The power which Christ imparts enables man to resist the tyrant and usurper."⁵

We were enemies against God: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7, 8). But when we open the door of our heart to receive Jesus, He gives us enmity against sin. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Verses 3, 4).

WHAT IS THE "BRUISING"?

What is the bruising of the head of the serpent and the bruising of the heel of the woman referred to in Genesis 3:15?

"When Christ hung in agony upon the cross, while evil spirits rejoiced and evil men reviled, then indeed His heel was bruised by Satan. But that very act was crushing the serpent's head. Through death He destroyed 'him that had the

power of death, that is, the devil' (Hebrews 2:14). This act decided the destiny of the rebel chief, and made forever sure the plan of salvation. In death He gained the victory over its power; in rising again, He opened the gates of the grave to all His followers. In that last great contest we see fulfilled the prophecy, 'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel' (Genesis 3:15)."⁶

SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH

The fact that the message of Revelation 14:6, 7 is represented as being proclaimed by an angel shows the purity and sacred import of the message. It also tells us that the message will be carried out not only by human wisdom and power, but that supernatural strength—the power of heavenly beings—will accompany the everlasting gospel message in these last days of human history.

"This [first angel's] message is declared to be a part of the 'everlasting gospel.' The work of preaching the gospel has not been committed to angels but has been entrusted to men. Holy angels have been employed in directing this work; they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth."⁷ This activity is boosted not only by the help of angels, but with the energy of God Himself: The "three great powers of heaven pledged themselves to give you power and grace to resist every temptation to dishonor God."⁸ How glorious is this enmity!

THE PERIL WE FACE

Have you ever seen a cat, with his belly full, meet a mouse? I saw it just once, and it was interesting.

The cat started chasing the mouse until he caught it. Once the cat had the mouse under his paw, he started playing with it. The cat hit the mouse—though not very hard. Then the mouse fell, pretending to be dead. In his turn, the cat pretended to believe the mouse and started to leave. Suddenly, the mouse got up and started running. Then the cat turned and ran after the mouse. Over and over again they repeated the same ritual: Finally the cat got tired of playing

and hit the mouse hard enough to kill him.

Our enemy wants to do the same with you and me. He wants to play with us for some time. But once he gets tired of playing with us, then his plan is to hit us as hard as he can and leave us without hope, lost forever.

Nevertheless, God has a much better plan for us. He wants us to live with Him forever, in a world that is much better than where we live now. Therefore, He warns us against the deceitful games of the enemy. This is why He proclaims the message of the everlasting gospel in a loud voice.

LOOK AND LIVE!

Jesus makes the bold declaration: "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:31, 32).

As our mind's eye beholds the sacrifice of Christ in our behalf, and as we take firm hold of His power in practical life, we are no longer inclined to break God's law. "Christ came to our world to represent the character of God as it is represented in His holy law; for His law is a transcript of His character. Christ was both the law and the gospel. The angel that proclaims the everlasting gospel proclaims the law of God; for the gospel of salvation brings men to obedience of the law, whereby their characters are formed after the divine similitude."⁹ "Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world' [John 1:29]. Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer. . . . He whose eyes are fixed on Jesus will leave all. He will die to selfishness."¹⁰ "Love and light and truth and life are found in the everlasting gospel."¹¹

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL SHOWS OUR DUTY TO LOVE

Jesus taught that loving those around us is more important than

rituals and ceremonies. It is the gospel in action. "To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:33).

God foresaw that thousands "would proclaim the everlasting gospel, showing the duty of man to love God supremely and his fellowman as himself. He knew that His message of everlasting truth, which was symbolized by an angel flying in the midst of heaven, would increase in glory, and that other messengers would join those who already proclaimed the gospel, until the whole earth should be lightened with the glory of God."¹²

A MESSAGE OF CHRIST'S RETURN

The message of the everlasting gospel is a message of hope to all believers—it is an announcement that the time of judgment means Christ's second coming is soon.

"In the prophecy [of the first angel's message] this warning of the judgment, with its connected messages, is followed by the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. The proclamation of the judgment is an announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. And this proclamation is called the everlasting gospel. Thus the preaching of Christ's second coming, the announcement of its nearness, is shown to be an essential part of the gospel message."¹³

GOOD NEWS!

Are you tired of suffering from spiritual failure? Are you tired of sojourning as a pilgrim in this world? There is good news. Your Creator and Redeemer is willing and able to give you a new experience. The gospel of Jesus Christ can put enmity between you and those alluring temptations that have been plaguing your life. Instead of temptation finding an answering echo in your heart, the sour tones of conflict between yourself and sin will be obvious. You will be provided with strength from on high to resist the tempter's snare. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is

common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Ultimately, the coming of Jesus Christ is to deliver you from the perpetual darkness of this fallen world.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3).

"Oh that the curtain which shuts the eternal world from our view might be rolled back! . . . **Every soul that remains true to Christ is another evidence and reminder of the first prophecy. Satan may bruise the heel, but the faithful believer shall bruise the head of the serpent.**"¹⁴

So, "put your trust in God. Pray much, and believe that in His good work the Lord will guide you step by step. Trusting, hoping, believing in the Lord, holding fast the hand of Infinite Power, you will be more than conquerors. In God you will have victory and success. You will see the salvation of the Lord."¹⁵ "And when these things [the ominous signs of the times] begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). We are almost home!

The promise of Jesus is sure: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). *R*

References:

- ¹ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 106.
- ² *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 35-37.
- ³ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1083.
- ⁴ *Steps to Christ*, p. 47.
- ⁵ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 505, 506.
- ⁶ *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 701, 702.
- ⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 312.
- ⁸ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 235. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁹ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 106.
- ¹⁰ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1113.
- ¹¹ *The Youth's Instructor*, September 11, 1902.
- ¹² *The Sabbath School Worker*, August 1, 1895.
- ¹³ *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 227, 228.
- ¹⁴ *The Review and Herald*, July 18, 1882. [Emphasis supplied.]
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Fear God and Give Glory to Him

by B. Montrose

The message of the first angel of Revelation 14:6 and 7 is to be given in a loud voice. It's a wake-up call that begins with a startling concept: **Fear**.

Fear is common today. One of the most frequent topics in the news is that of terrorism—based on the root word “terror,” which is very frightening indeed. Prophecy foretells “men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:26)—heart attacks triggered by anxiety and stress. Yes, it’s all happening before our eyes, even in the professed Christian world. But what should be the greatest fear of a Christian? Let us consider:

OF WHAT ARE WE SO AFRAID?

Is it persecution? It should not be. Over the centuries, Christians have stood firm and even thrived in the face of persecution. Throughout history, true reformation has often grown much faster under persecution than under freedom. Yet **fear of persecution** virtually paralyzes many today, so that too often we are afraid to speak up for our Lord because we are afraid of possible consequences. Like Peter in Pilate’s judgment hall, we succumb to the pressure of the crowd, trusting in our own devices and disguises for supposed safety. That is why God warns: “Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy;

neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and **let him be your fear, and let him be your dread**” (Isaiah 8:12, 13). [Emphasis added.]

Of what else do we tend to be afraid? In the preceding article in this issue of *The Reformation Herald*, we read about the everlasting gospel. That message involves a great commission that needs to go to the whole world. What is hindering us from focusing more wholeheartedly on this vital task at hand? Is it the economic struggle just to survive—being burdened with the cares of this life? Christ warns: “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeit-



The Greek word translated as “fear” can mean “scared” but is also used to indicate reverence, awe, and loving respect; to hold in honor. This will result in rightdoing.

Father.” “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (Romans 8:15; 2 Timothy 1:7)? How can we then reconcile these seemingly contrasting ideas? To fear and how to fear, that is the question.

WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO FEAR GOD?

The Greek word *phobeomai* translated as “fear” in Revelation 14:7 can mean to have fear or anxiety; to be scared or even terrified of someone or something. Yet the same word is also used to indicate reverence, awe, and loving respect; to hold in honor. This will result in rightdoing.

A FIRST STEP

The fear of God is actually the first step in acknowledging His omnipresence. When we are keenly aware that the Lord sees and hears all that we do, our actions will be affected by that realization in some way. It can bolster us with needed courage:

“Only the sense of God’s presence can banish the fear that, for the timid child, would make life a burden. Let him fix in his memory the promise, ‘The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them’ (Psalm 34:7).”¹ Courage is good. On the other hand, some of us may have courage but actually need to be less presumptuous in our boldness. In such cases, a consciousness of the presence of God will have a different effect. It will subdue and humble our proud tendencies.

Whatever may be the state of our individual case, to all of us the psalmist explains: “Come, ye chil-

ing, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares” (Luke 21:33, 34). This **fear of hardship and even poverty** is paralyzing many.

CHOOSING OUR CONCERN

Persecution and hardship are not the things we are to fear. We are told in Revelation 14:7 to “**fear God!**”

Jesus wipes out all our self-justification about both the fear of persecution and the fear of poverty by stating plainly: “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mark 8:35).

“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not

therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:28–33).

Thus we will now decide to fear God instead of people or circumstances. We repeat to ourselves the pledge of the psalmist: “In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. . . . “In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me” (Psalm 56:4, 11).

Does this mean we are to tremble and shake in our boots, living a life petrified by the notion of a wrathful, vengeful God? Doesn’t Scripture clearly teach the following concepts—“Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba,

dren, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:11–18).

Here we see some positive results that spring from a living fear of the Lord. We also see wonderful promises that help us keep our various trials in perspective. The psalmist bids us have a broken, contrite heart. Such a soul will not be casual, coarse, or lackadaisical. Quite the contrary—a thoughtful sobriety characterizes the spirit of contrition.

To have a healthy realization of God's presence is to be aware that even though our Lord loves us with everlasting, enduring love greater than that of a mother for her child, He is not simply a bundle of comfort and cuddles. To sin in all of its forms, our God is also as a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). The fire that will burn up sin in the end will consume all who cling to its corruption. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Corinthians 3:13). Here we see the perfect blending of justice and mercy, more firmly grasped as we cultivate a healthy fear of God.

EXAMPLES FROM GREAT MEN OF OLD

A true understanding of how God's presence is to affect us is shown in an example in the book of Genesis. When faced with temptation, the tenor of **Joseph's** state of mind is revealed in his words, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). Besides Joseph and the temptress, no one was present when the temptation was offered. They were alone—away from

the sight or earshot of any other people. Yet Joseph knew very well that they were not really alone. The Spirit of the living God was right there. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). Joseph loved his Lord too much to be dragged into any immoral enticement. His demeanor was like that of the psalmist who said, "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16:8).

The notable reformer **Nehemiah** explains how his acknowledgement of God's presence influenced the way he behaved on his job: "Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, **because of the fear of God**" (Nehemiah 5:14, 15). [Emphasis supplied.]

"Every soul is to gird himself for the spiritual conflict before us. The world's plans, the world's customs, the world's conniving, are not for us. We are to say, 'So did not I, because of the fear of God.' Selfishness, dishonesty, craftiness, are trying to intrude into hearts. Let us not give them room.

"Nehemiah kept his eye single to the glory of God. . . . By the stability of his course of action he gave evidence that he was a brave Christian. His conscience was cleansed, refined, and ennobled by obedience to God. He refused to depart from Christian principles.

"Upon all who believe in Christ is laid the obligation of walking worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, to reveal the character of Christ. The cross will honor every Christian who honors it."² This is the fear of God.

ESSENTIAL TO THE EDUCATION OF A CHRISTIAN

How important is this fear? Does it really matter that much? Inspiration answers: "Christian parents, will you not for Christ's sake examine

your desires, your aims for your children, and see if they will bear the test of God's law? **The most essential education is that which will teach them the love and the fear of God.**"³

Besides providing our families with the most essential aspect of education, the fear of God will promote kindness in the home circle. Sometimes we are too lax at home—and because the outside world cannot see us, we fail to appreciate our family members and treat them properly. But we must keep in mind that God is watching us at home every bit as much as when we are out. This is why David pledged: "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart" (Psalm 101:2). Whatever the setting, Christians are directed to be "giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:20, 21).

The fear of God is important in every association of life. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:22–24).

What happens when we abandon our fear of God? We end up on very dangerous ground: "When men cast off the fear of God they are not long in departing from honor and integrity."⁴

"Every act of life is important. It is strengthening habit and forming character. **If all the daily duties are performed in the fear of God, they will be done with fidelity,** and the life record will be such as can pass the test of the Judgment."⁵

FEAR: OUR FIRST RESPONSE

The fear of God may be thought of as having its parallel in the concept of justification—the first response of receiving imputed righteousness given to the Christian as a title to heaven. We may be touched by this fear—but we still need a **fitness** for heaven. Where does that come into the picture? By continuing on to glorify God in daily life. Christ declares: "**If ye continue** in my word, then are ye my disciples

indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). [Emphasis supplied.]

HOW DO WE THEN GIVE GLORY TO GOD?

The consistent rendering of glory to God is sanctification, whereby "ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:23). This is the righteousness of Christ imparted as our fitness for heaven. In order to appropriate God's character into our practical life, we must always be keeping before our mind's eye all that comprises that beautifully balanced character. When Moses asked to see the glory of God, the divine traits of character were unveiled to him: "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:6, 7). Such a perfect blend of justice and mercy! We also see more about His character in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23), in the record of Jesus' life on earth, in the epistles given for our instruction, and so forth. These and other inspired testimonies can only be kept in the forefront of our minds by studying and meditating on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy day by day.

Then as we "walk in love" (Ephesians 5:2), reflecting God's mercy—coupled with a life of principle "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4), reflecting His justice—we give glory to Him. In order for this perfect balance to be manifested in us, our personal, selfish, egotistical glory needs to be laid in the dust. It means that our glory—character—is totally given over to Him. Only then can we accept His Omnipotence to give us power to obey.

The moon—which has no light of its own—reflects the sun, a mighty source of energy. Likewise, our individual character—which has no light on its own—is to reflect the character of Christ, the Sun of

"The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example—these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world."

righteousness and Source of our strength. Hence as we fear God, the assurance comes: "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2). There will be a radiating of light from the glory of God as His character becomes enshrined in our heart.

"True character is not shaped from without, and put on; it radiates from within. If we wish to direct others in the path of righteousness, the principles of righteousness must be enshrined in our own hearts. Our profession of faith may proclaim the theory of religion, but it is our practical piety that holds forth the word of truth. The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example—these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world."⁶

This light can only shine to the world when we stop blocking it. We need to be able to declare with the apostle: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Self is a big blockade. Only by a full surrender to Christ can it melt away into humility under the powerful, brilliant rays streaming from the mighty cross of Calvary. Only then can we reflect the true glory of heaven.

"The light of the glory of God will reveal all the hidden evil and bring the soul to the place of humble confession. As the increasing glory of Christ is revealed, the human agent will see no glory in himself; for the concealed deformity of his soul is laid bare, and self-esteem and self-glorying are extinguished. Self dies, and Christ lives."⁷

"What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the

glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. . . .

"The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken."⁸ Thus the darkness of this old world will be dispelled, and the light of heaven will be glorious. And through the power of Christ, the redeemed of God will ultimately experience glorification. What a wondrous hope is before us!

IN CONCLUSION

The message of the first angel has begun. What is the urgent call for us today? The gospel commission must be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people in a loud voice. And where does it start? In view of the precious promises of God our Father and His Son Jesus Christ, "dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness **in the fear of God.**" "Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, **glorify him; and fear him**, all ye the seed of Israel" (2 Corinthians 7:1; Psalm 22:23).

[Emphasis supplied.] *R*

References:

- ¹ *Child Guidance*, p. 42.
- ² *That I May Know Him*, p. 174.
- ³ *Child Guidance*, p. 298. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁴ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 557.
- ⁵ *The Signs of the Times*, November 3, 1881. [Emphasis supplied.]
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The Hour of His Judgment Is Come

A compilation from the Bible
and Spirit of Prophecy

The first angel of Revelation 14:6, 7 presents essential elements indispensable for our salvation. He bears the everlasting gospel and proclaims a powerful message: "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."

We thank God for providing the everlasting gospel for us before announcing the investigative judgment; otherwise none would be prepared to face that judgment! In Psalm 143:1, 2 we find very meaningful and inspired words from David: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And **enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.**" [Emphasis supplied.]

David was 100% right. No human being can be guiltless before

God's judgment. As we study God's perfect character in comparison with the sinful condition of humanity, we see that there is no chance for acquittal. But the "everlasting gospel" has all the necessary provision for us to be declared innocent. In His mercy, God sent the everlasting gospel to prepare His loyal children for the judgment.

Daniel 12:1 says: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, **the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.**" [Emphasis supplied.] We should notice that Michael—Jesus Christ, our beloved Saviour, Lord, and Intercessor—is working in the most holy place **for His people**. It means that He is not working to condemn His people but to defend them. The New King James Version puts it this way: "The great prince who stands *watch over* the sons of your people." [Emphasis supplied.] The Revised Standard Version says: "The great prince who

has charge of your people." [Emphasis supplied.] In other words, Christ is interceding in the judgment for His children, or defending them.

A LESSON FROM ZECHARIAH'S VISION

The vision of Zechariah 3 which describes Joshua and the Angel gives us a very clear and comforting view of the work of Christ in the most holy place to save His people.

Joshua was a real person in the time of the prophet Zechariah who held the position of high priest and intercessor for Israel. In the vision, as the representative of God's people, Joshua "was clothed with filthy garments" (verse 3), symbolizing his own sins and the sins of the people. Satan was "standing at his right hand to resist him" (verse 1), and Joshua was "standing before the angel of the Lord" (who is Christ, our Intercessor).



Joshua could not deny that Israel had sinned. And Satan demanded the right to destroy them because of their sins. But Christ gave a special order to those present in the judgment: "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (verse 4).

Removing the filthy garments signifies forgiveness based on the imputed righteousness of Christ.

"Poor, repentant mortals, hear the words of Jesus and believe as you hear. . . . I will blot out his transgressions. I will cover his sins. I will impute to him My righteousness. 'And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.'

"The filthy garments are removed; for Christ says: 'I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee.' The iniquity is transferred to the innocent, the pure, the holy Son of God; and man, all undeserving, stands before the Lord cleansed from all unrighteousness, and clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ. Oh, what a change of raiment is this!"¹

In what consisted the appeal of Joshua before Christ in behalf of his people? He cannot say that they have not sinned, but he presents before our Advocate their repentance and their reliance on the merits of Christ.

And what kind of argument does the Lord use to defeat the accuser of His people? He says that, even though His people have committed grievous sins, they have repented and confessed their sins which were transferred to Christ, who paid for

them on the cross of Calvary. They have trusted in their Saviour. Then, they are declared innocent.

"The high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan's accusations. He does not claim that Israel are free from fault. In his filthy garments, symbolizing the sins of the people, which he bears as their representative, he stands before the Angel, confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and humiliation, relying upon the mercy of a sin-pardoning Redeemer and in faith claiming the promises of God."²

Let us consider some key words of the previous paragraph: "[Joshua] stands before the Angel [Jesus Christ], **confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and humiliation, relying upon the mercy of a sin-pardoning Redeemer and in faith claiming the promises of God.**"

Here we find: Confession, repentance, humiliation, trust in the mercy of Christ and in His promises.

And what gives Christ the full right to forgive His people and rebuke Satan?

"Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. **He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary. His perfect obedience to God's law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man.**"³

"**The mighty arguments of Calvary.**" Here we have the Gospel. As sinners, men and women should die eternally. However, from the very day that Adam committed transgression against the words of God, Christ took the guilt and punishment of human beings upon Himself and became the Substitute and Warranty of humanity.

As persons accept the provision of Calvary, they receive Christ as their personal Saviour and submit to the control of the Holy Spirit. As they thus obey God's Word, Christ imputes His perfect righteousness

"Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith."



to the repentant sinner, and thus the person is declared righteous in the divine judgment.

IN THE HEAVENLY COURTROOM

"Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. **We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith.**

"Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith, repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meager, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the

oracles of God's Word. In amazement he hears the message, 'Ye are complete in Him.' Now all is at rest in his soul. No longer must he strive to find some worthiness in himself, some meritorious deed by which to gain the favor of God."⁴

"As you near the cross of Calvary there is seen love that is without a parallel. As you by faith grasp the meaning of the sacrifice, you see yourself a sinner, condemned by a broken law. This is repentance. As you come with humble heart, you find pardon, for Christ Jesus is represented as continually standing at the altar, momentarily offering up the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is a minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.

"The typical shadows of the Jewish tabernacle no longer possess any virtue. A daily and yearly typical atonement is no longer to be made, but the atoning sacrifice through a mediator is essential because of the constant commission of sin. Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner."⁵

The apostle John puts in simple words the provision in behalf of the repentant sinner:

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:1-3).

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

WHAT SHOULD THIS MARVELOUS PLAN CAUSE US TO CONSIDER?

"The fact that the acknowledged people of God are represented as standing before the Lord in filthy

garments should lead to humility and deep searching of heart on the part of all who profess His name. Those who are indeed purifying their souls by obeying the truth will have a most humble opinion of themselves. The more closely they view the spotless character of Christ, the stronger will be their desire to be conformed to His image, and the less will they see of purity or holiness in themselves. But while we should realize our sinful condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own.

"Yet we should never be content with a sinful life. It is a thought that should arouse Christians to greater zeal and earnestness in overcoming evil, that every defect in character, every point in which they fail to meet the divine standard, is an open door by which Satan can enter to tempt and destroy them; and, furthermore, that every failure and defect on their part gives occasion to the tempter and his agents to reproach Christ. We are to exert every energy of the soul in the work of overcoming, and to look to Jesus for strength to do what we cannot do of ourselves. No sin can be tolerated in those who shall walk with Christ in white. The filthy garments are to be removed, and Christ's robe of righteousness is to be placed upon us. By repentance and faith we are enabled to render obedience to all the commandments of God, and are found without blame before Him. Those who shall meet the approval of God are now afflicting their souls, confessing their sins, and earnestly pleading for pardon through Jesus their Advocate. Their attention is fixed upon Him, their hopes, their faith, are centered on Him, and when the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments, and clothe him with change of raiment, and set a fair miter upon his head,' they are

prepared to give Him all the glory of their salvation."⁶

OUR CONSOLATION IN VIEW OF THE JUDGMENT

We are not alone to face the divine court. We have a very capable, righteous, and powerful Advocate to defend us against the accusation of our archenemy.

Instead of being terrified because of the judgment, we can be really happy knowing that we have such a Saviour as Jesus Christ.



"[Daniel 12:1 quoted.] By this we see the importance of having our names written in the book of life. All whose names are registered there will be delivered from Satan's power, and Christ will command that their filthy garments be removed, and that they be clothed with His righteousness. 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him' [Malachi 3:17]."

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that

is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 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 4:14-16).

"Through the sacrifice made in our behalf, sins may be perfectly forgiven. 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. We may claim sanctification. We may enjoy the favor of God. We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute. Ye are accepted in the Beloved. The Lord shows, to the repenting, believing one, that Christ accepts the surrender of the soul, to be molded and fashioned after His own likeness."⁸

"The Father gave all honor to His Son, seating Him at His right hand, far above all principalities and power. He expressed His great joy and delight in receiving the Crucified One and crowning Him with glory and honor. And all the favors He has shown to His Son in His acceptance of the great atonement are shown to His people. Those who have united their interests in love with Christ are accepted in the Beloved. They suffer with Christ, and His glorification is of great interest to them, because they are accepted in Him. God loves them as He loves His Son. Christ, Emmanuel, stands between God and the believer, revealing the glory of God to His chosen ones, and covering their defects and transgressions with the garments of His own spotless righteousness. The seal of Heaven has been affixed to Christ's

"The fact that the acknowledged people of God are represented as standing before the Lord in filthy garments should lead to humility and deep searching of heart on the part of all who profess His name."



atonement. His sacrifice is in every way satisfactory. In Him mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. The Father embraced His Son, and in this included all who receive Him. 'To them gave He power to become the sons of God' [John 1:12]. They are His chosen ones, joint-heirs with Christ in the great firm of heaven. They overcome as He overcame."⁹ *R*

References:

- ¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1178.
- ² *Testimonie for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 468, 469.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 471. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁴ *Faith and Works*, pp. 107, 108. [Emphasis supplied.]
- ⁵ *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 343, 344.
- ⁶ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 471, 472.
- ⁷ *Lift Him Up*, p. 347.
- ⁸ *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 32, 33.
- ⁹ *The Signs of the Times*, August 16, 1899.

By Peter D. Lausevic



“WORSHIP HIM”

Do we really see our need so that we can “worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters,” as this message requires?



Sometime after Jesus began His ministry, those who chose to believe in the message He was teaching began to be baptized as a symbol of their commitment to serve the Lord with all their heart. As His disciples were baptizing, it came to the notice of various people trying to create a strife between Jesus and John the Baptist that Jesus was baptizing more people than John. To avoid unnecessary conflict, Jesus departed from Judea. On His way back to Galilee, He had to pass through Samaria.

His disciples went to purchase needed supplies while Jesus rested by Jacob’s well and entered into that familiar conversation with the Samaritan woman. Eventually they came to the subject of worship. She wanted to know which mountain was the correct place to worship God. In answer to this important question, Jesus said in part: “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh

such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24).

In this issue we are studying various parts of the first angel's message. We now come to this very subject of worship. "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 14:7). In this article we are going to look at whom it is that we are to worship.

WHOM ARE WE TO WORSHIP?

There are many gods in this world that we can choose to worship. When Paul was working in Corinth, he could see their eagerness to worship all the gods possible. This is why he said, "Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many)" (1 Corinthians 8:5). In those days there were not only various deities all over the place, but they also had the Roman emperor whom they worshipped as god. Even some of the local kings were believed to be gods. "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost" (Acts 12:21–23).

Today nothing has changed. The names of the deities have been removed and people still worship the gods of this world. Whether we talk about ever-changing fashions, flashy cars, elaborate homes, hefty bank accounts, power or position in government or in the church, or our own theories and ideas, any form of worshipping material things paralyzes the mind so that eternal realities are not discerned. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians

4:4). This list can go on. "Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god."¹

What all of these deities—ancient or modern—are lacking is the power of the Creator. Although each deity may offer some attraction, it cannot offer anything of its own or anything of any eternal value. Anciently a person would create something and then fall down and worship his or her very creation. "The customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good. Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might" (Jeremiah 10:3–6). Today it is the same. People work hard for their money and then worship that very money as if it were a god.

On the other hand, Jehovah is identified for several undisputable reasons. None of these false gods can even try to match our God.

1 No beginning or ending

The first reason that Jehovah is matchless is that He has no beginning and no end. (The Bible calls both the Father and the Son by the name of Jehovah. Compare the prophecy in Isaiah 40:3, "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah" (*Young's Literal Translation*), with Matthew 3:3, where the gospel writer applies this prophecy to the preparation of the way for Jesus.) Speaking of Jesus the prophetic record states, "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," or as the margin states, the days of eternity (Micah 5:2). The origin of God

is eternal, so He cannot be made from something lesser than Himself and then be worshipped. There is no possibility of degrading one's self in worshipping the Eternal One because He was not made by anything lower than Himself. "The attempt to represent the Eternal One by material objects would lower man's conception of God. The mind, turned away from the infinite perfection of Jehovah, would be attracted to the creature rather than to the Creator. And as his conceptions of God were lowered, so would man become degraded."²

2 Declaring the end from the beginning

The second reason is that He can declare the end from the beginning. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9, 10).

The prophetic eye of God is 100% accurate in the view of past, present, and future events. "The history which the great I AM has marked out in His word, uniting link after link in the prophetic chain, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tells us where we are today in the procession of the ages, and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order."³

Because God knows all things, He works hard behind the scenes to bring about the conversion of everyone. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). As we look into "the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems,

to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will."⁴

3 The Creator

The third reason is that the Eternal Being is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. "And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein" (Revelation 10:6). There is nothing in existence that was not created by God. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him" (Colossians 1:16).

It is this aspect of worship that is identified only in the seventh day Sabbath. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11). The word hallowed is translated sanctified in Genesis 2:3. It means to set aside for a holy use. The reason for keeping the seventh day Sabbath is because of the power of God to create all things. "In the fourth commandment, God is revealed as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and is thereby distinguished from all false gods. It was as a memorial of the work of creation that the seventh day was sanctified as a rest day for man. It was designed to keep the living God ever before the minds of men as the source of being and the object of reverence and worship."⁵

When the first angel's message turns our attention to worship the One who has created the heavens and the earth and everything in

this world of ours, it definitely means that the people of God in the last days need to worship Him in His specified manner and set the seventh day of the week aside for holy use. "The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God'—because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. 'The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete and must never be forgotten.'—J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27. It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men, that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man's thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, 'Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters' [Revelation 14:7.] It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment."⁶

4 Creates from nothing

The fourth major reason for worshipping Jehovah is that He creates out of nothing. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). In science we learn

that matter cannot be created nor destroyed. That is true only to a degree; for we are created beings and can see it only from our perspective. The Creator of the universe created this world from absolutely nothing but His word. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6).

The power in this word is remarkable. Not only is the act of creation itself remarkable but also the speed at which it is done. "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (verse 9). At the moment of speaking, the atoms come into existence and obey His command. They mingle and combine in exactly the way the mind of the Lord has spoken it, and suddenly you have the trees of the forest, the grass covered, rolling hills, the water in the streams and oceans, the birds of the air, the animals of the forest, and the sun in its path through the Milky Way. When God speaks, instantly there is the reality of what God was thinking.

"In the formation of our world, God was not beholden to preexistent substance or matter. For the 'things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.' On the contrary, all things, material or spiritual, stood up before the Lord Jehovah at His voice, and were created for His own purpose. The heavens and all the host of them, the earth and all things that are therein, are not only the work of His hand, they came into existence by the breath of His mouth."⁷

The power of the Word of God is illustrated in the experience of the Roman centurion in the eighth chapter of Matthew's gospel. "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented (verses 5, 6)." Here is a Gentile who has a genuine concern for a disposable servant (although it may have actually been his son, considering the record of the event in the other gospels) who is sick. Jesus assures him that upon His arrival this servant will be rescued.

However, this supposed heathen does not feel worthy of the presence of Jesus in his home. He must have been observing Jesus for some time to come to the conclusion he did. Most of the people only saw Jesus touching the sick, and they were healed. However, this Roman saw something else. "The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed (verse 8)." He understood something more than the supposed people of God. The power was not in the touch or the presence of Jesus. It was His word that accomplished marvelous results.

This man recognized the power of authority. "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it (verse 9)." He realized that Jesus had authority not only of human beings as the Roman officers did, but He had authority over all of creation. He recognized Jesus as the Creator. It is for this reason, the fact that this man saw the power in the word of God, and trusted in that word to accomplish its impossible actions, that Jesus recognized his faith. "When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel (verse 10)."

As a result, Jesus cured an individual at a distance. "And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour (verse 13)." "Instead of going to Capernaum, Jesus, by a flash of divine telegraphy, sends the message of healing to the bedside of the suffering son."⁸

CREATE IN ME

The God that we worship is able to make something out of nothing. He is able to heal at a distance because there is power in His word. What will happen to us if we really trust Him and His word? "A new

heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). "The words, 'A new heart also will I give you' mean, A new mind will I give you. This change of heart is always attended by a clear conception of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. The clearness of our view of truth will be proportionate to our understanding of the word of God. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence."⁹

It is for this reason that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). "The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, 'Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth' (John 17:17). If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us."¹⁰

Do we really see our need so that we can "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters," as this message requires? God wants to exchange this corrupt heart of ours, but He cannot do it unless we ask. Are you ready to ask Him today as did David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me"? (Psalm 51:10). *R*

References:

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

² *Ibid.*, p. 306.

³ *Education*, p. 178.

⁴ *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 499, 500.

⁵ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 53, 54 (1888).

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 437, 438.

⁷ *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 312.

⁸ *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 155.

⁹ *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 452.

¹⁰ *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 100.

P.O. Box 7240
Roanoke, VA 24019-0240

MOVING? Please let us know.

PIECING TOGETHER THE PUZZLE

“I have kept thy precepts
and thy testimonies: for
all my ways are before
thee. Let my cry come near
before thee, O Lord: give me
understanding according to
thy word” (Psalm 119:168, 169).



Have you ever done a jigsaw puzzle? Jigsaw puzzles come in many sizes—they are made with lots of pretty pictures from which to choose. For little children having little hands, jigsaw puzzles are made with big, chunky pieces of pictures easy to see and figure out. For older children the pieces get more complicated, and the pictures may involve different objects of the same color. Finally, for the more experienced puzzle person, a gorgeous nature photograph might be made into a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle. The leaves and plants in the photo may have various shades of green; one part of the picture may have lots of blue water or sky, or perhaps a forest of trees with many different shades of brown bark on the trunks and limbs. This kind of jigsaw puzzle can be difficult to piece together. A person may grab a piece of a certain color and assume it belongs in a certain spot, when actually it is meant to fit somewhere totally different. Early in life we

learn that to try to force a piece into a jigsaw puzzle will prevent the picture from turning out right and can sometimes even damage the puzzle pieces. As always in life, cheating never pays.

To get a true understanding of Scripture is like piecing together a beautiful jigsaw puzzle. If we are not patient and careful, we may try to force the wrong piece into the wrong place. “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10).

This “precept-upon-precept” idea is the method of study used by the believers of the early Advent movement. They were God-fearing people such as William Miller. He took the complete concordance of the Bible and studied deeply each instance where a certain word was used in Scripture. When the believers used this method, the correct picture came into place. It was complete and whole—not like half of an unfinished jigsaw puzzle.

Sometimes when people are stubborn, they may try to force the Bible to say something it does not—just like the forced puzzle piece. They know something, but they stop their study to try to make Scripture say what they want to say instead of patiently seeking God’s word for the real answer. This is what the Pharisees did in the time of Christ—and sadly it is also what many people do today.

So the next time you see a jigsaw puzzle, think of how much it is like the way we are to study the Word of God. By faithful study of His Word and meek surrender to His will, your life can be like the beautiful work of art that God wants you to be. And you’ll be much happier in the end! — BHM.

