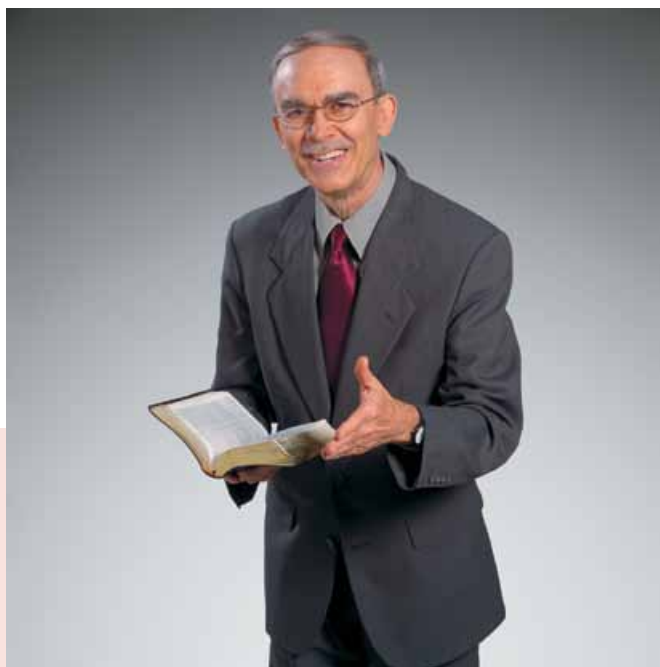


HISTORIC
LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM



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Editor's Letter

John J. Grosboll

The Issue That Determines Your Eternal Destiny

Many people in the last days will think that they are saved but will find at last that they are irretrievably lost: Matthew 7:21–23. The reason for this is because they are not loyal subjects of the divine government—they are living in violation of God's law.

It was through disobedience that Adam and Eve lost Paradise and plunged our world into ruin that would have been permanent if God had not devised a way of redemption for the human race. This salvation that Jesus came to our world to bring could be brought only by obedience (John 15:10; Hebrews 5:8, 9).

The person who has faith will be obedient (Hebrews 11:8) and only the faithful will be in the kingdom of heaven. (See Luke 16:10–12, 1 Corinthians 4:2, Galatians 3:9, and Revelation 17:14.)

The final issue in the last days will be over obedience to God's law, whether

or not you will keep it. Pressure will be applied to force all to worship an image to the beast (Revelation 13:11–17). The antichrist power described in Daniel 7, 2 Thessalonians 2 and in Revelation 13:1–10 has a special identifying mark. Daniel says that a mark of this power will be his intent to change times and laws (Daniel 7:25). The special mark of God's children in the last days, on the other hand, is their obedience to all of God's commandments (Revelation 14:12; 12:17; 22:14).

As we draw near the end of time, the entire world is going to be polarized, divided into two camps. On one side are those who are obedient to God's law who will be marked or sealed by Him and will receive eternal life (Revelation 7:1–3; 14:1–5). (NOTE: The words *seal* and *mark* are used interchangeably in the Bible. See Romans 4:11.) However, those who are disobedient and continue to break

God's law will receive the mark of antichrist, the mark of disobedience, called the "mark of the beast" (Revelation 14:9–12; 16:2; 19:20).

On one side will be those who have overcome the world, the flesh and the devil (Revelation 21:5–7; 1 John 5:4, 18; Romans 8:13), but on the other side will be those who have lived according to the flesh, who were conformed to this world and who were led on by evil spirits to commit all manner of sin. They will both worship the image to the beast and receive the mark of the beast (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15; 18:23, 24).

In the end of the world there will be no third category. You will be on one side or the other. The decisions that you make day by day are determining which side you will wind up on. "It is the issue of the daily test that determines their victory or defeat in life's great crisis." *The Desire of Ages*, 382.

LANDMARKS

Staff

Editor

John J. Grosboll

Graphic Designer

Martin Bernar

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Steps to Life, Inc.

P. O. Box 782828

Wichita, KS 67278

tel 316.788.5559

fax 316.788.6900

e-mail: historic@stepstolife.org

web: www.stepstolife.org

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It is the goal of *LandMarks'* editors to present articles based on truth from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Viewpoints of writers and/or contributors expressed outside of articles printed in this publication are not necessarily the views of this magazine's editors and are not endorsed by Steps to Life Ministries.

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The Price & The Law

By John J. Grosboll

At present we have not experienced the real consequence to a person, family, church, or nation if a whole nation were to cast aside the law of God.

Heaven experienced this when Lucifer and his angel followers rebelled. We are told: “Satan stood in amazement at his new condition. His happiness was gone. He looked upon the angels who, with him, were once so happy, but who had been expelled from heaven with him. Before their fall not a shade of discontent had marred their perfect bliss. Now all seemed changed. Countenances which had reflected the image of their Maker were gloomy and despairing. Strife, discord, and bitter recrimination were among them. Previous to their rebellion these things had been unknown in heaven. Satan now beheld the terrible results of his rebellion. He shuddered, and feared to face the future and to contemplate the end of these things.

“The hour for joyful, happy songs of praise to God and His dear Son had come. Satan had led the heavenly choir. He had raised the first note; then all the angelic host had united with him, and glorious strains of music had resounded through heaven in honor of God and His dear Son. But now, instead of strains of sweetest music, discord and angry words fall upon the ear of the great rebel leader. Where is he? Is it not all a horrible dream? Is he shut out of heaven? Are the gates of heaven never more to open to admit him? The hour of worship draws nigh, when bright and holy angels bow before the Father. No more will he unite in heavenly song. No more will he bow in reverence and holy awe before the presence of the eternal God.

“Could he be again as he was when he was pure, true, and loyal, gladly would he yield up the claims of his authority. But he was lost! beyond redemption, for his presumptuous rebellion! And this was not all; he had led others to rebellion and to the same lost condition with himself—angels, who had never thought to question the will of Heaven or refuse obedience to the law of God till he had put it into their minds, presenting before them that they might enjoy a greater good, a higher and more glorious liberty. This had been the sophistry whereby he had deceived them. A responsibility now rests upon him from which he would fain be released.

“These spirits had become turbulent with disappointed hopes. Instead of greater good, they were experiencing the sad results of disobedience and disregard of law. Never more would these unhappy beings be swayed by the mild rule of Jesus Christ. Never more would their spirits be stirred by the deep, earnest love, peace, and joy which His presence had ever inspired

in them, to be returned to Him in cheerful obedience and reverential honor.” *The Story of Redemption*, 24–26.

By casting aside the law of God, their happiness, peace, joy and contentment were gone—everything was lost. It was so bad that Satan himself would gladly have gone back. In fact, we are told that he entreated the Lord to be readmitted and Jesus wept as He explained to Satan that he could not be accepted back into heaven. The seeds of rebellion were still in him and he was irretrievably ruined. Satan then carried on his rebellion against God’s law and caused the fall of our first parents.

into the papers that flood our world, filled with recitals of daily crimes, committed not only in the lower walks of life, but also among the higher classes. Those who occupy positions of trust, who are placed as guardians of the peoples’ interest, are untrue to their responsibility. There is embezzlement and fraud. Public money is stolen, and not one tithe of these corrupt transactions come to the light of day, and we do not see to what extent the wickedness of the world exists.

“The youth of our time are receiving their education from the evil doings of these wicked, but honored men of the world. Theft, murder,

The deception that there will be freedom, joy and happiness by casting off God's law still abounds today.

What a devastating result from that first rebellion. The deception that there will be freedom, joy and happiness by casting off God’s law still abounds today. The Bible calls these temporary pleasures of sin, but in the process of disobedience, there is great loss. Since the fall of Adam and Eve, the enemy of God and man has had this world under his training. He has taught the world well to trample under foot God’s moral standard so that today we live in a time of gross lawlessness.

In talking about the last days in Matthew 24:12, Jesus says, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.” This describes the time in which we are living. Ellen White, in describing her time, sounds almost like she was talking today. She wrote, “The signs of the times are plain and startling. Look

adultery, corruption, every sin that has a name, prevails to an awful extent.” *The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1893. This was true then and it is even more true now. When God called His people out of Egypt, the children of Israel were the depository for the law of God. It was given to them to guard and keep it, teach it to their children and to make it known in the world.

Paul wrote, “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1, 2). Israel was given the law of God and they were instructed what to do with it. Deuteronomy 6:6–9 says, “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when

you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Childhood is when a person's mind is the most plastic and most receptive to new ideas, whether good or bad.

If the children of Israel had actually done this, the whole history of the world would have been different. But they continually fell into idolatry. The second commandment was violated because the children were not learn-

The devil attacks any religious teacher or preacher who teaches God's law. One of his favorite methods of attack is to accuse him or her of being a legalist. By using smears or slogans he attempts to intimidate them to keep them from teaching God's principles, yet this is something that should be prominent in every Christian church. If there is no law, there is no sin, because sin is the transgression of the law. If there is no sin, then there is no need for the gospel. If you do not need the gospel, what is a preacher supposed to preach? Religion becomes an empty shell with nothing to teach.

pay four-fold and that the sword would dwell in his family from that time on, mentioning a whole series of terrible things that would happen. (See 2 Samuel 12:1-7.)

David lost four of his sons as a result of his crime. Every one of those losses hurt him more than if he had died himself. He was forgiven and he will be in the kingdom of heaven, but in this world, he had to pay consequences for his sin.

It seems that Protestants understand this principle even less than the Roman Catholics, who teach that there are temporal consequences for sin. Ellen White said that many people "... are so hardened that they do not think it possible that certain punishment will fall upon the evil doer." *The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1893.

There is *eternal* punishment for sin if it is not forgiven, and even if those sins are forgiven, there are temporal consequences that occur in this world that will be paid. By the way, the temporal consequences of sin are not at a discount price. Everyone pays full price. Sometimes the price is damage to a person's physical or mental health or other damages that occur in a person's life.

Ecclesiastes 8:12, 13 talks about this problem. It says, "Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will He prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God."

There are limits to the forbearance of God. Ellen White says, "God has drawn a line" *The Signs of the Times*, May 15, 1884. We don't know exactly where that line is, but God has drawn a line. An exact record is being kept of individuals, families,

The youth of our time are receiving their education from the evil doings of these wicked, but honored men of the world.

ing from their parents, from babyhood on up, the principles of God's law. The Lord said to talk about it when you are sitting, when you are rising up, when you are traveling. Whatever you are doing, teach your children the principles of the law.

Ellen White wrote, "Had fathers and mothers followed the direction given by Christ, we should not now read and hear of sins and crimes committed not only by adults, but even by youth and children. The evil condition of society exists because parents have disregarded this instruction, and neglected to train and educate their children to respect and honor the holy commandments of God. Even religious teachers have failed to present the holy standard by which character is measured" *The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1893.

It is hollow, without substance, unless you believe that the foundation of the Christian religion is God's law, which is a reflection of His character. The law is valid and binding.

The world is being held captive by the belief that the law can be disregarded. Christian churches believe you can sin, but you do not have to pay the penalty for it. Just confess and be forgiven and the sin is erased. But forgiveness does not erase sin in itself; there are always consequences to be dealt with. Study the life of David, for instance. After David committed his sin with Bathsheba, he repented, and was forgiven. But was the sin erased as if it never happened? No. The prophet Nathan used a metaphor to draw out David's response, which was that the guilty man should repay four-fold. He then told David that he would indeed

institutions, and nations and when an individual passes the limit, that person experiences judgments. When a nation passes the limit, that nation experiences judgments. Ellen White said, "O that every living teacher would teach both in word and doctrine that there are limits to God's longsuffering. Many have gone beyond the limits of His forbearance. The world should be aroused to a wholesome fear of the Lord God of hosts. The time and age in which we live is one of marked depravity. ... Erelong God will arise and vindicate His honor." *The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1893.

An example is found in Genesis 15:13–16 when God was making promises to Abraham. "Then He said to Abram: 'Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete [or full].'"

So, the Lord said, I can't give you the land yet because the Amorites are living in it now. Your descendants are going to dispossess them, but I can't give it to them now because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

In the fourth generation what happened? Exodus 12:40, 41: "Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt."



Often those who occupy positions of trust, who are placed as guardians of the peoples' interest, are untrue to their responsibility. There is embezzlement and fraud. Public money is stolen, and not one tithe of these corrupt transactions come to the light of day, and we do not see to what extent the wickedness of the world exists.

When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they dispossessed the Amorites. The Amorites had had a long period of probation, but the time came when their transgression was so large that the Lord said, They must be dispossessed, as the city of Jericho. Not only the boundary of their probation was past, but they were doing the things that are listed in Leviticus 18. Because they were doing all these things, the Lord said, Enough! The types of things listed in Leviticus 18 are being done today and God hasn't changed. "The time will come when all the transgressors of His law will know that God will by no means clear the guilty." *The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1893. The Lord told Moses in Exodus 34:6 and 7, "And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful, and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation.'"

God is merciful. In God's government there is a mingling of mercy and justice. The devil challenged that principle. When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, that charge was completely answered. Jesus' death on the cross paid a just penalty for the sins of the world. It is by means of the cross that mercy is extended to the whole world. It was demonstrated at that time, in an irrefutable way, so irrefutable that at the end, the devil himself is going to bow and say, Yes, my sentence is just.

Another example of God's forbearance is His dealing with the Jews. When Jesus came as the Saviour of the world, He said in John 6:37, "The one who comes to Me, I will by no means cast out." He has promised not to cast me out, but to save me, and to cleanse me. Jesus was speaking to the Jewish people when He said that. He died on the cross to save even the worst of sinners.

Great light was given to the Jewish nation, but they rejected the light and the truth. They rejected the counsel of God against themselves. They set themselves stubbornly against the messages and warnings that God

sent. The time came when they had exhausted the patience of God by their repeated rejection of truth and the messengers that God sent. When people are going in the wrong way, God sends them a message of reproof through a minister, a prophet, or a secular statesman. When the people of Nineveh listened and turned around at the reproof of Jonah, the Lord did not destroy them. But had they not listened, the outcome would have been different.

Now, the same God, with the same accuracy, keeps a record of what is happening in the world today. The Lord is still offering to nations, churches and to individuals the wedding garment that is woven in the loom of heaven so

to God and honoring Him and His law for His multitude of blessings, professed Christians of America have become leavened with pride, covetousness, and self-sufficiency. Ellen White described the situation as follows: "The love of money, which is the root of all evil, has had a large place in their hearts. Many whose names are upon the church records have oppressed the poor, and grasped every possible advantage over those who were under them. They have lived to gratify appetite, to make extravagant display; and pride is fast making a Sodom of our world. But God is keeping His reckoning. The treatment of the poor, the robbery of the widow and the fatherless by those who are lifted

their guilt will be full, and 'national apostasy' will be registered in the books of heaven. The result of this apostasy will be national ruin." Ibid.

National apostasy is followed by national ruin. It will also be a time of persecution of God's children. The prayer that we are instructed in inspired writings to pray when that happens is Psalm 119:126: "It is time for You to act, O LORD, for they have made void Your law" (literal translation).

To the people who keep the commandments of God when under the hand of oppression will come these words of comfort found in Revelation 3:10-12: "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial [or temptation] which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."

From God's people in the last days the truth of the law is going to go to the whole world. It is at the heart of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12. God's people in the last days will preach the message of the judgment in Revelation 14:6 and 7.

You cannot preach the judgment unless you preach about the law. The law of God is the basis of the judgment (James 2:10-12). In the third angel's message it is pointed out that God's people in the last days will keep the commandments. In both the first and the third angel's messages, you have a distinct presentation concerning the law of God. If you compare

The evil condition of society exists because parents have neglected to train and educate their children to respect and honor the holy commandments of God.

that they will be prepared for the coming of Christ and be fit to go into the wedding supper of the Lamb. Every effort is being made that none would be lost, for God does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men (Lamentations 3:33). The Lord says, "What could have been done more to My vineyard that I have not done in it" (Isaiah 5:4, literal translation)?

Today, there is a land that has had unrivaled mercies and blessings from God, a land that has been the greatest land of liberty that has ever existed. It has been the glory of the whole earth and blessed of heaven more than any other country on the face of the globe. But, instead of returning gratitude

up against the weak and helpless, is all written in the book of heaven. The cries of those who are oppressed have reached the ears of Him who judgeth righteously." *The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1893.

And the result of this: "The time has come when judgment is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. But the Lord's arm is not shortened that it cannot save, and His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear. The people of the United States have been a favored people; but when they restrict religious liberty, surrender Protestantism, and give countenance to popery, the measure of

Revelation 14 with Revelation 17 you will find that the second angel's message is a condemnation of those that are breaking the law.

People have been told by false teachers that the law has been nailed to the cross. Jesus said in Luke 16:17, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle [part of a letter] of the law to fail."

Paul said in Romans 3:20 that it was by the law that we had a knowledge of what sin is. People think that the apostle Paul is the one that taught that the law was nailed to the cross. Notice what Romans 4:15 says: "... because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression." And people say, We are not under the law, but under grace. Paul said in Romans 3:19, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

In Romans 6:14 Paul says that we are "not under the law but under grace." But you need also to read Romans 6:15 which says: "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!" Sin is the transgression of the law. "What then? Shall we ... 'transgress the law' ... because we are not under the law, but under grace? Absolutely not!"

Paul tells who it is that is not under the law in Galatians 5:18: "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." Romans 8:14: "... as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." And notice in verse 13, he says, "... if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

Verse 4 says, "... that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk



The temporal consequences of sin are not at a discount price. Everyone pays full price. Sometimes the price is damage to a person's physical or mental health or other damages that occur in a person's life.

according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Notice, Romans 8:4 is a key text. Romans 8:4 shows that if I am walking according to the Spirit, the righteous requirement of the law is going to be fulfilled in my life.

The person who is not under the law is a person who has come to the Lord, confessed and forsaken his sins. The Lord has taken away all of his guilt and given to that person the Holy Spirit which gives power to live in harmony with His law. Paul says that those who are led by the Holy Spirit are not under the law. Sinful deeds of the body will be put to death and the righteous requirement of the law will be fulfilled in your life. It is the rest of the world that is under the law.

The person who is not obedient to the law is not subject to the law and is not a Christian, but is a person who is unconverted. Romans 8:7 says, "... the carnal (unconverted) mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." They are the people that are not converted.

As Adventist Christians in these latter days, we have been given the

responsibility to give the warning to the world that we are living in the day of atonement, in the midst of the judgment and that the basis for the judgment is the law of God. Our job is to take that message to the world. It is not a popular message. Neither was the message of Noah, but he was very thankful that he had given the message to the world when, while the rest of the world was drowning outside he was safe inside the ark.

May God help us all to be faithful witnesses in all the world by giving the message out to the world that we are living in the time of judgment, a time when there is going to be a penalty applied to those who persist in breaking God's law.

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

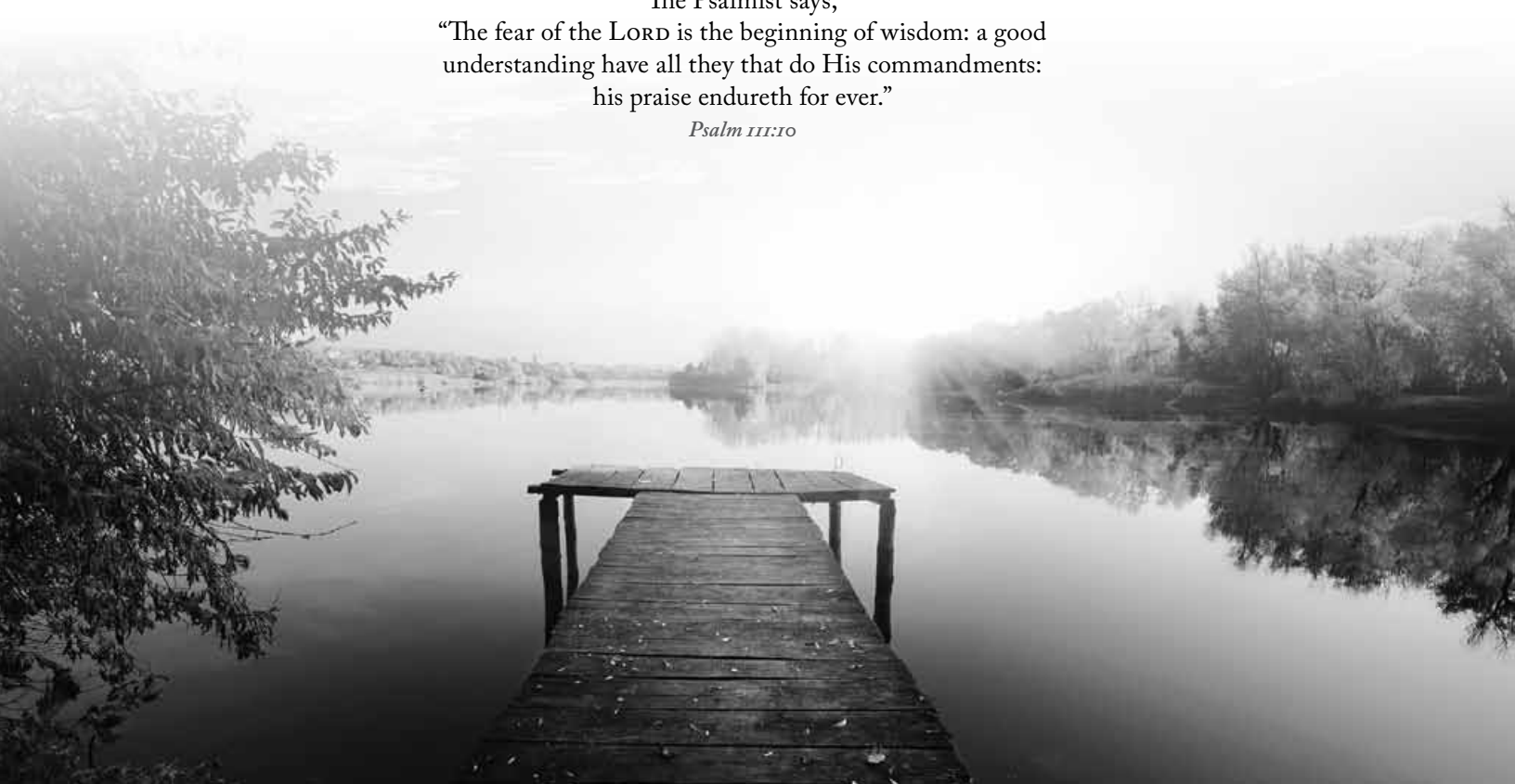
Pastor John J. Grosboll is Director of *Steps to Life* and pastors the *Prairie Meadows Church of Free Seventh-day Adventists in Wichita, Kansas*. He may be contacted by email at: historic@stepstolife.org, or by telephone at: 316-788-5559.

Divine Understanding

BY IVAN PLUMMER

The Psalmist says,
“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good
understanding have all they that do His commandments:
his praise endureth for ever.”

Psalm 111:10



WHAT IS WISDOM?

The word “wisdom” in the Hebrew language is *Chokmah*, a word occurring 141 times in the Bible. *Chokmah* is comprehensive in its meaning:

1. technical knowledge (Exodus 28:3; 35:26);
2. practical, worldly wisdom (1 Kings 4:30; Isaiah 47:10);
3. ideal human wisdom (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:2);
4. wisdom as an attribute of God (Psalm 104:24; Proverbs 3:19; Jeremiah 10:12; 51:15).

Wisdom is distinguished from knowledge in that *wisdom* has to do with character and conduct, whereas *knowledge* is primarily intellectual enlightenment. Knowledge may be an accumulation of unrelated and unorganized facts without the ability to apply these facts to personal life. Wisdom is the faculty of being able to make a practical use of facts.

SO WHAT IS UNDERSTANDING?

An intermediate step may be conceived of in the term *understanding*. Understanding implies the ability to evaluate and organize facts, an essential framework for wisdom.

The word “understanding” as found in Psalm 111:10 originates from a Hebrew word which means, intelligence, success, discretion, knowledge, policy; sense or wisdom.

So while “understanding” has to do with the ability or power to acquire and interpret knowledge, while it has to do with the mental faculties, intelligence and the ability to comprehend yet according to the Holy Scriptures, it is intimately connected to wisdom, which makes a practical use of facts, for it has to do with character and conduct.

So we read again, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: his praise endureth for ever” (Psalm 111:10). Therefore good, true or divine understanding cannot be separated from obedience! Obedience to God’s revealed will, obedience to God’s word demonstrates that a person has true understanding!

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD OR THOSE WHO PROFESS TO BELIEVE IN HIM BUT DISOBEY HIM? ARE THEY WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING?

“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom . . . But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD. . .” (Jeremiah 9:23, 24).

say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Ephesians 4:17, 18).

WHAT CAUSES COMPLETE BLINDNESS?

Jesus taught, “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness” (Matthew 6:22, 23)!

The “light” of the body is that insight that places relative value on the things of time and eternity. When Jesus used the word “eye,” He was addressing the eye of the soul that gives a man heavenly vision, and that

Wisdom is distinguished from knowledge in that wisdom has to do with character and conduct, whereas knowledge is primarily intellectual enlightenment.

The man who knows not God or the man who professes to know Him but does not obey has understanding, but it is not true or divine understanding. It is that understanding that allows man to glory or that uplifts himself instead of his Creator.

Paul says of such men that while they possess understanding, yet their understanding is darkened. “This I

enables him to behold that which is invisible to the natural eyesight. Such eyesight is a guide to the soul in the same way that physical eyesight is a guide to the body. Hebrews 11:27 reads, “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.” And 2 Corinthians 5:7 tells us, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

Ellen White, commenting on the words of Jesus points out, "But when the eye is blinded by the love of self, there is only darkness. 'If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.'" *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 91.

The apostle John tells us also what causes spiritual blindness: "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:11).

The word "darkness" is derived from a root word which means *shadi-*

knowledge, intellectual curiosity is his guide; but if he wants insight into what Jesus Christ teaches, he can only get it by obedience.

If things are dark to me, then I may be sure it will be made evident by disobedience. Intellectual darkness comes through ignorance; spiritual darkness comes because of something I do not intend to obey. No man ever receives a word from God without instantly being put to the test over it. We disobey and then wonder why we don't advance spiritually.

All God's revelations are sealed until they are opened to us by obedi-

Thomas a' Kempis, (1380–1471) German scholar & clergy, taught, "God walks with the humble; He reveals Himself to the lowly; He gives understanding to the little ones; He discloses His meaning to pure minds, but hides His grace from the curious and the proud."

WHO CAUSES THE UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN BEINGS TO BECOME DARKENED?

Paul states, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom 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 4:3, 4).

WHO IS THE "god OF THIS WORLD"?

1. The devil claims to be the god of this world – "Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8, 9).
2. He is "the god of this world" because the world is largely under his control. He rules in the hearts of most of its inhabitants – "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1, 2).

Satan is called by other titles such as "prince of this world" (John 12:31;

Disobedience has closed the door to a vast amount of knowledge that might have been gained from the Scriptures.

ness or more specifically *darkness of error*. Even among Christians are many whose understanding is darkened because of a failure to obey God.

As a REMINDER, "Disobedience has closed the door to a vast amount of knowledge that might have been gained from the Scriptures. Understanding means obedience to God's commandments. The Scriptures are not to be adapted to meet the prejudice and jealousy of men. They can be understood only by those who are humbly seeking for a knowledge of the truth that they may obey it." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 112.

ALSO

The golden rule for understanding spiritually is not intellect, but obedience. If a man wants scientific

ence. You will never get them open by philosophy or thinking. Immediately you will obey, a flash of light comes. The only way you can gain understanding is by being born again. Obey God in the thing He shows you, and instantly the next thing is opened up. It is not study that does it, but obedience. With the tiniest fragment of obedience, heaven opens and the profoundest truths of God are yours straight away.

Dr. Edward Heppenstall agrees with Oswald Chambers when he penned, "Christianity consists of two things: a true knowledge of Christ and an experience of Him. Christ comes not merely with information. He comes so that we exclaim with delight, 'Once I was blind, but now I see' (John 9:25)."

14:30; 16:11) and “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2).

Therefore, it is he who darkens people’s minds by way of all manner of sinful practices! Satan’s principal work is to blind or darken men’s minds.

SUMMARY OF HOW SATAN DARKENS HUMAN BEINGS’ MINDS:

- By keeping them from the study of God’s word.
- By deranging the power of the mind through excesses of body and soul.
- By wholly occupying the mind with things of this life.
- By appealing to pride and self-exaltation.

KEEP IN MIND!

The battle between Christ and Satan is a battle for the minds of men (see Romans 7:23, 25).

TWELVE WAYS THE UNDERSTANDING BECOMES DARKENED!

1. Sin darkens the understanding

– “The enlightening of the understanding must become a part of the experience. Sin has darkened the reasoning powers, and hell is triumphing.” SpTBO7, *Testimonies for the Church Containing Messages of Warning and Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists*, 22. “Blindness of the heart is a terrible barrier to the discerning of truth ... Sin is the disease of the soul, in consequence of which the understanding fails to do its appointed work on the heart and memory.” PHo28, *Elder Daniels and the Fresno Church*, 6, 7.

2. Failure to heed the call to repentance

– “During the preceding months of the Baptist’s ministry, many had refused to heed the call to repentance. Thus they had hard-

ened their hearts and darkened their understanding.” *The Desire of Ages*, 136.

3. By rejecting former messages

– “Those who rejected the first message could not be benefited by the second; neither were they benefited by the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. And by rejecting the two former messages, they have so darkened their understanding that they can see no light in the third angel’s message, which shows the way into the most holy place.” *Early Writings*, 260, 261.

4. By the use of alcoholic/strong drink

– Satan “tempts men to the use of wine and strong drink, by which the understanding is darkened, the senses confused, and the image of God defaced.” *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 187.

5. By impure thoughts, actions and willful disobedience

– “Impurity in thought or practice obscures spiritual vision, so that the soul can not contemplate and be charmed with the character of God. The world is full of disobedience, and the understanding of men has become so darkened by a sinful course of action that righteousness is not clearly discerned, and is not therefore appreciated above unrighteousness.” *The Signs of the Times*, October 3, 1895.

6. By cherishing doubt

– “There are those who walk amid perpetual doubts. They feed on doubts, enjoy doubts, talk doubts, and question everything that it is for their interest to believe. To those who thus trifle with the plain testimonies of God’s word, and who refuse to believe because it is inconvenient and unpopular to do so, the light will finally become darkness; truth



The golden rule for understanding spiritually is not intellect, but obedience. If a man wants scientific knowledge, intellectual curiosity is his guide; but if he wants insight into what Jesus Christ teaches, he can only get it by obedience.

will appear to the darkened understanding as error, and error will be accepted as truth. When thus shrouded in error, they will find it perfectly natural and convenient to believe what is false, and will become strong in their faith." *The Review and Herald*, January 5, 1886.

7. **Because of continual transgression** – "It was the love of God toward the children of men that moved Him to proclaim His law from Sinai. Because the understanding of men had become darkened by continual transgression, God, in His infinite mercy, condescended to bestow upon

ning deception of Satan false theories are made a power to rob God. Man's spiritual understanding is darkened by Satan's sophistry." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, 221.

10. **By defects of character** – "By some the truth has been preached for a lifetime, but the understanding, darkened by defects of character which are not overcome, prevents them from discovering truth in its matchless loveliness." *Ibid.*, vol. 20, 180.
11. **By exalting one's idea above God's will** – "Those who exalt their own ideas above the plainly specified will of God are saying, as did

is separated from God. Where the message of divine truth is spurned or slighted, there the church will be enshrouded in darkness; faith and love grow cold, and estrangement and dissension enter. Church-members center their interests and energies in worldly pursuits, and sinners become hardened in their impenitence." *The Great Controversy*, (1888), 378.

WHO IS IT THAT ENLIGHTENS THE UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN BEINGS?

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:17, 18).

In commenting on these verses God's messenger records, "The ministry of the divine Spirit in enlightening the understanding and opening to the mind the deep things of God's holy word, was the blessing which Paul thus besought for the Ephesian church." *The Great Controversy*, ix.

The apostle John wrote, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13, 14).

God's Servant wrote, "The work of the Holy Spirit is to enlighten the darkened understanding, to melt the selfish, stony heart, to subdue the rebellious transgressor, and save him from the corrupting influences of the world." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 441.

God walks with the humble; He reveals Himself to the lowly; He gives understanding to the little ones; He discloses His meaning to pure minds, but hides His grace from the curious and the proud.

them the living oracles in all their original purity." *The Signs of the Times*, December 2, 1880.

8. **Allowing the devil access to our minds** – "When the Pharisees expressed their discontent because of the class of people with whom He mingled, Jesus set the matter before them in the parable of the lost sheep. But their understanding was darkened; for Satan had power over their minds, and they arrayed themselves in opposition to Jesus." *Ibid.*, November 20, 1893.
9. **Because of the false theories of Satan** – "The idols of the heathen stood between them and their God, obscuring God from their vision. Thus it is today. By the cun-

Pharaoh, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?' Every rejection of light hardens the heart and darkens the understanding; and thus people find it more and more difficult to distinguish between right and wrong, and they become bolder in resisting the will of God." *Christ Triumphant*, 109.

12. **Because of deliberately stifling one's convictions of duty** – "He who deliberately stifles his convictions of duty because it interferes with his inclinations, will finally lose the power to distinguish between truth and error. The understanding becomes darkened, the conscience callous, the heart hardened, and the soul



We disobey and then wonder why we don't advance spiritually.

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE CONCERNING BEING ENLIGHTENED?

The wise man said, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

"You should cultivate a spirit of entire submission to the will of God, earnestly, humbly seeking to know His ways and to follow the leadings of His Spirit. You must not lean to your own understanding. You should have deep distrust of your own wisdom and supposed prudence." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 360, 361.

"It is unsafe for men to lean to their own understanding; therefore they should daily seek strength and wisdom from above. God should be in all their thoughts; then all the wiles and subtleties of the old serpent

cannot betray them into sinful neglect of duty. They will meet the adversary with the simple weapon that Christ used, 'It is written,' or will repulse him with, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan' (Luke 4:8)." Ibid., vol. 5, 409.

WHY IS IT UNSAFE FOR MAN TO LEAN TO HIS OWN UNDERSTANDING?

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:17, 18).

In *The General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1899, we are also given the answer: "Through the power and work of Satan, the world has mistaken and forgotten God, and is living

By some the truth has been preached for a lifetime, but the understanding, darkened by defects of character which are not overcome, prevents them from discovering truth in its matchless loveliness.

in sin. Man's influence works against God. His knowledge of God and His word is perverted. His understanding is darkened."

TODAY JESUS WANTS TO DO FOR YOU AND ME WHAT HE DID FOR THE DISCIPLES!

- "And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me" (Luke 24:44).
- "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (verse 45). **LM**

Pastor Ivan Plummer ministers through the Emmanuel Seventh Day Church Ministries in Bronx, New York. He may be contacted by telephone at: 718-882-3900.



WHAT SEEST THOU?

BY JOHN PEARSON

One of the most miraculous organs that God gave humans is the eye. But just like any organ of the body, it can be abused through misuse or mistreatment—more commonly by the former rather than the latter.

God's word gives us much guidance regarding use of our eyes and provides many examples of the results of their misuse. In Isaiah, the prophet was moved to write one of the clearest statements regarding the importance of guarding what we behold:

“The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites:
‘Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?
Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?’
He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
He who despises the gain of oppressions,
Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes,
Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed,
And *shuts his eyes from seeing evil*.
He will dwell on high;
His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks;
Bread will be given him,
His water will be sure.”

Isaiah 33:14–16

[Emphasis supplied.]

The pen of inspiration noted the importance of Isaiah's counsel in the following passage:

"Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. 'Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners' (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer.

"The darkest hour of the church's struggle with the powers of evil is that which immediately precedes the day of her final deliverance. But none who trust in God need fear; for 'when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall,' God will be to His church 'a refuge from the storm' (Isaiah 25:4).

"In that day only the righteous are promised deliverance. 'The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure' (Isaiah 33:14-16)."

"The word of the Lord to His faithful ones is: 'Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity' (Isaiah 26:20, 21)." *Prophets and Kings*, 725, 726.

It is comforting to recognize that through Isaiah the Lord has promised

the faithful that if they abide by His counsel, if, among other forms of obedience, they shut their eyes from seeing evil, they will be fed and sheltered during the time of trouble.

Some of the counsel that inspiration provides concerns not only our physical vision, but our imagination—our mental vision—as well.

"We want the transforming grace of God to take right hold of our thinking powers. We may think evil, we may continue to keep our minds upon objectionable things, but what does this do for us? It conforms our entire experience to that which we are looking upon. But by beholding Jesus

gresses the commandments, statutes, testimonies, and words of counsel that the Lord in His mercy has given us, how can we hope to be overcomers? Eventually we will become changed into what we are beholding.

"Everything that can be done should be done to place ourselves and our children where we shall not see the iniquity that is practised [sic] in the world. We should carefully guard the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears, so that these awful things shall not enter our minds. When the daily newspaper comes into the house, I feel as if I wanted to hide it, that the ridiculous, sensational things in it may

The eyes are sanctified, and the ears are sanctified, and those who will close their eyes and ears to evil will become changed.

we become changed into His likeness. The servant of the living God sees to some purpose. The eyes are sanctified, and the ears are sanctified, and those who will close their eyes and ears to evil will become changed." *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 670.

This passage makes reference to a text that needs to be understood in its fullest meaning by those who are serious about overcoming: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). We commonly understand this text to mean that we become changed into what we spend our time beholding. If we regularly view activity that trans-

not be seen. It seems as if the enemy is at the foundation of the publishing of many things that appear in newspapers. Every sinful thing that can be found is uncovered and laid bare before the world." *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 211.

When this was written, there was no television or Internet, but if we understand the principle of this counsel, we must recognize that it is obvious that the same danger that inspiration recorded as existing from reading the newspaper exists to an even greater degree when those dangers are presented in living color.

The psalmist also provided wise counsel to us when he recorded one of the enlightened rules by which he guided his own life:

“I will set nothing wicked
before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who
fall away;
It shall not cling to me”
(Psalm 101:3).

“The vows of David recorded in Psalm 101 should be the vows of all upon whom rest the responsibilities of guarding the influences of the home. David declared: ‘I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. ... I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes’ (Psalm 101:2, 3 KJV).

“The enemy of souls will invent many things to lead the minds of our youth from firm faith in God to the

Psalm 119, the psalm that makes the necessity of obedience to God’s laws, precepts, and testimonies so inarguably evident, also addresses the importance of the appropriate use of our eyes in this appeal to Omnipotence:

“Turn away my eyes from looking
at worthless things,
And revive me in Your way”
(Psalm 119:37).

Inspiration makes a clear reference to this prayer of the psalmist in the following passage:

“Watchfulness and vigilance are needed now as never before in the history of the race. The eye must be

Shinar; even when it had brought him face to face with death he called it ‘a goodly Babylonish garment.’” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 496.

The story of Achan clearly demonstrates that we must not allow our eyes to linger in areas or on things that God in His mercy has forbidden us to behold—either physically or mentally. Note that Achan “*saw* among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels” (Joshua 7:21). His error was in letting his vision linger on the spoils and coveting them as his own. He failed to recognize these objects as what in reality they were—an allurement used by Satan to lead him into sin.

Another well-known example of the dangers of allowing our vision to linger on things that we should not be provided in the following Scripture:

“Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king’s house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, ‘Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite’ (2 Samuel 11:2, 3)?”

Perhaps at this point in time he had not yet written the following:

“My eyes are ever toward the
LORD,

For He shall pluck my feet out of
the net” (Psalm 25:15).

If David had had his eyes “ever toward the Lord,” he would have averted his vision away from the sensuous scene before him. The many griefs that followed in his life may well have been avoided.

Often in the course of our daily Christian walk, we are confronted

*Everything that can be done should be done to
place ourselves and our children where we shall not
see the iniquity that is practised [sic] in the world.*

idolatrous practices of the world. Let the cautions given to ancient Israel be carefully studied. Satan’s efforts to spoil the thoughts and confuse the judgment are unceasing, and we must be on our guard. We must be careful to maintain our allegiance to God as His peculiar people.” *In Heavenly Places*, 215.

“Say firmly: ‘I will not spend precious moments in reading that which will be of no profit to me, and which only unfits me to be of service to others. I will devote my time and my thoughts to acquiring a fitness for God’s service. I will close my eyes to frivolous and sinful things.’” *Maranatha*, 145.

turned off from beholding vanity.” *That I May Know Him*, 267.

One well-known example of the consequences of misuse of the eyes is contained in the sad story of Achan.

“And Achan answered Joshua and said, ‘Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it’ (Joshua 7:20, 21).”

“Achan’s covetousness was excited by the sight of that costly robe of

with images that, as Christians, we should consciously and conscientiously turn from. Tabloids in the grocery check-out line, billboards, inappropriately dressed worldlings—life is full of these kinds of allurements.

It is imperative that we recognize that Satan is the prince of this world and is absolutely determined to lead as many people astray as possible. It is also important that we recognize that those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are his special targets.

“As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry [dishonesty or fraudulence] and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. Therefore he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God.” *Maranatha*, 208.

Adventists are the very ones “who are looking for the second advent of Christ and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God” and are therefore subject to these special efforts of Satan and his evil agents. It matters not to them how they succeed in their efforts—whether they lead the professed people of God to transgress in thought, word, or deed. Thus it is absolutely imperative that those who are expecting to cross the Jordan in triumphant victory guard their vision, whether they are seeing with their eyes or with their imagination. Christ made that clear in the Sermon on the Mount:

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.’ But I say



The enemy of souls will invent many things to lead the minds of our youth from firm faith in God to the idolatrous practices of the world.

to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27, 28).

The apostle John also warned about feasting visually in forbidden areas:

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15–17).

Well, what’s a person to do? We have an enemy who knows us better than we know ourselves. Is there a safe harbor for us?

In the world of business, there is an area of practice that involves personnel management called “human resources.” One of the things that profession dwells on is compliance with the rules and regulations developed over time by the government to protect the rights of workers. The intent of these regulations is to ensure that all employees are treated equally. To accomplish that task, there are what are called “safe harbors.” If

you do this one particular thing with respect to some rule or regulation, you are assured that you are in compliance enough to avoid penalty.

Wikipedia puts it this way: “A safe harbor is a provision of a statute or a regulation that specifies that certain conduct will be deemed not to violate a given rule. It is usually found in connection with a vaguer, overall standard.”

Let’s look at an example for clarity. There is a law against reckless driving. What constitutes reckless driving is sometimes—even often—a matter of personal opinion. However, driving at 25 miles per hour is considered a safe harbor against reckless driving in most situations. On the other hand, driving at 90 miles per hour is considered an unsafe harbor under just about any situation.

So, what’s the safe harbor for those striving to be among the 144,000? God’s word provides the answer in many places, but we will look at Psalm 19:8:

“The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psalm 19:8).



We have an enemy who knows us better than we know ourselves. Is there a safe harbor for us? Driving at 90 miles per hour is considered an unsafe harbor under just about any situation.

As Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness” (Matthew 6:22, 23)!

This is a text that is worth much study. What does Christ mean when He says “if your eye is bad”? What does He mean by “your whole body will be full of darkness”? And especially intriguing is His statement that “if therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” Clearly, we have some introspection to do! Having bad eyes, eyes that linger on forbidden things, has perhaps greater consequences than we might initially realize. Remember our initial text from Isaiah: he who shuts his eyes from seeing evil will dwell on high.

By keeping our eyes—especially our mind’s eye—turned upon the word of God in all of its manifesta-

tions, we indeed find a safe harbor for our conduct. The psalmist made note of that in Psalm 26:2, 3:

“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me;
Try my mind and my heart.
For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,
And I have walked in Your truth” (Psalm 26:2, 3).

If we keep the lovingkindness, the blessings, of our Lord constantly in our mind’s eye, what is the result? The psalmist tells us: we walk in His truth.

Paul wrote some simple words in his letter to the Colossians that deserve much thought:

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:1–3).

On initial reading, one might simply think that the meaning of Paul’s counsel expressed in these texts is obvious. However, spending some time meditating on this passage brings to mind a wealth of wise instruction.

First of all, we recognize that to be raised with Christ is to be baptized—to make a public statement of our intent to be overcomers, to concede that we need the grace of Christ as we accept the challenge of the battle and the march that is the Christian’s life.

Next, we are instructed to “seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.”

Inspiration alludes to this text in the following passage:

“We need to have more distinct views of Jesus and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities. The beauty of holiness is to fill the hearts of God’s children; and that this may be accomplished, we should seek for divine disclosures of heavenly things.” *Steps to Christ*, 99.

Colossians 3:2 contains an extremely valuable jewel of counsel: “set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” How many of our trials and temptations would vanish if we heeded this advice. Every temptation that faces us, every effort of Satan to lead us astray would fall helplessly to the ground if we heeded this counsel. “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Even taken literally, the truth of this counsel is evident.

By virtue of man’s choice to obey the serpent rather than the Creator and eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, this earth is the realm of Satan. Scripture makes that abundantly clear. See John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, and Ephesians 2:2, as well as many other texts that make it too plain to be misunderstood that Satan holds sway over mankind.

So, what are we to do? How can we succeed in keeping our vision on things above and not on things on the earth? The apostle John adds to the advice toward that end that Paul has given us in his first epistle:

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15–17).

We are back where we started—noting the importance of keeping our eyes focused on appropriate things and avoiding looking at anything that takes the mind away from “things which are above.”

How thorough and clear is God’s word of warning to His faithful children about the dangers of beholding “things in the world.” Reference after reference, text after text can be cited that addresses this issue.

“Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right
before you” (Proverbs 4:25).

May God help us as we strive to
“shut our eyes from beholding evil”
so that we might “dwell on high.”

All quotes NKJV unless otherwise noted. **LM**

John Pearson is the office manager and a board member of *Steps to Life*. After retiring as chief financial officer for the Grand Canyon Association, Grand Canyon, Arizona, he moved to Wichita, Kansas, to join the Steps team. He may be contacted by email at: johnpearson@stepstolife.org.

Hold Fast

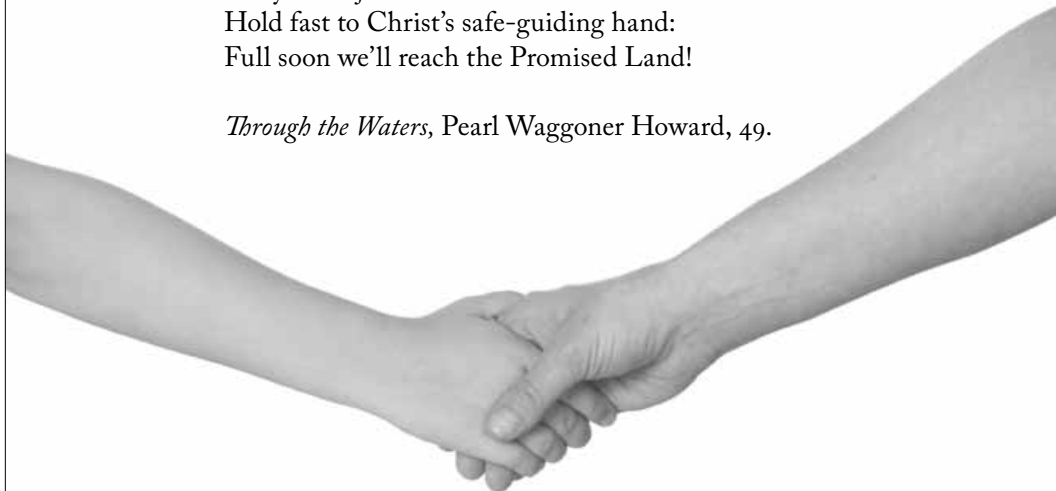
Hold fast for just a little while—
The journey’s end’s in view:
Behind lie many a weary mile,
Ahead the steps are few.
Oh, from your Guide loose not your hold:
Too near now are the streets of gold!

Hold fast for just a little more,
Nor turn to left or right;
Albeit trials are pressing sore,
Yet keep the goal in sight.
Look never back, nor yet around:
With Christ alone is safety found.

Hold on! Hold fast, nor ever cast
Your confidence away;
The weariest mile is oft the last,
And night shall end in day.
Hold fast, and raise the triumph song:
‘Twill spur some faltering soul along.

Hold fast your faith, hold fast to truth,
Hold fast, and patient be;
Now nearer than in the days of youth
The year of jubilee!
Hold fast to Christ’s safe-guiding hand:
Full soon we’ll reach the Promised Land!

Through the Waters, Pearl Waggoner Howard, 49.



Trump Signs 'Religious Liberty' Executive Order Allowing for Broad Exemptions

By Ali Vitali



President Donald Trump on Thursday made good on a promise to allow religious organizations greater freedom in political speech.

"Faith is deeply embedded into the history of our country, the spirit of our founding and the soul of our nation," Trump said in the Rose Garden at a National Day of Prayer event with religious leaders and White House staff. "We will not allow people of faith to be targeted, bullied or silenced anymore."

The president declared his administration would be "leading by example" on religious liberty in the United States.

"We are giving our churches their voices back," Trump said.

Religious leaders prayed in the garden just before Trump signed the executive order.

Two nuns from the Little Sisters of the Poor, the plaintiff in a federal lawsuit seeking relief from the Afford-

able Care Act's contraception mandate, were among those on stage for the signing, according to a press pool report.

Trump promised during the campaign to dismantle the Johnson Amendment, which bans tax-exempt organizations like churches from political speech and activities. His executive order relaxes IRS enforcement of that ban. While the executive order signals a promise kept, fully repealing the Johnson amendment would require Congressional action.

The executive order, called "Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty," also gives "regulatory relief" to companies that object to an Obamacare mandate for contraception in health care. That builds on the 2014 Hobby Lobby Supreme Court case, which found that the Affordable Care Act mandate that certain corporations must provide female employees with no-cost access to contraception was

a violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

While an earlier draft of the religious liberty order reportedly would have let federal contractors discriminate against LGBT employees based on faith beliefs, Thursday's version did not include such provisions.

Pastor Mark Burns, a longtime Trump supporter who attended the White House signing and a White House dinner for religious leaders Wednesday evening, celebrated the move, telling NBC News Thursday morning that it was a "great day for religious freedom in America."

Conservative religious groups applauded the move.

"The open season on Christians and other people of faith is coming to a close in America and we look forward to assisting the Trump administration in fully restoring America's First Freedom," Family Research Council President Tony Perkins said in a statement.

Civil liberty groups criticized the order with several vowing to sue.

"Plain and simple: President Trump's executive order will hurt women," Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights said in a statement. "And the Center for Reproductive Rights is ready to fight back in court."

www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/trump-signs-religious-liberty-executive-order-allowing-broad-exemptions-n754786 LM

A RUFFLED COLLAR

BY JUDY HALLINGSTAD

Have you ever gotten your collar ruffled? Well, I must admit that I got my collar really ruffled not too long ago. The first place I ran to was to my corner—to my Comforter, the word of God. At this time, God directed me to Romans 8:18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

The word I specifically looked at was “sufferings.” Looking up the meaning I found that it perfectly described me at that moment. That word *suffering* also includes emotions, a stirring perturbation or excitement of mind. I really enjoyed that word *perturbed* which means

- To disquiet thoroughly
- To disturb greatly
- To agitate

That exactly described me at that moment—very perturbed!

- I was *thoroughly* disquieted
- I was *greatly* disturbed
- I was *really* agitated

In fact, I was really in a state of *perturbation*! And then, as I prayed, God heard, as stated in Psalm 91:15, “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.”

As God put a smile on my face, I felt all of the *perturbation* melt away! It is so much easier to bear life’s troubles when we take everything to God in prayer, for these troubles are really His workmen—and it worked! Our God is so merciful—He truly unruffled my collar right then!

I read my verse again, only putting my new word into it, “For I reckon that the ‘*perturbations*’ of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory (character of God) which shall be revealed in us.”

God had again saved me from the devil’s ploys, or schemes, to destroy me spiritually, emotionally and physically:

- spiritually, because I did not represent Christ’s Character but the devil’s at that moment and
- emotionally and physically, because uncontrolled emotions destroy the immune system and cause all kinds of reactions physically, mentally and spiritually.

Remember, trouble makes this earth undesirable and this causes us to lift our hearts to God! This *ruffling of my collar* caused me to run to God and to sit in heavenly places with Him. And, in His presence, His Holy Spirit put a smile on my face and all of the stress of that moment faded away.

Jesus said: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Prayer is the most appropriate thing to do in the times of trouble. Take everything to God in prayer. Go, talk to God! **LM**

Father: Thank You for drawing me into Your presence where truly I find fullness of joy. My ruffled collar melted under Your touch and I am so thankful that You protected me from the terrible results that would have happened had I hung onto that perturbation, which really was the attitude of the devil. Truly, in Your presence is fullness of joy! My time with You is always a blessing. Amen.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

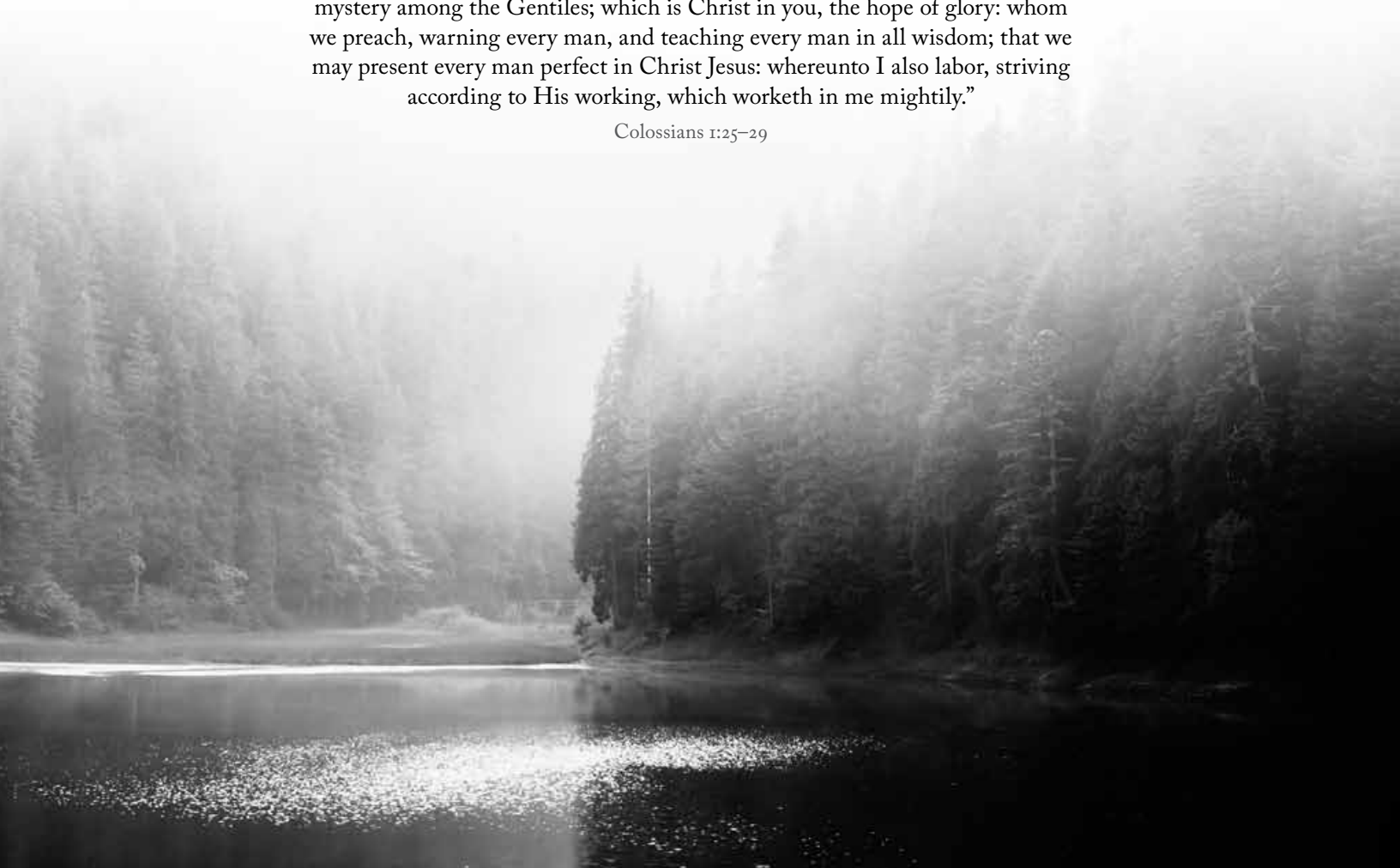
BY ELLEN G. WHITE

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”

Ephesians 3:8–10

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.”

Colossians 1:25–29



What is this mystery of which Paul writes to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, saying that it was given to him to fulfill the word of God, the mystery “which hath been hid from ages and from generations?” One translation reads, “which hath been kept in silence through eternal ages.” ...

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity. ...

The great work of redemption was to be brought before all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. Because of their disobedience, the Jews were broken off from the olive tree, and those among the Gentiles who would accept Christ as their Saviour were to be grafted into the good olive tree, and made one with the original branches. But in no case are they to boast because of this, lest they be broken off as were the natural branches. ... (See Romans 11:17, 18). ...

The incarnation of Christ is a mystery. The union of divinity with humanity is a mystery indeed, hidden with God, “even the mystery which hath been hid from ages” (Colossians 1:26). It was kept in eternal silence by Jehovah, and was first revealed in Eden, by the prophecy that the Seed of the woman should

bruise the serpent’s head, and that he should bruise his heel. To present to the world this mystery that God kept in silence for eternal ages before the world was created, before man was created, was the part that Christ was to act in the work He entered upon when He came to this earth. And this wonderful mystery, the incarnation of Christ and the atonement that He made, must be declared to every son and daughter of Adam, whether Jew or Gentile. His sufferings perfectly fulfilled the claims of the law of God. None of the apostles could have filled the deficiency, had there been any.

Christ, and raised us up to sit together in heavenly places in Him, “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7). ...

We are not now sufficiently advanced in spiritual attainments to comprehend the mysteries of God. But when we shall compose the family of heaven, these mysteries will be unfolded before us. ...

Then much will be revealed in explanation of matters upon which God now keeps silence because we have not gathered up and appreciated that which has been made known of the

God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out.

God has given us warnings that must be heeded if we would escape the perils of the last days. Temptations, fierce and strong, will try us. The enemy will strive to take from us the hope of eternal life. If we are not growing up into Christ, our living head, we are growing in distrust and unbelief, and are giving our allegiance to the world.

Since the promise given in Eden, God has revealed His mysteries through His prophets. According to the command of the eternal God, they have been made known to all nations. God, being rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, quickens us together with

eternal mysteries. The ways of Providence will be made clear; the mysteries of grace through Christ will be unfolded. That which the mind can not now grasp, which is hard to be understood, will be explained. We shall see order in that which has seemed unexplainable; wisdom in everything withheld; goodness and gracious mercy in everything imparted. Truth will be unfolded to the mind free from obscurity, in a single line, and its brightness will be enduring. The heart will be made to sing for joy. Controversies will be forever ended, and all difficulties will be solved.

The Signs of the Times, March 25, 1897. **LM**

From the Desk of Pastor John J. Grosboll

July 2017

“Your ministry continues to bless us!
May God bless and use you more and
more until His glorious appearing!”
—T<, Nevada

“Dear Ministry, Thank you for sending
the DVD sermons and monthly CDs
from Pastor Grosboll. I am happy to
say that by God’s grace I can bring a
DVD sermon for Sabbath every week
to the ... church group now. Since I
have a large library of Pastor John’s
DVD sermons, I preview which one to
bring each week. They are not neces-
sarily the latest ones, but often are
from previous years sermons. They
have been well received and one person
borrows them to show during the week
to people they know! So, the messages
to the people are multiplying.”
—GP, Oregon

Crossword Puzzle (p. 35) Answers

A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	A
B	R	E	F	U	G	E	G						C	O	N	T	E	N	D		B
C			J				A	R	P				A				Y				C
D	A	N	G	E	R		P	A	R	A	D	I	S	E		H	E	A	R	T	D
E			H	E			C						T		W				L	R	E
F	P	A	T	H	S		L	E	A	D			O		A				L	U	F
G	E				T		I		O		A	F	F	L	I	C	T		S	G	
H	A	R					F	A	I	N	T		F		K			H		T	H
I	C	H	I	L	D	R	E	N				P				R	A	I	N		I
J	E						G	A	R	D	E	N									J
K			H		B		E		E	R					F	O	R	G	E	T	K
L			E	T	E	R	N	A	L		A		I		O					S	H
M							S		P					S	P	I	R	I	T		R
N			S		A				A				H		S					O	N
O	P	L	U	C	K				N						M	A	N	S	I	O	N
P	O		S			F	O	R	G	I	V	E			K					E	P
Q	U		T	A	K	E			E					G	R	E	A	T	E	R	Q
R	R		A		E	A	R	L	Y			O								R	R
S		L	I	G	H	T					S	T	O	N	Y		E	A	R		S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22

Dear Friend,

When Moses came to the end of his life in this world, “only two of all the adults in the vast army that left Egypt had been found so faithful that they could enter the Promised Land. As Moses reviewed the result of his labors, his life of trial and sacrifice seemed to have been almost in vain.

“Yet he did not regret the burdens he had borne. ... he had obtained a rich experience during the sojourn in the wilderness, in witnessing the manifestations of God’s power and glory, and in the communion of His love; he felt that he had made a wise decision in choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 472.

Someday, nobody knows how soon, you and I will come to our last day on earth, our last night in this world. When you review your earthly life at that time, will you feel that you made wise decisions in regard to the conduct of your life?

“Our time here is short. We can pass through this world but once; as we pass along, let us make the most of life. The work to which we are called does not require wealth or social position or great ability. It requires a kindly, self-sacrificing spirit and a steadfast purpose. A lamp, however small, if kept steadily burning, may be the means of lighting many other lamps. Our sphere of influence may seem narrow, our ability small, our opportunities few, our acquirements limited; yet wonderful possibilities are ours through a faithful use of the opportunities of our own homes. If we will open our hearts and homes to the divine principles of life we shall become channels for currents of life-giving power. From our homes will flow streams of healing, bringing life and beauty and fruitfulness where now are barrenness and dearth.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 355.

By the grace of God, are you making your home, your family, your church, a channel for the current of life-giving power that God wants to dispense through you?

We will meet again in the final judgment the people with whom we are now in contact. If we are faithful in giving our testimony—our witness to them whether, spoken, written in literature, or displayed by our godly example—we will be able to be with some of them in the kingdom of heaven. May you be one of those who have many in the kingdom of heaven who say, It was you who invited me here.

Your brother in witnessing,


John J. Grosboll

The Deer

By Lynette Golia

The land was dry. Rain had not fallen for some time, and a giant drought had squeezed all moisture from the ground. At the gates of the city, long the center of public activity, dust and debris had piled up, for the severe dry spell had disrupted all business and civic functions.

In writing about this dismal event, the prophet Jeremiah added one more picture to stress the great disaster that would come upon Israel. He prophesied that the hind, after giving birth to its young, would forsake it “because there was no grass” (Jeremiah 14:5).

This was the height of calamity, since the mother deer is known for the solicitous care she gives her young. Just before giving birth she seeks out dense forest undergrowth whose natural protection provides safety for the newborn fawn. The mother deer is never far from it during the first few days of its life, and only a terrible drought could bring such an unnatural desertion as Jeremiah describes.

While many Old Testament texts that speak of deer are familiar to Bible students, perhaps the one best known to all of us is the first verse of Psalm 42. Here David declares that the “hart panteth after the water brooks.”

A deer suffers from thirst much more than most other animals in its family. As it runs it becomes thirsty, its eyes bulge, its tongue swells, and its panting lungs use up the body fluids

that the thirsting cells are calling for.

The hart also pants for water to destroy its scent when being hunted. Although it may freeze in its tracks to escape detection, the deer’s most useful method of protection is its speed in running. On a straight run it can outdistance pursuing hounds, but in a close chase it seeks the “water brooks.” It makes a long leap into the stream, runs for a distance in the water, and then with another great leap into the brush the animal is gone and the chasing dogs have lost its scent.

For centuries deer have been admired for their beauty and hunted for food. Venison has been the chief meat for many people. However, during the time of the Old Testament writers deer meat was generally found only on the tables of the rich, as in the case of King Solomon. We read that one day’s provisions for the royal household included among other animals, harts, roebucks, and fallow deer (1 Kings 4:23).

Judging from the number of times

the hart or stag is mentioned in the Bible, it must have been well-known. The discovery in caves of Palestine of the bones of those animals and the numerous pictures of them in Assyrian and Egyptian records would indicate that they were widespread.

Two ancient towns of Israel, both called Aijalon, were named after deer. One was located in the province of Dan, the other in Zebulun, suggesting large numbers of deer in these areas.

Deer were primarily mentioned in Scripture in a figurative sense, often in beautiful metaphors. The speed of their flight was praised. The grace of the doe is often referred to, and the agility of the young hart is mentioned by Isaiah in the well-known phrase that the lame shall “leap as an hart” (Isaiah 35:6).

Excerpts from *The Deer*, by Ernest N. Wendth, *The Youth’s Instructor*, April 18, 1967.

“With intensity of desire, long after God, yea, pant after Him, as the hart pants after the water-brooks. As your soul yearns after God, you will find more and still more of the unsearchable riches of His grace.”





LEFT: The first house for staff is finished in the background. Second one under construction in the foreground.

BELOW: A devastating cyclone hit the ministry in 2016. The main hall and student dormitory are now repaired.



When a cyclone struck Fiji in 2016, the Three Angels' Missionary College was devastated with many buildings needing major repair. Right away the folk rallied together and plans were put into operation to repair and rebuild. According to a report in their recent newsletter, "Praise the Lord that the rebuilding has been progressing well. The main buildings have been restored. The Health Retreat is up and running again. The next class of medical missionaries has begun. The only houses left to be built are the staff quarters. Three staff houses were destroyed during the cyclone. One has been rebuilt while the second one has been half-way completed."

Please mark your 13th Sabbath Offering *Missions* or to specifically help with this project mark your offering *Fiji*.

July Sermon of the Month

Traditions and Excuses Accepted

By John J. Grosboll

Many find it easy to strictly keep God's law until it goes against some personal belief. Placing tradition above the law of God led Caiaphas to rend his garment and cause the worst crime that has ever been committed—the crucifixion of the Saviour.

All who have donated in the past month will automatically receive this Sermon of the Month free of charge.



Participants listen attentively to Pastor Harold Cortes from the Colton, C.A. church at a camp meeting in Cuajinicualapa, Guerrero, as he explains the pillars of our faith.

Supporting Missions

By Janet Headrick

“Has not the time come when we should begin to cut down our possessions? May God help you who can do something now to make an investment in the bank of heaven. We do not ask a loan, but a freewill offering—a return to the Master of His own goods which He has lent you. If you love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, we believe you will give tangible proofs of the same in freewill offerings for our mission work. There are souls to be saved, and may you be coworkers with Jesus Christ in saving these souls for whom Christ has given His life. The Lord will bless you in the good fruit you may bear to His glory. May the same Holy Spirit which inspired the Bible take possession of your hearts, leading you to love His word, which is spirit and life. May it open your eyes to discover the things of the Spirit of God. The reason there is so much dwarfed religion today is because people have not brought practical self-denial and self-sacrifice into their lives.”

The Review and Herald, January 8, 1889

“Mission work must not cease because of limited means. Let every church member practice self-denial. The word of God gives the commission, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature’ (Mark 16:15). There is no restriction, no limit, to the work. And the promise is ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world’ (Matthew 28:20). Abridge the work, limit your labors, and you remove your Helper.”

Notebook Leaflets, vol. 1, 99



Upper Left-Fiji: A home that will house the staff of the Three Angels' Missionary College is under construction.

Upper Right-Mexico: Attendees accept Jesus as their Savior in Tecuanapa, Guerrero, Mexico.

Lower Left-United Kingdom: Workers pause from their task of distributing *The Great Controversy* throughout the United Kingdom and beyond.

Encouragement to support the mission field abounds in the word of God and inspired writings. Clearly, the Lord wants those who can to help spread the gospel throughout the mission field to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

This quarter, we are appealing for assistance with three areas of the mission field where significant work is being done to hasten the return of our Saviour.

FIJI

The Three Angels' Missionary College and Health Retreat in Fiji received devastating damage from a cyclone that struck in 2016. By the grace of God, they have received much assistance from supporters around the world but more is needed to complete the work.

ENGLAND

An effort is being put forth to distribute *The Great Controversy* to every household in that island country and beyond. Advent Books was established in 1996 in order to take the truth to the people in the United Kingdom and also around the world. Well over half of the country has been contacted and work is rapidly progressing to offer this wonderful book to the remainder. You can read more about their work at www.adventbooks.org.

MEXICO, GUERRERO

Three small groups prayed for God to send them a missionary to guide them in the Adventist truth. One of the elders from the Seventh Day Sabbath Church in Colton, California, met with their leaders and established a supporting relationship. Today, they have expanded to Puebla, and Oaxaca for a total of twenty groups. Using the medical missionary and gospel approach, they teach health seminars at Sunday keeping churches. Members are being taught the pillars of our faith.

MEXICO, GUADALAJARA

A clinic has been opened to support a present truth radio station. Demetrius and Ruth Ledesma from Washington state have moved to Mexico to raise up new churches. Funds are being raised to build dorms for the workers in the clinic and radio station.

These projects are examples of the various kinds of work being done in the mission field. You can support this work by marking your thirteenth Sabbath offering *Missions*. If one of these projects especially appeals to you, mark your mission offering accordingly.

Question

What would you consider “strange fire” in today’s world?

Answer

“Cheap, earthly, unchristian words may be represented as ‘strange fire,’ and with this God can have nothing to do. The loud, boisterous laugh is a denial of God in the soul, for it reveals that the truth is not ruling in the heart. ... By our vain words and unchristian example we dishonor God, and imperil not only our own souls but also the souls of those with whom we associate.” *That I May Know Him*, 138.

“But strange fire has been offered in the use of harsh words, in self-importance, in self-exaltation, in self-righteousness, in arbitrary authority, in domineering, in oppression, in restricting the liberty of God’s people, binding them about by your plans and rules, which God has not framed, neither have they come into His mind. All these things are strange fire, unacknowledged by God, and are a continual misrepresentation of His character.” *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 357, 358.

“A failure to study and obey God’s word has brought confusion into the world. Men have left the guardianship of Christ for the guardianship of the great rebel, the prince of darkness. Strange fire has been mingled with the sacred.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, 440.

“... the spirit of selfishness is strange fire which should not be mingled with God’s sacred service.” *The Home Missionary*, June 1, 1897.

“We must keep the way of the Lord, and speak and act as standing in His sight, living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,

that no strange fire shall mingle with that which is holy. Light and darkness cannot be mingled and harmonize. Many act partly as children of time, and partly as children of eternity, and this course God abhors. ‘If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him’ (1 Kings 18:21). If you believe the word of God, submit your ways to its guidance in all things, even though your own inclinations are crossed. Believe the truth heartily. Do not stand as many of you have done, apparently wavering between dependence upon the righteousness of Christ, and dependence upon your own righteousness. Deception has come upon some minds until they have thought that their own merits were of considerable value. Their minds are confused and perplexed where all is clear and plain. The end is near! We have no time to halt between two opinions.” *The Review and Herald*, May 27, 1890.

“As the searcher for truth advances in his investigation, he sees that inferences and traditions and the suppositions and sayings of men, have baptized Sunday as a Sabbath. The more earnestly and candidly this question is canvassed, the more clearly will men who are judgment-bound see that there is not a particle of Scriptural evidence to sustain Sunday. God never placed his sanctity upon that day. Those who observe it offer God strange fire in place of sacred. ...” *Ibid.*, July 13, 1897.

“Your words are not always wise. When you allow your own spirit to have sway, you lose the spirit of God, and then it is that the strange fire is offered.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, 313. **LM**



BREATHE THROUGH THE NOSE

BY R. F. COTTRELL

The nostrils are the proper channels for the breath of life. The mouth is designed for other important purposes; and when it is not opened for some good purpose, it were better that it remain closed. Some fifteen or twenty years ago I read an article on this subject, and since then have been trying to reduce to practice the advice to keep the mouth shut, with some progress, I think, and certainly with some benefit. Many a cold, sore throat, toothache, etc., can be prevented by keeping the mouth closed, when going out in cold weather. I have held evening meetings in stormy, winter weather, where the good people were afraid to have the house prop-

erly ventilated, and as the result, the close of the meeting would find me in perspiration. When obliged to go out, I would keep my mouth so strictly closed till I reached my quarters that I feared I should give the impression that I was unsociable; and in this way, I would escape colds almost entirely while almost all others would be very much afflicted with them. But this is not the sole cause of the difference; something must be credited to my different manner of living in other respects. Hygienic living in general is the best preventive of this difficulty, as well as of others.

Think of the cases of those of your acquaintance who, attending singing

school, have ruined their voices, contracting a bronchial affection for life. After singing two hours in a heated and unventilated house, they would get into sleighs and go singing on their way home. The throat, irritated and inflamed, suddenly exposed to the frosty air of a northern winter! It was a wonder that any could live through such an ordeal. Think of it, friends. When going out, especially after having been using your voice, keep your mouth shut. On going to bed, shut your mouth carefully, and thus go to sleep, being covered well and not fearing to have your room well ventilated.

The Health Reformer, February 1876. **LM**



STEPHEN THE DEACON

BY JOHN GROSBOLL

You and I do not see things the way God sees them. Very often what appears to us to be nothing but defeat is something that is going to bring victory in God's cause in the end. That has been the experience many times throughout religious history. What appeared to bring defeat and disaster to Christianity often ended up being a great triumph of the Christian faith and recorded in sacred Scripture.

As believers were added to the church, the sick were brought into the street on stretchers in the hope they would be healed. The priests and

rulers were filled with indignation and threw the apostles into prison, forbidding them to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. They were scheduled to come before the Sanhedrin for trial the next morning, but during the night, an angel from heaven came and released them and told them, "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life" (Acts 5:20). They were brought before the council again, and told, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name" (verse 28)? But Peter and the other apostles said, "We ought to

obey God rather than men" (verse 29). They became so angry when Peter told them that they were the ones responsible for crucifying Jesus, that they decided to kill them on the spot.

But Gamaliel, who was one of the learned rabbis among them, cautioned them and said, "Be careful: for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God" (verses 38, 39). Unable to disagree with Gamaliel's advice, it says in verses 40–42, "They agreed with him and

when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

Ever since the beginning, the devil has constantly sought to stir up trouble among Christians so that Christ’s prayer for His church to be in unity and harmony would not be fulfilled. This was another attempt by the devil to destroy the church by arousing within it controversy and infighting. Resulting from these events was that from the ranks of

all in Jerusalem. So if you wanted to confirm the evidence that Jesus had been raised from the dead, you could easily find someone who had seen Him. The number of Christians was continually increasing, not only among those who were Hebrews, but also among people who were living there from other nations that spoke not Hebrew but the *lingua franca* of those days, the Greek language.

These early believers had been cut off from their family and friends. Jesus had said in Matthew 10:34–36, “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-

who had money and those who had possessions cheerfully sacrificed them to meet the existing emergency. They sold their things and brought them to the apostles so that the rest of the Christians could be sustained.

Among the believers there were those who were Jews by birth, and also those who did not speak the Hebrew tongue. They were residents of other countries who used the Greek language. Between these two classes in the past there had existed distrust and even antagonism, but now, even though their hearts were softened and united by Christian love, yet the old jealousies were easily rekindled. Acts 6:1 says, “In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists” that is, the Greeks, “... because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution” (literal translation).

Inequality would have been contrary to the spirit of the gospel. There was an alleged neglect of these Greek widows in the distribution of funds and food set aside for the poor. So, prompt measures were taken to remove all cause of dissatisfaction and the apostles summoned all the believers together for a meeting. They said that the time had come when they needed to be relieved from the task of apportioning food and sustenance to the poor and other similar burdens so that they could spend their full time preaching Christ. Verse 2 says, “The twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’”

Very often what appears to us to be nothing but defeat is something that is going to bring victory in God’s cause in the end.

those opposing the Christian faith, their most active and successful champion in persecuting Christians, came a man who would become the greatest champion of the Christian faith and write more than half of the books in the New Testament.

The early believers had accepted Jesus as the Messiah and believed that He had been raised from the dead. They were in Jerusalem at the time; so they could check the evidence, check the tomb where He had laid, and talk with those who were eyewitnesses. Paul says there were over 500 that had seen Christ after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6). These people were

in-law; and a man’s enemies will be those of his own household,” because some would accept the gospel and some would not.

Because of zealous bigotry many of the converts to Christianity had been thrown out of business and exiled from their homes. Their relatives refused to allow them to stay at home because they were Christians. For espousing the cause of Christ they were destitute. They had no business, they had no source of livelihood, they had no place to stay. So it became necessary to provide this large number that were congregated in Jerusalem with homes and sustenance. Those

This saying pleased everybody and seven people were appointed as deacons. The word *deacon* comes from a Greek word *diaconas* which simply means a middle-class servant. So they appointed seven people to be the servants of the church, to take care of, to visit those that were poor, those that were sick, those that had financial difficulties, and any other need. After they had set these seven men before the apostles, they prayed and laid hands on them. It says in verse 7, “The word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Not only was there a growing number of people who believed the doctrines taught by the apostles and had checked the evidence and found out Jesus had risen from the dead, they also said that He is in heaven, and we have the evidence. We’ve talked to people who have seen Him and talked with Him after the resurrection. The number of Christians was multiplying very rapidly, not only among the Greeks and the Hebrew people, but among the priests, even the leaders of the Jewish religion. It says in verse 7, *last part*, “A great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

This turn of events caused more trouble. The leading priests and rulers witnessed the wonderful ministration of the power that attended the deacons and especially the leader, the one in first place, whose name was Stephen. Stephen made it plain that he was a student of the prophecies. He had also done great wonders and miracles among the people (verse 8). He was a Jew by birth but he could speak the Greek language and was familiar with the customs and manners of the Greeks. So he found opportunity to proclaim the gospel in the synagogue of the Greek Jews.



Ever since the beginning, the devil has constantly sought to stir up trouble among Christians so that Christ's prayer for His church to be in unity and harmony would not be fulfilled.

There were learned rabbis and doctors of the law who engaged in public discussion with Stephen and tried to show that he was wrong, but it says in verses 10, 11, “They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’” Some of the leaders had decided to figure out a way to kill him.

First of all, they hired false witnesses to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against the temple and against God.” They were filled with bitter hatred against this man because they couldn’t show in a public debate that he was wrong. Remember, the last resort of every false religion is force. If you cannot show that your opponent is wrong intellectually, the only way to win is to kill him.

Instead of yielding to the weight of evidence presented, they decided that they would silence his voice by putting him to death. They did not doubt that they could pursue such a course, since they had previously bribed the Roman

authorities to ignore their nefarious deeds. They determined that they were going to risk the consequences at all events. So Stephen was seized and brought before the Sanhedrin council. Jews were brought in from surrounding countries to refute his arguments. There was a young man, also present, by the name of Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a theologian, trained at the feet of Gamaliel and one of the leading rabbis in Jerusalem. Saul took a leading part against Stephen. He brought the weight of eloquence, the logic, and the reasoning of the rabbis, to bear on the case, to convince the people that Stephen was preaching delusive and dangerous doctrines.

When Saul of Tarsus met Stephen at his trial before the Sanhedrin, he met somebody that he found out was as highly educated as himself, someone who had a full understanding of the purpose of God in the spreading of the gospel to other nations. Neither Saul of Tarsus, nor the council, nor anybody, was able to prevail anything against the clear, calm wisdom of Stephen. But even though they couldn’t

win the argument by debate, they were vehement in their opposition and determined that they were going to make an example of him. They decided to satisfy their revengeful hatred by putting Stephen to death, hoping that would prevent other people, through fear, from accepting the doctrines he was teaching.

This fate has befallen thousands, if not millions of individuals since. False witnesses were hired and testified that they had heard Steven speak blasphemous words against the temple, saying we have heard him say that the customs are going to be changed.

Acts 7). He proceeded to rehearse the history of the chosen people of God in words that held that assembly spellbound. He showed a thorough knowledge of the Jewish economy, and explained the spiritual interpretation of it that was now made manifest through Christ. He made plain that his own loyalty to God and to the Jewish faith was still intact.

But he showed that the law in which they trusted for salvation had not been able to preserve them from idolatry. He connected Jesus Christ with all of Jewish history. He referred to the building of the temple by Solo-

horror-stricken. This was an evidence to Stephen, a signal to him, that his voice would soon be silenced forever. Even though he was just in the middle of his remarks, of his defense, he abruptly concluded it by suddenly breaking away from the chain of history and turning upon his infuriated judges. Acts 7:51, 52 says, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murders, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."

When he spoke those words, the priests and the rulers were beside themselves with rage. They became so infuriated with anger that they became more like wild beasts of prey than human beings. They rushed upon Stephen, gnashing their teeth, but he was not intimidated. He had expected this. His face was calm. He was ready for whatever they might do. The infuriated priests and the excited mob took him out of the temple, and as he was brought out from the place where they were going to kill him, Stephen looked up into the heavens and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul" (verses 56-58).

The rulers could not stand to hear what he had to say so they "stopped their ears." They stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord, Jesus, receive my spirit."

Because of zealous bigotry many of the converts to Christianity had been thrown out of business and exiled from their homes. Their relatives refused to allow them to stay at home because they were Christians.

Verse 15 says, "All who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel." He was there to answer for the crime of blasphemy, but a holy radiance shown on his face, and those that exalted Moses could have seen in the face of the prisoner the same holy light that radiated from the face of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai. Many who saw this lighted countenance of Stephen trembled and veiled their faces, but their stubborn unbelief and prejudice never faltered.

Stephen was questioned as to the truth of the charges brought against him and he began to take up his defense in a clear thrilling voice that rang through the council hall (see

mon in Acts 7:47-50: "But Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?' "

When Stephen reached that point, there was a tumult among the people, and the prisoner read his fate in the countenances of those before him. He perceived the resistance that met his words that were spoken under the dictation of the Holy Spirit. He knew that He was giving his last testimony. When he connected Jesus Christ with the prophecies and spoke of the temple as he did, they pretended to be

“Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (verses 57, 59, 60).

The people who had accused him were required, according to their custom, to cast the first stones. These persons who cast the first stones laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul of Tarsus who had also taken an active part in the disputation and consented to the death of Stephen.

The martyrdom of Stephen made a deep impression upon all who witnessed it. It was a terrible trial to the church, but it resulted in the conversion of Saul. The faith that Stephen manifested, the constancy that he showed, the glorification of the martyr at the very time when the religious leaders were angry at him and were killing him, could not be effaced from the memory of Saul of Tarsus. Whole nights he spent struggling with this. How is it that at the very time when this man is being stoned to death, dishonored by men, a blasphemer teaching dangerous doctrines, he gives evidence that he has the signet of God upon his face. His words reach to the very soul of those who heard them, and remained in the memory of all the beholders, testifying that what he was saying was the truth.

Similar incidences have happened thousands or maybe even millions of times where force was used to get rid of someone whose arguments could not be refuted. The weight of evidence was too great; the only way to win the argument was to kill them. There had been no legal sentence passed on Stephen, but the Roman authorities could be bribed and they were bribed, by large sums of money to make no investigation of the case.



We live in a world where bribery has been used in order to get one's way in courts of justice. This is a terrible thing when it happens even in Christian nations.

God's way of dealing with people is to give evidence and then ask you to make your decision on the evidence. What is the weight of evidence? Are you making decisions on the weight of evidence? Or are you making decisions on the weight of money?

We live in a world where bribery has been used in order to get one's way in courts of justice. This is a terrible thing when it happens even in Christian nations, because, if we do not make our decisions based on the weight of evidence, someday we will have to give an account of what we have done and why we have done it. Romans 14:12 says, “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”

Friends, that means you, that means me. We are each going to have to give an account of ourselves to God. Saul of Tarsus started having a hard time. He could not forget the scene of Stephen's trial and subsequent death and he seemed to be angry at his own secret convictions that Stephen was honored of God at the very time when he was dishonored of men. In order

to put this out of his mind he began more than ever before to persecute the church of God. He hunted them down, seized them in their houses and delivered them up to the authorities to be imprisoned and even killed. He became the terror of the Christians in Jerusalem. The Roman authorities made no special effort to stay the cruel work. They secretly aided the Jews, trying to pacify them. That has been the case in our world, over and over again for thousands of years. But soon unbeknown by Saul, everything was going to change in his life.

If you come to Jesus, everything will change in your life.

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

Pastor John J. Grosboll is Director of *Steps to Life* and pastors the *Prairie Meadows Church of Free Seventh-day Adventists* in Wichita, Kansas. He may be contacted by email at: historic@stepsto-life.org, or by telephone at: 316-788-5559.

Promises and Assurances Clues

BY ROB HAGAR

Across:

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------|
| B2 | In the time of trouble the Lord will be this to us | Psalms 9:9 |
| B14 | God has promised to do this with Satan for us | Isaiah 49:25 |
| D2 | When we sinners return from backsliding God will keep this from us | Jeremiah 3:12 |
| D8 | Jesus promised the believing thief he would go here | Luke 23:43 |
| D17 | If we delight in the Lord this will be fulfilled | Psalms 37:4 |
| F2 | If we acknowledge God He will direct our _____ | Proverbs 3:6 |
| F8 | When we turn to God He promises to _____ us in new paths | Isaiah 42:16 |
| G13 | God never does this to us willingly | Lamentations 3:32, 33 |
| H8 | The Lord promises us power when we are this | Isaiah 40:29 |
| I2 | The Lord has promised to save our _____ | Isaiah 49:25 |
| I17 | The Lord promises this in former and latter times | Joel 2:23 |
| J9 | If we will help the less fortunate God will make us like a watered _____ | Isaiah 58:10, 11 |
| K16 | God has assured us that He will never do this to us | Isaiah 49:15, 16 |
| L3 | We are promised this kind of life | 1 John 2:25 |
| M13 | God promises to put a new one of these within us | Ezekiel 36:26 |
| O2 | Jesus promises that no man can _____ us from His hand | John 10:28 |
| O15 | Jesus has promised that we will live in these in heaven | John 14:2, 3 |
| P7 | John assures us that with our confession God is faithful to do this | 1 John 1:9 |
| Q4 | Even if our father and mother forsake us The Lord will _____ us up | Psalms 27:10 |
| Q14 | God in us is what compared to Satan in us | 1 John 4:4 |
| R7 | Those that seek the Lord _____ shall find Him | Proverbs 8:17 |
| S3 | When we sinners return to God He turns our darkness to this | Isaiah 42:16 |
| S12 | God is able to take this kind of heart from us | Ezekiel 36:26 |
| S18 | The Lord's _____ is well able to hear our prayers | Isaiah 59:1 |

Down:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|
| A7 | If we dwell in the uttermost parts of this God will lead us | Psalms 139:9, 10 |
| B4 | In the time of trouble our enemies will do this but God will deliver us | Jeremiah 1:19 |
| B9 | Paul assures us that God's _____ enables us to withstand anything | 2 Corinthians 12:9 |
| B14 | We are promised that the Lord will not do this to us (two words) | Psalms 94:14 |
| B18 | God promises to instruct and teach us, and guide us with this | Psalms 32:8 |
| C11 | When we sinners return to the Lord He will abundantly _____ | Isaiah 55:7 |
| D6 | When we come to Jesus He promises us this | Matthew 11:29 |
| D19 | When we follow God these work for our ultimate good (two words) | Romans 8:28 |
| D21 | The Lord will be our strength in the time of trouble if we _____ Him | Nahum 1:7 |
| E16 | In the time of trouble the Lord will strengthen us to do this | Isaiah 40:31 |
| F2 | When our minds are stayed on God we will have this | Isaiah 26:3 |
| F8 | If we lose this for Jesus' sake we shall find it | Matthew 10:39 |
| H4 | In the time of trouble God will tell us where to go when we turn this way | Isaiah 30:21 |

A	2	3	4	5	6		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	A
B																					B
C																					C
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1	2	3		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		15	16	17		19	20	21	22

Answer key on page 26.

- H9 God promises to give these charge over us to keep us from danger
 I13 Those who strive against us in the time of trouble will do this
 J11 If we sow bountifully we will do this bountifully
 K6 In the earth made new God will do this to the bow and the sword
 K16 God has promised to never leave or _____ us
 K21 If we overcome sin on this earth we will sit here with Jesus
 N4 If we give our burdens to God He will do this to us
 N10 In the time of trouble the _____ of the Lord will protect and deliver us
 O2 God has promised to do this with water when we're thirsty
 P7 God promises to keep these from falling
 Q14 If we seek God we shall not want for any _____ thing
 Q18 If we overcome sin on this earth we will get to eat from this

- Psalms 91:11
 Isaiah 41:11
 2 Corinthians 9:6
 Hosea 2:18
 Hebrews 13:5
 Revelation 3:21
 Psalm 55:22
 Psalm 34:7
 Isaiah 44:3
 Psalm 56:13
 Psalm 34:10
 Revelation 2:7



What I liked most about living in our little brown house was that we were near my Grandpa Willie's family and near my great-grandma Ellen White. If I walked out our front gate and turned to the right, it took about five minutes to walk up the hill to Grandpa Willie's big white house. But if I went out the gate and turned left, I could walk across the wooden bridge over the creek, past the big barn, and in only three or four minutes, I could be at Grandma Ellen's house. She named it Elmshaven.

One morning, my mother helped me pick a handful of our prettiest pansies from our flower garden. Then she let me take them to Grandma Ellen and visit her all by myself. I felt very grown up. Auntie Sara, who lived with Grandma Ellen and helped take care of her, opened the door for me. Sara McEnterfer wasn't really our aunt, but that's what we all called her. She let me go through the front room and up the beautiful red-carpeted stairs. At the top of the stairs, I ran down the long hall and into Grandma's writing room.

When Grandma Ellen saw me, her face turned into one big smile. She pushed her flat writing board to the side of her chair and held out her arms. I ran straight into them.

Grandma Ellen spent time every day writing down the things God showed her and told her. She was a messenger for God. He gave her wonderful dreams called visions. Sometimes, angels came and spoke to her.

This morning, she hugged me tightly and thanked me as she took the flowers from my grimy little hand. She smiled like I had given her the biggest bouquet of flowers from a real flower shop!

"Look at all these smiling pansy faces!" Grandma Ellen said with a laugh. "That's why pansies are one of my favorite flowers. They make me happy. Look, Mabel! Every pansy is smiling at you."

I had never thought of pansies having faces. Suddenly, I could see their faces too!

"Mabel," Grandma Ellen said, "point to a pansy face that looks sad or mean."

I looked carefully at each flower. "Grandma, there are no sad faces. Every pansy is smiling."

Grandma Ellen smiled. "That's why I like pansies. They make me happy,

because they are happy." She pulled me closer. "Jesus wants us to be like pansies. He wants us to bring happiness to everyone around us."

I liked talking with my Grandma Ellen. "Mabel," she asked, "do you know what pansies do the very first thing in the morning?"

I shook my head. "No. What do they do?"

Grandma squeezed my hand. "All your life, Mabel, remember to talk with Jesus the moment you wake up and start a new day. Ask Jesus to be with you all that day. He loves you so much that He will never leave you. If you're tempted to do something wrong, remember that He is only a whisper away. You can say, 'Dear Jesus, please help me to be true and

Jesus wants us to be like pansies. He wants us to bring happiness to everyone around us.

"The first thing a pansy does in the morning is turn its face toward the sun," she said. "It needs light and warmth to make it grow. All day long, that pansy keeps its face toward the sun as the sun slowly crosses the sky. Then when the sun sets and it gets dark, the pansy rests all night, trusting that the sun will wake it up again the next morning."

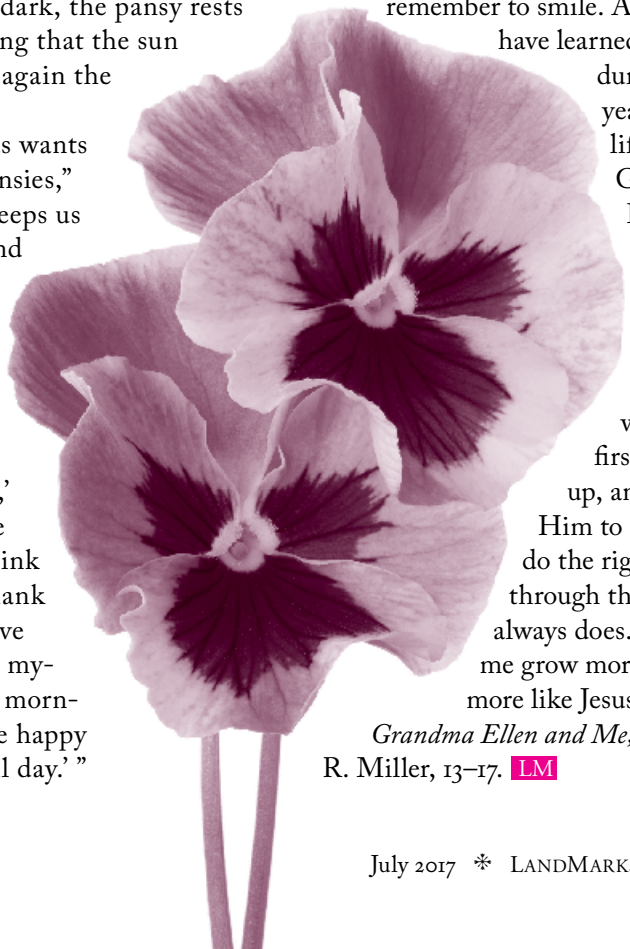
"Mabel, Jesus wants us to be like pansies," she said. "He keeps us safe all night and wakes us up in the morning. Jesus is our bright, warm, loving Sun. 'Thank You, dear Jesus,' we say when we wake up and think about Him. 'Thank You for Your love and care. I give myself to You this morning. Help me be happy and obedient all day.'"

loyal to You.' Never forget, Mabel, that He can even hear the prayers you whisper in your own mind."

And I have remembered what my Grandma Ellen told me that day. It was more than eighty years ago now, but whenever I see a pansy, I remember to smile. And I

have learned that during the years of my life what Grandma Ellen said is true. If I talk to my Heavenly Father when I first wake up, and ask Him to help me do the right things through the day, He always does. He helps me grow more and more like Jesus.

Grandma Ellen and Me, Mabel R. Miller, 13-17. LM



July 30 – August 5

Lazarus

Key Text

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (John 8:51).

Study Help: *The Desire of Ages*, 524–536; *My Life Today*, 208.

Introduction

“In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. . . . The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.” *The Desire of Ages*, 530.

Sunday

1 A SICK FRIEND

- a. What disciples did Jesus have in Bethany? John 11:5.

Note: “At the home of Lazarus, Jesus had often found rest. The Saviour had no home of His own; He was dependent on the hospitality of His friends and disciples, and often, when weary, thirsting for human fellowship, He had been glad to escape to this peaceful household.” *The Desire of Ages*, 524.

- b. In whose homes is Christ present with His blessings? Proverbs 3:33, *last part*.

Note: “Our Saviour appreciated a quiet home and interested listeners. He longed for human tenderness, courtesy, and affection. Those who received the heavenly instruction He was always ready to impart were greatly blessed.” *The Desire of Ages*, 524.

- c. What happened to Lazarus? John 11:1.

- d. What message did Lazarus’ sisters send to Jesus and what response did they receive? John 11:3, 4.

Monday

2 JESUS REMAINS AWAY

- a. How much longer did Jesus remain away from Bethany, and what thoughts began troubling the minds of the disciples? John 11:6.

Note: “When Christ heard the message, the disciples thought He received it coldly. He did not manifest the sorrow they expected Him to show. Looking up to them, He said, ‘This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby’ (John 11:4). For two days He remained in the place where He was. This delay was a mystery to the disciples. What a comfort His presence would be to the afflicted household! they thought. His strong affection for the family at Bethany was well known to the disciples, and they were surprised that He did not respond to the sad message, ‘He whom Thou lovest is sick’ (verse 3).

“During the two days Christ seemed to have dismissed the message from His mind; for He did not speak of Lazarus. The disciples thought of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. They had wondered why Jesus, with the power to perform wonderful miracles, had permitted John to languish in prison, and to die a violent death. Possessing such power, why did not Christ save John’s life? This question had often been asked by the Pharisees, who presented it as an unanswerable argument against Christ’s claim to be the Son of God. The Saviour had warned His disciples of trials, losses, and persecution. Would He forsake them in trial? Some questioned if they had mistaken His mission. All were deeply troubled.” *The Desire of Ages*, 526.

- b. Describe the reaction of the disciples when Jesus proposed His next course of action. John 11:7, 8.

Note: “After waiting for two days, Jesus said to the disciples, ‘Let us go into Judea again’ (John 11:7). The disciples questioned why, if Jesus were going to Judea, He had waited two days. But anxiety for Christ and for themselves was now uppermost in

their minds. They could see nothing but danger in the course He was about to pursue. ‘Master,’ they said, ‘the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again’ (verse 8)?” *The Desire of Ages*, 526, 527.

Tuesday

3 LAZARUS DIES

- a. What did Jesus reveal to the disciples, and what did they understand? John 11:11, 12.

- b. What did the words of Christ mean? John 11:13, 14.

Note: “Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him.” *The Desire of Ages*, 527.

- c. Why did Jesus stay away from Bethany even after knowing that Lazarus had died? John 11:15.

- d. What events took place in Bethany before the arrival of Jesus? John 11:17–19.

- e. Of whom else was Jesus thinking when He decided to perform the miracle in Bethany?

Note: “In delaying to come to Lazarus, Christ had a purpose of mercy toward those who had not received Him. He tarried, that by raising Lazarus from the dead He might give to His stubborn, unbelieving people another evidence that He was indeed ‘the resurrection, and the life’ (John 11:25). He was



The painting of Resurrection of Lazarus in church Chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista by Girolamo Romani - Romanino (1484 - 1559).

Christ did not weep for Lazarus; for He was about to call him from the grave. He wept because many of those now mourning for Lazarus would soon plan the death of Him who was the resurrection and the life.

loath to give up all hope of the people, the poor, wandering sheep of the house of Israel. His heart was breaking because of their impenitence. In His mercy He purposed to give them one more evidence that He was the Restorer, the One who alone could bring life and immortality to light. This was to be an evidence that the priests could not misinterpret. This was the reason of His delay in going to Bethany. This crowning miracle, the raising of Lazarus, was to set the seal of God on His work and on His claim to divinity.” *The Desire of Ages*, 529.

Wednesday

4 THE PROMISE OF RESURRECTION

- a. Upon hearing that Jesus was coming to Bethany, what did Martha do and what conviction did she manifest? John 11:20–22.

- b. What did Jesus assure Martha, and what did she understand by this? John 11:23, 24.

- c. With what words did Jesus confirm Martha’s conviction? John 11:25.

Note: “Still seeking to give a true direction to her faith, Jesus declared, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life’ (John 11:25). In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. ‘He that hath the Son hath life’ (1 John 5:12). The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.” *The Desire of Ages*, 530.

- d. What promise is the basis of our hope beyond the tomb? John 5:25; 11:26, *first part*.

- e. How did Martha’s conviction relate to Christ’s miracle? John 11:26, *last part*, 27.

Note: “‘He that believeth in Me,’ said Jesus, ‘though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this’ (John 11:25, 26)? Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death. The miracle which Christ was about to perform, in raising Lazarus from the dead, would represent the resurrection of all the righteous dead. By His word and His works He declared Himself the Author of the resurrection. He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood with the keys of death, a conqueror of the grave, and asserted His right and power to give eternal life.” *The Desire of Ages*, 530.

Thursday

5 COOPERATION BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANITY

- a. Describe the actions and words of the grief-stricken Mary. John 11:28–32.

- b. What did Jesus do when He saw Mary and some of the Jews weeping? John 11:33–35.

Note: “It was not only because of His human sympathy with Mary and Martha that Jesus wept. In His tears there was a sorrow as high above human sorrow as the heavens are higher than the earth. Christ did not weep for Lazarus; for He was about to call him from the grave. He wept because many of those now mourning for Lazarus would soon plan the death of Him who was the resurrection and the life.” *The Desire of Ages*, 533.

- c. What did Jesus do next, even in the midst of accusations against Him? John 11:37–39.

- d. What prayer did Jesus offer beside the sepulcher? John 11:41, 42.

- e. What words did Jesus utter, and what happened when those words were spoken? John 11:43, 44.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Why didn’t Jesus immediately comply with the request of Lazarus’ sisters?
- 2 How should death be regarded by the followers of Christ?
- 3 For what purpose did Christ allow Lazarus to die?
- 4 Why did Jesus weep?
- 5 Describe the actions of Lazarus upon the call of Jesus.

August 6 – 12

The Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem

Key Text

“Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass” (Matthew 21:5).

Study Help: *The Desire of Ages*, 569–579.

Introduction

“Christ came to save Jerusalem with her children; but Pharisaical pride, hypocrisy, jealousy, and malice had prevented Him from accomplishing His purpose.” *The Desire of Ages*, 577.

Sunday

1 WARM RECEPTION

- a. When the multitude heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, what did they do? John 12:12, 13.

- b. What prophecy was fulfilled on that occasion? Zechariah 9:9; John 12:14, 15.

Note: “Christ was following the Jewish custom for a royal entry. The animal on which He rode was that ridden by the kings of Israel, and prophecy had foretold that thus the Messiah should come to His kingdom. No sooner was He seated upon the colt than a loud shout of triumph rent the air. The multitude hailed Him as Messiah, their King. Jesus now accepted the homage which He had never before permitted, and the disciples received this as proof that their glad hopes were to be realized by seeing Him established on the throne. The multitude were convinced that the hour of their emancipation was at hand. In imagination they saw the Roman armies

driven from Jerusalem, and Israel once more an independent nation. All were happy and excited; the people vied with one another in paying Him homage. They could not display outward pomp and splendor, but they gave Him the worship of happy hearts. They were unable to present Him with costly gifts, but they spread their outer garments as a carpet in His path.” *The Desire of Ages*, 570.

Monday

2 TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

- a. How did some of the Pharisees react to this manifestation? Luke 19:39.

Note: “Many Pharisees witnessed the scene, and, burning with envy and malice, sought to turn the current of popular feeling. With all their authority they tried to silence the people; but their appeals and threats only increased the enthusiasm. They feared that this multitude, in the strength of their numbers, would make Jesus king. As a last resort they pressed through the crowd to where the Saviour was, and accosted Him with reproving and threatening words: ‘Master, rebuke Thy disciples’ (Luke 19:39). They declared that such noisy demonstrations were unlawful, and would not be permitted by the authorities.” *The Desire of Ages*, 572.

- b. What answer did Jesus give them? Luke 19:40.

- c. For what purpose did Jesus permit this great demonstration? John 12:16, 23–26.

Note: “Never before in His earthly life had Jesus permitted such a demonstration. He clearly foresaw the result. It would bring Him to the cross. But it was His purpose thus publicly to present Himself as the Redeemer. He desired to call attention to the sacrifice that was to crown His mission to a fallen world.

While the people were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, He, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set Himself apart as an oblation. It would be needful for His church in all succeeding ages to make His death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt." *The Desire of Ages*, 571.

- d. What did Jesus do and say when He came into full view of the city? Luke 19:41-44.

Tuesday

3 PETITION OF THE GREEKS

- a. As the wise men of the East sought Christ at His birth (Matthew 2:1, 2, 10, 11), who sought Him at the close of His earthly ministry? John 12:20; Matthew 8:11.

Note: "These [Greek] men came from the West to find the Saviour at the close of His life, as the wise men had come from the East at the beginning. At the time of Christ's birth the Jewish people were so engrossed with their own ambitious plans that they knew not of His advent. The magi from a heathen land came to the manger with their gifts, to worship the Saviour. So these Greeks, representing the nations, tribes, and peoples of the world, came to see Jesus. So the people of all lands and all ages would be drawn by the Saviour's cross." *The Desire of Ages*, 621, 622.

- b. How did the Greeks express their desire? John 12:21.

- c. How did Jesus feel when He heard the petition of the Greeks and what did He declare? John 12:22, 23.

Note: "At this time Christ's work bore the appearance of cruel defeat. He had been victor in the controversy with the priests and Pharisees, but it was evident that He would never be received by them as the Messiah. The final separation had come. To His disciples the case seemed hopeless. But Christ was approaching the consummation of His work. The great event which concerned not only the Jewish nation, but the whole world, was about to take place. When Christ heard the eager request, 'We would see Jesus,' echoing the hungering cry of the world, His countenance lighted up, and He said, 'The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified' (John 12:21, 23). In the request of the Greeks He saw an earnest of the results of His great sacrifice. ...

"When the request was brought to Jesus, He was in that part of the temple from which all except Jews were excluded, but He went out to the Greeks in the outer court, and had a personal interview with them." *The Desire of Ages*, 621, 622.

Wednesday

4 JESUS GLORIFIED

- a. What prayer did Jesus offer as He thought of His death upon the cross? John 12:27, 28, *first part*.

Note: "In anticipation Christ was already drinking the cup of bitterness. His humanity shrank from the hour of abandonment, when to all appearance He would be deserted even by God, when all would see Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He shrank from public exposure, from being treated as the worst of criminals, from a shameful and dishonored death. A foreboding of His conflict with the powers of darkness, a sense of the awful burden of human transgression, and the Father's wrath because of sin caused the spirit of Jesus to faint, and the pallor of death to overspread His countenance.

"Then came divine submission to His Father's will. 'For this cause,' He said, 'came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name' (John 12:27, 28). Only through the death of Christ could Satan's kingdom be overthrown. Only thus could man be redeemed, and God be glorified. Jesus consented to the agony, He accepted the sacrifice. The Majesty of heaven consented to suffer as the Sin Bearer." *The Desire of Ages*, 624.

- b. What answer was heard coming from heaven? John 12:28, *last part*.

c. What did the bystanding crowd say? John 12:29.

Note: “As the voice was heard, a light darted from the cloud, and encircled Christ, as if the arms of Infinite Power were thrown about Him like a wall of fire. The people beheld this scene with terror and amazement. No one dared to speak. With silent lips and bated breath all stood with eyes fixed upon Jesus. The testimony of the Father having been given, the cloud lifted, and scattered in the heavens. For the time the visible communion between the Father and the Son was ended.

“The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to Him’ (John 12:29). But the inquiring Greeks saw the cloud, heard the voice, comprehended its meaning, and discerned Christ indeed; to them He was revealed as the Sent of God.” *The Desire of Ages*, 625.

Thursday

5 THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS

a. Notwithstanding the many miracles that Jesus had performed, how did the majority of the Jews receive Him? John 12:37–41.

Note: “‘But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him’ (John 12:37). They had once asked the Saviour, ‘What sign showest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee’ (John 6:30)? Innumerable signs had been given; but they had closed their eyes and hardened their hearts. Now that the Father Himself had spoken, and they could ask for no further sign, they still refused to believe.” *The Desire of Ages*, 626.

b. How did some rulers act who were convinced that Christ’s mission was real? John 12:42, 43.



Christ came to save Jerusalem with her children; but Pharisaical pride, hypocrisy, jealousy, and malice had prevented Him from accomplishing His purpose.

Note: “They [many chief rulers] loved the praise of men rather than the approval of God. To save themselves from reproach and shame, they denied Christ, and rejected the offer of eternal life. And how many through all the centuries since have been doing the same thing! ...

“Alas for those who knew not the time of their visitation! Slowly and regretfully Christ left forever the precincts of the temple.” *The Desire of Ages*, 626.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How did Christ’s entry into Jerusalem fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9?
- 2 How can I ensure that I would have been among those few who discerned the voice of God instead of mistaking it for thunder?
- 3 What fears and concerns of the Jewish leaders should I be careful to avoid?
- 4 What was significant about the search for Christ by the wise men from the East and the Greeks from the West?
- 5 What might be causing my Saviour to weep for me now as He did for Jerusalem?

The Servant of Servants

Key Text

“For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

Study Help: *The Desire of Ages*, 642–651.

Introduction

“The whole life of Christ had been a life of unselfish service. ‘Not to be ministered unto, but to minister’ (Matthew 20:28), had been the lesson of His every act.” *The Desire of Ages*, 642.

Sunday

1 SERVANT OF SERVANTS

- a. After assembling in the Upper Room, when the disciples did not take any initiative, what did Jesus do? John 13:4, 5.

Note: “At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service. ...

“The disciples made no move toward serving one another. Jesus waited for a time to see what they would do. Then He, the divine Teacher, rose from the table. Laying aside the outer garment that would have impeded His movements, He took a towel, and girded Himself. With surprised interest the disciples looked on, and in silence waited to see what was to follow. ‘After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded’ (John 13:5). ...

“So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget.” *The Desire of Ages*, 644, 645.

- b. How did Peter react when Christ wanted to wash his feet? John 13:6–8, *first part*.

- c. What example did Jesus set with this action? John 13:13–16.

Monday

2 FEET WASHING

- a. Prior to the last supper, how far had Judas yielded to the temptation of Satan? John 13:2.

Note: “Before the Passover Judas had met a second time with the priests and scribes, and had closed the contract to deliver Jesus into their hands. Yet he afterward mingled with the disciples as though innocent of any wrong, and interested in the work of preparing for the feast. The disciples knew nothing of the purpose of Judas.” *The Desire of Ages*, 645.

- b. What did Jesus know as He washed the feet of Judas? John 13:10, 11.

- c. Besides washing their feet, what did Jesus really desire to do for the disciples? John 13:8, *last part*.

Note: “The service which Peter refused was the type of a higher cleansing. Christ had come to wash the heart from the stain of sin. In refusing to allow Christ to wash his feet, Peter was refusing the higher cleansing included in the lower. He was really rejecting his Lord. It is not humiliating to the Master to allow Him to work for our purification. The truest humility is to receive with thankful heart any provision made in our behalf, and with earnestness do service for Christ.” *The Desire of Ages*, 646.

- d. What significant words did Jesus pronounce after the feet washing ceremony? John 13:12–17.



Note: “By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.

“This ordinance is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. We are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood. Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.” *The Desire of Ages*, 650.

Tuesday

3 THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

- a. How did Jesus identify Himself, and His relationship with the Father? John 14:5–7.

Note: “Since the first gospel sermon was preached, when in Eden it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, Christ had been uplifted as the way, the truth, and the life. He was the way when Adam lived, when Abel presented to God the blood of the slain lamb, representing the blood of the Redeemer. Christ was the way by which patriarchs and prophets were saved. He is the way by which alone we can have access to God.” *The Desire of Ages*, 663.

- b. What great possibilities did Jesus offer His disciples? John 14:12.

The whole life of Christ had been a life of unselfish service. “Not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Matthew 20:28), had been the lesson of His every act.

Note: “The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.

“‘And greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father’ (John 14:12). By this Christ did not mean that the disciples’ work would be of a more exalted character than His, but that it would have greater extent. He did not refer merely to miracle working, but to all that would take place under the working of the Holy Spirit.” *The Desire of Ages*, 664.

- c. What assurance did Jesus give to the believers? John 14:13, 14.

Note: “Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection.” *The Desire of Ages*, 667.

Wednesday

4 THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. Whom did Jesus promise to send to the disciples? John 14:16–18.

Note: “... from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men’s hearts. But while Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come.” *The Desire of Ages*, 669.

- b. How does Christ “live” in the heart of His disciples? John 14:19–23; 1 John 3:24.

Note: “At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.” *The Desire of Ages*, 669, 670.

- c. How would the Comforter influence the memory and understanding of the disciples? John 14:26.

- d. What else would the Comforter do in behalf of Christ’s true followers? John 16:12–14.

Note: “If there is a point of truth that you do not understand, upon which you do not agree, investigate, compare scripture with scripture, sink the shaft of truth down deep into the mine of God’s word. You must lay yourselves and your opinions on the altar of God, put away your preconceived ideas, and let the Spirit of Heaven guide you into all truth.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 413.

Thursday

5 THE TRUE VINE

- a. How does the Bible depict our relationship with Christ? John 15:1–3.

- b. What condition is essential to a fruitful Christian life? John 15:4–6.

- c. How is true discipleship revealed? John 15:14; 8:31; 13:35.

- d. On what condition can we abide in Christ’s love? John 15:9, 10; 1 John 2:5; James 4:4, 7, 8; Matthew 4:4.

Note: “God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. ‘If ye abide in Me,’ He says, ‘and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you’ (John 15:7). It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God’ (Matthew 4:4). The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.” *The Desire of Ages*, 677.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 If I refuse to wash my brother’s feet, what am I actually refusing?
- 2 What is the inner experience of Judas to me?
- 3 How am I to be enabled to accomplish the works of Christ?
- 4 How can I experience more of the peace of Christ?
- 5 How am I to abide in Christ?

August 20 – 26

Brotherly Love

Key Text

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 167–177; *The Ministry of Healing*, 25, 26.

Introduction

“All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another.” *The Desire of Ages*, 678.

Sunday

I A NEW COMMANDMENT

- a. How much love was demonstrated by Christ and what is its significance for His followers? John 13:1; 15:13.

Note: “[John 13:34, 35 quoted.] How broad, how full is this love. The new part of that commandment the disciples did not understand. They were to love one another as Christ had loved them. These were their credentials that Christ was formed within, the hope of glory. After the sufferings of Christ, after His crucifixion and resurrection and proclamation over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, ‘I am the resurrection and the life’ (John 11:25), after His words to the five hundred who assembled to see Him in Galilee, and after His ascension to heaven, the disciples had some idea of what the love of God comprehended, and of the love they were to exercise one toward another. When the Holy Spirit rested on them on the day of Pentecost, that love was revealed.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, 1141.

- b. What is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit and what is the evidence that this fruit is being perfected in us? Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 John 4:11–13; 3:18.

Monday

2 A NEW COMMANDMENT (continued)

- a. In what sense did Christ refer to brotherly love as a “new commandment”? John 13:34.

Note: “In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. ‘These things I command you,’ He said repeatedly, ‘that ye love one another.’ His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, ‘A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another’ (John 15:17; 13:34). To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ’s sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another.” *The Desire of Ages*, 677, 678.

- b. How do we show that we are the sons of God and the friends of Christ? Romans 8:14; 1 John 3:10.

Note: “Religion consists in doing the words of Christ; not doing to earn God’s favor, but because, all undeserving, we have received the gift of His love. Christ places the salvation of man, not upon profession merely, but upon faith that is made manifest in works of righteousness. Doing, not saying merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. It is through action that character is built. ‘As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God’ (Romans 8:14). Not those whose hearts are touched by the Spirit, not those who now

and then yield to its power, but they that are led by the Spirit, are the sons of God.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 149, 150. [Emphasis author’s.]

Tuesday

3 CHOSEN FRIENDS

- a. What title does Jesus bestow upon His faithful followers? John 15:15, 14.

Note: “How did Christ manifest His love for poor mortals? By the sacrifice of His own glory, His own riches, and even His most precious life. Christ consented to a life of humiliation and great suffering. He submitted to the cruel mockings of an infuriated, murderous multitude, and to the most agonizing death upon the cross. Said Christ: ‘This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you’ (John 15:12–14). We give evidence of being the friends of Christ when we manifest implicit obedience to His will. It is no evidence to say, and do not; but in doing, in obeying, is the evidence. Who are obeying the commandment to love one another as Christ has loved them?” *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 690, 691.

- b. For what purpose did Jesus choose us, and what is His command to us? John 15:16, 17.

Note: “[John 15:14 quoted.] This is the condition imposed; this is the test that proves men’s characters. Feelings are often deceiving, emotions are no sure safeguard; for they are variable and subject to external circumstances. Many are deluded by relying on sensational impressions. The test is: What are you *doing* for Christ? What sacrifices are you making? What victories are you gaining? A selfish spirit overcome, a temptation to neglect duty resisted, passion subdued, and willing, cheerful obedience rendered to the will of Christ are far greater evidences that you are a child of God than spasmodic piety and emotional religion.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 188. [Emphasis author’s.]

“[John 15:9–17 quoted.] These blessed assurances are for every one who will respect them, and who will, in character, reveal to the world their interpretation. ‘If ye love me,’ Christ said, ‘keep my commandments’ (John 14:15). If we are doers of the Word, we can come to God with full assurance of faith, saying, ‘Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope’ (Psalm 119:49). When we zealously obey God’s word from the heart, we may make that word our plea. The Lord always works in accordance with His word.” *The Review and Herald*, December 6, 1898.

Wednesday

4 PERSECUTED BY THE WORLD

- a. Why does the world persecute the followers of Christ? John 15:18, 19.

Note: “[John 13:35 quoted.] This love, manifested in the church, will surely stir the wrath of Satan. Christ did not mark out for His disciples an easy path. ‘If the world hate you,’ He said, ‘ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent Me’ (John 15:18–21). The gospel is to be carried forward by aggressive warfare, in the midst of opposition, peril, loss, and suffering. But those who do this work are only following in their Master’s steps.” *The Desire of Ages*, 678.

- b. How does the prince of evil respond to the work of Christ’s followers? John 3:19, 20; 15:20, 21.

Note: “He who came to redeem the lost world was opposed by the united forces of the adversaries of God and man. In an un pitying confederacy, evil men and evil angels arrayed themselves against the Prince of Peace. Though His every word

and act breathed of divine compassion, His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitterest hostility. Because He would give no license for the exercise of the evil passions of our nature, He aroused the fiercest opposition and enmity. So it is with all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. Between righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, there is an irrepressible conflict. When one presents the love of Christ and the beauty of holiness, he is drawing away the subjects of Satan's kingdom, and the prince of evil is aroused to resist it. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 29.

Thursday

5 I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS

- a. What difficulties would the disciples encounter after the ascension of Christ? John 16:1–3.

- b. Even though they would suffer persecution at the hands of the enemies of the truth, what promise did Christ give to the faithful? John 14:18.

- c. What difference in the relationship between Christ and His followers would set in after His ascension? John 16:7.

- d. What far-reaching work would the Holy Spirit perform in behalf of sinners? John 16:8–11.



How did Christ manifest His love for poor mortals? By the sacrifice of His own glory, His own riches, and even His most precious life. Christ consented to a life of humiliation and great suffering.

- e. What is our part in helping the church to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit? John 15:26, 27; 1 John 1:1–3.

Note: “With a loving spirit we may perform life’s humblest duties ‘as to the Lord’ (Colossians 3:23). If the love of God is in the heart, it will be manifested in the life. The sweet savor of Christ will surround us, and our influence will elevate and bless.” *Steps to Christ*, 82, 83.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What are the characteristics of the divine love which Christ wants to develop in me through the Holy Spirit?
- 2 What is hindering me from receiving Christ’s unselfish love in its fullness?
- 3 How is Christ’s commandment to be new to me?
- 4 Why shouldn’t I be surprised at persecution?
- 5 What obstacles may be hindering my reception of the Holy Spirit in great power?

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Fiber

By Lynette Golia

Back in the 1940s, Dr. Denis Burkitt began to notice the correlation of diet and good health. Working as a surgeon in East Africa, he rarely saw conditions like constipation, hemorrhoids and appendicitis that were widespread in the Western world. He came to believe the amount of fiber or roughage in a diet could explain why.

Fiber is the part of fruits, vegetables, and grains that your body cannot digest. There are two kinds of fiber, both important in keeping healthy. Soluble fiber dissolves easily in water and becomes a soft gel in the intestines. Insoluble fiber remains unchanged as it speeds up the food's passage through the digestive system.

Bumping up the fiber in your diet can help you avoid these conditions or deal with them in a healthier way:

Diabetes. Fiber helps improve the way your body handles insulin and glucose. That means you can lower your risk of diabetes by eating whole grains rather than refined carbohydrates. Whole grain bread and crackers, bran muffins, navy beans, Brussels sprouts and zucchini are good choices.

Heart attack and stroke. The soluble fiber in foods like oatmeal, okra, and oranges helps eliminate much of the cholesterol that can clog your arteries and cause a stroke or heart attack.

Constipation and hemorrhoids. "If fiber intake were adequate, laxatives would seldom be required," said Burkitt. Apples, sweet potatoes, barley, and pinto beans provide this roughage.

Appendicitis. "Keeping bowel content soft," said Burkitt, "seems to provide the best safeguard against the development of appendicitis." Treats like apricots, peaches, pears and figs are a tasty way to do this.

Diverticulitis. As the body processes fibrous foods like peas, spinach, corn, and artichoke it tones up the intestinal muscles. This helps prevent pouches, called diverticula, which can cause abdominal pain if they become inflamed.

Weight gain. The best way to lose weight is to eat low-fat, low-calorie vegetables and grains. "The more bulky fiber-rich foods you eat," said Burkitt, "the less unhealthy fat you will be consuming." And since fiber swells, you'll feel satisfied faster. If feeling the need of dessert, choose fruits like plums or strawberries.

Cancer. Burkitt believed a high-fiber diet defends against colon and rectal cancers in two ways. His cul-

tural studies showed the more animal fat in a diet, the higher incidence of bowel cancer.

A healthy portion of fiber speeds cancer-causing compounds out of the digestive system more quickly, before they have a chance to make trouble. Burkitt also considered fiber a protector against other conditions such as gallbladder disease, varicose veins, and hiatal hernia.

Start the day with a whole-grain cereal. Top it off with raisins, dates, sliced banana or chopped apple. Eat raw vegetable salads, munch on carrot and celery sticks. If cooking, steam only until crisp tender. Enjoy fruit salads and fruits. Eat the skins. Substituting brown rice for white will triple the fiber. Add legumes to soups and stews, use in whole grain burritos or with rice. Consume at least 20 to 35 grams a day.

Excerpts from *Eat and Heal*, Frank W. Cawood and Associates, Inc., Copyright 2001, 10-13. **LM**

Recipe

Cran-Date Oat Muffins

1 ½ cups canned crushed pineapple, drained, or fresh, diced

2 cups quick oats

1 banana, mashed

¼ cup walnuts, chopped

¼ cup almond butter

½ cup coconut, shredded

¼ cup coconut nectar or raw agave nectar

1 cup dates, chopped

½ tsp. salt

1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries, halved

1 tsp. coriander

Mix ingredients. Spray muffin tin or use cupcake liners. Lightly fill with mixture and bake at 350 degrees F for 35-40 minutes. Makes 12 muffins. Delish!

Winning Souls in El Salvador

An Evangelical Accepts Present Truth



Bible workers Arcenio and Modesta Ascencio, who are studying with Miguelangel Quintanilla.



Historic Adventists as well as several Pentecostals attended the meetings in Zacatecoluca.



Miguelangel Quintanilla speaks of his new-found faith before the congregation.



Pastor Nunez presents his end-time prophecy message to the group.

Prior to the recent visit to El Salvador by Pastor Domingo Nunez, he had been advised of the vandalism and crime in the area in which he was to conduct a series of public meetings—Zacatecoluca, which is the capital municipality of the La Paz Department of El Salvador. Because of the concern of the hosts regarding the safety of the attendees, it was decided to begin the meetings early, with a song service at 5:30 p.m. and the message beginning at 6:00, ending by 7:30 so that all would end before dark.

Besides the historic Adventists in attendance, several members and preachers from Pentecostal and charismatic churches attended. Pastor Domingo's messages dealt with prophecy and end-time events. He stressed particularly how the ecumenical movement was an effort by the enemy to bring about a false unity at the close of time that would ultimately result in lost souls.

One evangelical pastor from the Assembly of God church, Miguelangel Quintanilla, was so impressed with Pastor Domingo's message regarding the dangers of ecumenicalism that he later checked with his superiors to see if their church had membership in the ecumenical council. When they confirmed their membership, he presented his concerns. He was told to return to his church while his superiors considered their response. It came swiftly in a letter of disfellowship for Pastor Quintanilla.

Pastor Quintanilla is now studying with Arcenio and Modesta Ascencio, the husband and wife Bible workers in El Salvador, to become firmly rooted and grounded in present truth. He has requested prayers for his spiritual progress.

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