

# THE CSDA *Signet*

And Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO YAH. (Ex. 28;36)

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## *The Power of the Word*

In the Christian life everything depends upon the word of God. It is true that God is able and desires to keep us from sinning, but this must be done through His word. So it is written, "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." This is the way that God has appointed and there is no other way to have this thing accomplished.

Nor is this way appointed merely because He arbitrarily chose that this should be the way and then laid it upon men that this must be the way that they should go. His word is the way of salvation and the way of sanctification (Christian living) because this is the way that the Lord does things, because this is the way that He manifests Himself. It was by His word that He created all things in the beginning. It is by His word that He creates men anew, and it will be by His word that He will recreate this world and all things pertaining to it. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." "Being born again. . . by the word of God." "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things

new. . . . And he said unto me, It is done."

It is not only that the worlds were created by the word of God, but they are also sustained by the same word. "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby [by the word of God] the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store." So also it is not only that the Christian is created by the word of God, but by that same word He is sustained, nourished, and caused to grow. God holds up "all things" by His powerful word. And the Christian is among this "all things" no less than any or all the worlds.

There can be no question whatever that all the worlds are held up and held in their places by the Lord. But it is not only all the worlds, it is "all things" that are held up and held in place by the Lord. And it is as true of the Christian as it is of any star in the firmament or any world on high. Nor can there be any question that the stars and the worlds are held up and held in their courses by the word of the Lord. And no less than this can there be any question that the Christian is held up and held in his right course by the word of the Lord.

# O LOVE THAT WILT NOT LET ME GO

*O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths  
Its flow may richer, fuller be.*

*O Light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in thy sunshine's blaze  
Its day may brighter, fairer be.*

*O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.*

*O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be.*

This is to be believed and depended upon by every one who professes the name of Christ. You and I can no more hold ourselves up and in the right way than can the sun or the earth. And as certainly as the worlds are dependent upon His word, so certainly is the Christian to depend upon His word. And when this is so, the Christian is kept in the way of the Lord as certainly and as easily as is any planet in the universe. It is written that He "is able to keep you from falling." And He says, "I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." "Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

O struggling, failing Christian, is not that word which holds up great worlds able also to hold up you? Trust that word. Depend implicitly upon it. Rest wholly upon it, and then you will find rest in it. Trust the Lord to hold you up, just as you trust Him to hold up the sun. His word holds up the sun, and His word is over and over to you, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee." "I will uphold thee." I will keep thee, thou art mine. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." I will never leave thee

till I have done that thing which I have spoken to thee of.

"The word of God is quick ['living,' R. V.] and powerful." "Powerful" means "full of power." the word of God is living and full of power, to do for you, with you, and in you, all that that word says. Believe that word, trust it, for it is the word of the living God. It is the word of the pitying Saviour. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your soul." "I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." You "are kept by the power of God through faith." The power of God is manifested through His word and therefore it is His powerful word. Faith comes by hearing the word of God; therefore, it is the faithful word, the word full of faith. Therefore when He says, you "are kept by the power of God through faith," it is only saying in another way, You are kept by the word of God, "unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Believe that word, trust it, and find its keeping power. — A.T. Jones, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 13, 1896.

# THE CONTEXT *of Victory*

## IN THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY WRITINGS

This month we will be looking at a couple passages from Ellen White's writings that will occasionally come up when discussing the message of Righteousness by Faith. In general, the use of Mrs. White's writings to declare that the redeemed will "sometimes sin" usually results from ignoring the context of her statements, as our study of the 1896 article "Loyalty to the law is Loyalty to God" demonstrated last month.

Since the problem is that isolated statements are generally used to weaken or deny the force of the Victory message, it is difficult to find an entire passage to use as an example; usually we are faced with small fragments of quotes. Our last article of this nature was the exception, not the rule, and therefore from this point forward the commentary will generally be directed toward paragraphs, or even single sentences that have come up.

The objectives of the CSDA teachings are not to teach people what to think, but how to think: how to reason from cause to effect with the principles of practical Godliness, how to read the Scriptures and discover within them the Testimony of Yahshua the Messiah. (Rev 12:17) The best way to educate in these matters is by providing examples and encouraging readers to study through even those passages that appear initially "difficult" when seen through the lens of Christ's pure and perfect Gift to humanity.

The first of the passages to be examined in this article is this one:

"None of the apostles and prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God has honored with

divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ." [*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 561, paragraph 1]

Here, as in the previous examination of the quote from "Loyalty to the law is Loyalty to God," the apparent issue is cleared up by noting the distinction to be found both in the Bible and Ellen White's writings between known and unknown sin. (1John 5:16, Num 15:27-30) We note that these same men who never "claimed to be without sin" are those who "would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act."

The concept of knowingly sinning is the key. The redeemed are those who meet this criterion for baptism: "Find out by close questioning if these persons are really ceasing to sin, if with David they can say, I hate sin with a perfect hatred." [*Manuscript Releases Volume Six*, page 165]

It is the hatred of sin that causes willful sins to cease. "No one can fully enter into or understand the suffering of Christ, the Son of the infinite God. Proportionate to His majesty, His purity, His innocence, His exalted character, was the depth of His suffering as a substitute and surety for the human race. When the sinner realizes the aggravated character of sin, the transgression of the law, he will cease to sin." [*Manuscript Releases Volume Ten*, page 290]

This is the reason why "love is the fulfilling of the law," (Rom 13:10) because a love for Christ, an (even partial) appreciation of His sufferings, will naturally result in a hatred of the cause of those sufferings. The closer we come to Christ, and the more we love His

character, the more we proportionately hate the sin that led to the awful torments He suffered for our sakes. But how pure, how perfect is that hatred in the redeemed, which have the “very Christ” (Acts 9:22) living within them by means of His Spirit? (Gal 2:20) How consuming will our hatred of transgression be if “we have the mind of Christ,” being remade “a new creature” in Yahweh’s image? (1Cor 2:16, 2Cor 5:17)

The Scriptures teach us that, “If any man love not the Lord Yahshua the Messiah, let him be *Anathema Maranatha* [i.e., reserved for destruction at the return of Yahshua].” (1Cor 16:22) This is true, not because the Almighty hates those who do not love Yahshua in any unmerciful manner, but because those who do not love Him do not hate sin, and are destroyed before His glory because they never departed from transgression. “His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.” (Pro 5:22)

In the passage above, Ellen White is describing those “who have lived the nearest to God,” and therefore have the most refined sense of righteousness, the most developed hatred of sin. While loving sinners and laboring on their behalf, the friends of the Almighty have turned from all known iniquity, (Hosea 14:2) and this is why their repentance (when they discover a wrong tendency) has value, because it takes them “from glory to glory” (2Cor 3:18) and upward to eternity.

Of this process of sanctification, of discovery, Ellen White writes, “With humiliation and searching of heart, let each seek to discover the hidden sins that shut out God’s presence.” [*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 497] “The work of sanctification is the work of a lifetime; it must go on continually; but this work cannot go on in the heart while the light on any part of the truth is rejected or neglected. The sanctified soul will not be content to remain in ignorance, but will desire to walk in the light and to seek for greater light. As a miner digs for gold and silver, so the follower of Christ will seek for truth as for hidden

treasures, and will press from light to a greater light, ever increasing in knowledge. He will continually grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Self must be overcome. Every defect of character must be discerned in God’s great mirror. We may discover whether or not we are condemned by God’s standard of character. If you are condemned, there is but one course for you to pursue: you must repent toward God because of the transgression of his law, and have faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ as the one who only can cleanse from sin. If we would obtain heaven, we must be obedient to God’s holy requirements. Those who strive lawfully will not strive in vain. Only believe the truth as it is in Jesus, and you will be strengthened for the battle with the powers of darkness.” [*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 17, 1890]

For the *converted* man the hidden sins, not the known and willful sins, are the focus of his self-searching and progression in the Way. That passage from 1890 is also useful to counter an idea raised by our second passage, for some will say that we cannot ever “know” if we are really walking in the light. Clearly, Adventism teaches that “we may discover whether or not we are condemned by God’s standard of character,” and if ever some defect is revealed to us in prayer, by revelation, or by contact with our brethren, we have recourse to the Throne of Grace for healing and continued sanctification. The idea of not knowing whether or not we are walking in truth will be covered in the next edition of *The Signet*.

When we trust wholly in Christ, then we may take up the testimony of Yahshua, testifying as He did, “He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please Him.” (John 8:29) This is the way of it: “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Yahshua the Messiah, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” (1John 1:7) We do not say, “I am without sin” in the absolute sense, for like Paul we will acknowledge that we are yet residing in sinful



flesh. [*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 561, paragraph 2] Even so we must walk in the spirit despite our sinful flesh (Rom 8:1, 4; Gal 5:16) and say, "I do not commit sin." (cf., 1John 3:9) To be "without" implies a level of purity that mankind is not even equipped to judge, (1Cor 4:3) but to "commit" something in the Biblical sense *always* implies knowledge and consent.

It is a little-noted fact, but let reader verify the truth of this matter for himself or herself: with a concordance or some other Bible-study tool, find all the places where the word "commit" is rendered from a Hebrew or Greek word (I have done this with the King James Version for convenience's sake). Invariably, the usage of "commit" implies deliberate, willful action, both when used negatively (e.g., "Thou shalt not commit adultery"—Exo 20:14) and when used positively (e.g., "Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh, Elohim of truth." —Psa 31:5).

The only possible exception to this is found in Luke 12:48 which tells us that, "he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Even here, however, there appears to be a significant level of willful ignorance at work, (1Cor 14:38, 2Pet 3:5) since even for this man, the merciful Judge punishes him with a degree of "stripes." Yahweh is not arbitrary, nor does He visit for sins that are not held against a man's name for the sake of absolute, uncultivated ignorance, for "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom 4:8) In any event, if we are genuinely ignorant then "few stripes" will serve only to correct us and educate us as long as we are willing and able to learn. It is written, "rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee." (Pro 9:8) The Master says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Rev 3:19)

We may not be "without" sin in an absolutely perfected sense—for in order to do that we would have to be omniscient, (Phil 3:12) and know what all sins entail; but in Christ we are living up to all the light we do have with a

perfect dedication to the truth, (Phil 3:15) and like those who had far less light than we now do, it may be said of us, "[they] would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act."

Our second passage is this one, a longer reading:

"There is in the religious world a theory of sanctification which is false in itself and dangerous in its influence. In many cases those who profess sanctification do not possess the genuine article. Their sanctification consists in talk and will worship. Those who are really seeking to perfect Christian character will never indulge the thought that they are sinless. Their lives may be irreproachable, they may be living representatives of the truth which they have accepted; but the more they discipline their minds to dwell upon the character of Christ, and the nearer they approach to His divine image, the more clearly will they discern its spotless perfection, and the more deeply will they feel their own defects.

"When persons claim that they are sanctified, they give sufficient evidence that they are far from being holy. They fail to see their own weakness and destitution. They look upon themselves as reflecting the image of Christ, because they have no true knowledge of Him. The greater the distance between them and their Saviour, the more righteous they appear in their own eyes.

"While with penitence and humble trust we meditate upon Jesus, whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows have burdened, we may learn to walk in His footsteps. By beholding Him we become changed into His divine likeness. And when this work is wrought in us, we shall claim no righteousness of our own, but shall exalt Jesus Christ, while we hang our helpless souls upon His merits.

"Our Saviour ever condemned self-righteousness. He taught His disciples

that the highest type of religion is that which manifests itself in a quiet, unobtrusive manner. He cautioned them to perform their deeds of charity quietly; not for display, not to be praised or honored of men, but for the glory of God, expecting their reward hereafter. If they should perform good deeds to be lauded by men, no reward would be given them by their Father in heaven.” [The Sanctified Life, pages 7, 8]

This passage from *The Sanctified Life* is often used as a flagship attack upon the straight testimony of the Christian. Readers who ignore what Ellen White wrote of sanctification in other places will say, “You see, we can never claim to be sinless as you do, because even if we *were*, we wouldn’t even *know* it; and even if we *knew* it, we should not *say* it.”

In our work of this ministry, we have encountered well-known Adventist pastors, and educators in respected Adventist institutions, who have spoken the above sentence to us, often very close to verbatim. Naturally, the laity follows their lead, to their destruction. (Isa 9:16)

The truth is that those who use this passage against those claiming victory over sin fail to do two things:

1) They fail to represent the CSDA position properly, for we never say, “I am sinless,” “I am sanctified,” “I am without defects of character,” “I am righteous.” We note that they will say to us, “We can never claim to be sinless *as you do*,” while we ourselves make no such claims. As explained above, there is a difference (Biblically) between saying, “I am sinless,” and saying, “I do not *commit* sin,” which implies a deliberate choice to transgress known commandments.

Sanctification, as all Adventists accept, is the “work [...] of a lifetime,” [In *Heavenly Places*, page 26] nevertheless that same paragraph from *In Heavenly Places* tells us, “It is by unceasing endeavor that we *maintain* the victory over the temptations of Satan.” [paragraph 3, emphasis added] Adventism’s inspired sources do not teach that victory over sin is something to be

obtained “someday” or “possibly,” but something that is given to us as a gift, that must be maintained through faith in Christ and revealed in the acts of service that spring forth naturally from that living faith. This is only a re-statement of the Bible’s pure water. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? [...] And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Yahshua, and by the Spirit of our Almighty.” (1Cor 6:9a, 11)

Now if the Bible declares that we are sanctified in Christ, but we know that it is the work of a lifetime to be sanctified “wholly,” (1Th 5:23) then it would certainly be a mistake to claim the end product of sanctification. This is not the message of Victory over sin; Victory simply declares that we are justified by the blood of Christ, and move forward “maintaining” that victory as we walk the walk of sanctification to which we have been called.

Naturally, this sanctifying walk can only be maintained while in connection to Christ, and by His life within us. (Gal 2:20) Some have said, “If you claim to have victory over all known sin, you are denying the need for Christ.” This is the worst possible misrepresentation of the Victory message, for we teach exactly the opposite of that. This is a process that is begun, maintained, and completed by the righteousness of Christ in us, (Phil 1:6) not our own righteousness! It is not *self* that the saints glorify, or show to the world, “but Christ is all, and in all.” (Col 3:11b) It is not our works that we hold up for approval or validation, (these are done in “a quiet, unobtrusive manner”) but the work of Christ as He leads His willing people.

If “Christ [...] in all” is always before us, how can we indulge the thought that we are sinless in any completed sense? How can we exalt self? Even Paul, who did so much for the cause of Christ, saw himself as the recipient of infinite grace, due to the fact that he had once persecuted the Church and stood apart from the Son of Yahweh. (1Tim 1:12-15) The Victory

over sin, at its very heart, is a clinging to Christ in an acknowledgement of our helpless estate; but that is not the end of it. While we cling, we accept and receive the healing that the Messiah has brought to us, and we go forward in the instructions that He has given to us.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Yahshua the Messiah." (1John 1:3)

"It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me. Nothing so dispels doubt as coming in contact with the character of Christ. He declares, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;' that is, there is no possibility of My casting him out, for I have pledged My word to receive him. Take Christ at His word, and let your lips declare that you have gained the victory." [*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, page 517]

"Take the word of Christ as your assurance. Has He not invited you to come unto Him? Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressure come, you give evidence of a sickly, enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible. The Lord is rich in resources; He owns the world. Look heavenward in faith. Look to Him who has light and power and efficiency." [*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp 146, 147]

Will we not do this? What is more hopeless than saying, "We all come short?" Some believe that the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:2, 9; 12:17) leads them to declare, "We commit sins every day. We cannot know for certain if we are free from sins." Such as say this do not have the Bible as the foundation for their words, nor do they follow the counsel of Ellen White regarding the testimony our Savior paid for us to be able to bear at infinite

cost. Yahshua died that He might pay our penalty under the law, and become our righteousness for us; indeed, Yahweh "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2Cor 5:21)

Christ in us is our Righteousness, and in Him we are the "righteousness of God;" but it is *still His righteousness* in us; we do not have any righteousness of our own begetting. We must "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame." (1Cor 15:34) If any claiming to be Christ's do not know this, have not awakened to this righteousness, have not ceased to sin, and do not openly declare the Biblical truth, that we are "made the righteousness of God in Him," it is to their shame.

2) Those who use the above passage from *The Sanctified Life* against the CSDA position have failed to take into account the other things Ellen White says about sanctification. We have already seen that they have not taken into account what she wrote about claiming to have victory over sin (our lips must declare it), but worse, without understanding what she meant by *sanctification*, how do they receive benefit from *The Sanctified Life*?

This is written of Sanctification, "One of Satan's most successful deceptions is to lead men to claim to be sanctified, *while at the same time* they are living in disobedience to God's commandments." [*Faith and Works*, page 41, emphasis added] Doing a search in Mrs. White's published writings reveals a clear trend; her objection (like John's objection in 1John 1:8) is to those who claim sanctification while trampling upon the commandments of God. (e.g., *Evangelism*, page 597, par. 2, 3; *The Faith I Live By*, page 119, par. 3; *The Great Controversy*, page 472, par. 3)

Here is the matter, "Every Christian may enjoy the blessing of sanctification. [...] John enjoyed the blessing of true sanctification. But mark, the apostle does not claim to be sinless; he is seeking perfection by walking in

the light of God's countenance. He testifies that the man who professes to know God, and yet breaks the divine law, gives the lie to his profession." [*My Life Today*, pp. 256, 257]

"He who truly believes in Christ is made partaker of the divine nature, and has power that he can appropriate under every temptation. He will not fall under temptation or be left to defeat. In time of trial he will claim the promises, and by these escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust." [*ibid.*, p. 274]

We note: "He who truly believes in Christ [...] will not fall under temptation or be left to defeat." This is all that the Victory message (the opposite of the "Defeat message") declares; we may know that we have things yet to learn about the depths of perfection, yet this does not blind us to the truth, that we claim the promises Yahshua has given to us at the cost of His own blood, and we do not dishonor Him by saying, or even accepting the thought, "His sacrifice, even that, was not enough to keep my little life free from known sins." The truly proud are those who claim to have accepted Christ, yet deny that this means they have ceased to sin. They make their sins greater than His mercy, and their lives more "real" than His spotless life. This denial of the power of Salvation, this gross arrogance, must be overcome, entirely and completely, before the angel of Revelation 7:1-4 can place the Seal of God upon the forehead of the believer.

"The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' And 'whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen him, neither known him' (1 John 3:6). Though John in his Epistles dwells so fully upon love, yet he does not hesitate to reveal the true character of that class who claim to be sanctified while living in transgression of the law of God. 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is

a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.' (chap. 2:4, 5)" [*Reflecting Christ*, page 49, comments original to the text]

This paragraph tells the world precisely what Creation Seventh Day Adventists believe about the power of the Gospel. Ellen White, rather than presenting some other Gospel than we do today, is in fact one of the most eloquent sources from which we may draw our wording. Statements such as those in *The Sanctified Life* are only problematic if they are taken without regard to the positive statements and instructions provided by Ellen White that we must know ourselves, claim the promises of Christ, and declare victory without a word, an act, or a thought, of compromise with sin.

*"When the sinner realizes the aggravated character of sin, the transgression of the law, he will cease to sin."*

— Ellen G. White

As always, the bottom line is to be found in the Word of Yahweh. Christ Himself taught us, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even [in the same way] as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Rev 3:21) If we keep this in our minds, and let Christ Himself be the "Author and Finisher of our faith," (Heb 12:2) then He will not fail to accomplish that which He has begun, and by faith we can say, as Paul did, even before the manifestation of the promise, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2Tim 4:7, 8) This is the Spirit of Prophecy (the Testimony of Yahshua) at its most refined.

Christ has won the war for us; let us declare it to the world in our deeds, and with our words.

—David Aguilar



# Now is the Time

Our time and our talents belong to the Lord. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Then how can any one feel that he can be independent of God, and not subject to the Spirit of God? Those who imagine that they are independent of God's providences and plans, are in their supposed independence, in the veriest slavery to a power that is in rebellion against God.

"Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary."

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindle. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."

We are not safe in following the imagination of our own hearts. We cannot be independent of

God. We are safe only as we realize our entire dependence upon him as our Creator and Redeemer.

Satan has many devices whereby he holds us back from rendering prompt and unquestioning obedience to God. We have often had strong promptings and conviction of duty, but have shrunk back from fulfilling them. Yet Jesus says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." How many at times have been deeply stirred, and yet because duty demanded a sacrifice, they have tampered with their conscience, seated themselves in the enemy's debating chair, and have not made the decision that God sought to have them make. They have not broken away from the associates whose seductive influence for evil, led them to follow their own carnal reasoning, and because there was not evidence of any immediate danger, they have rested down in their false security. They have debated in their minds, saying, Shall I obey the voice of God that bids me shake off the lethargy of the world, and escape from the world as did Lot from Sodom, or shall I listen to the voice of the world that cries peace and safety to my soul? Shall I wait for a more convenient season? All the sophistry of Satan is bound up in that one word, "wait." O that those who are now moved by the Spirit of God, would make a decided stand for God and for the truth!

We shall never be able to discern spiritual and heavenly things while we remain indifferent to the word of God. The voice of Jesus is calling, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take

my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Those who remain away from Jesus have placed their necks under a yoke that is not easy. They have clasped their arms about burdens that are not light. O, why not exchange the heavy yoke you now wear for the yoke of Christ? The voice of mercy is now sounding in warnings and entreaties, but that voice will not always be heard, if you continue to resist, and still choose your own way.

There is true missionary work to be done for those who move in higher circles, and the followers of Christ are to be true representatives of Christ, who though he was rich, for our sake became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. The rich should consecrate their all to God, and he who is sanctified through the truth in body, soul, and spirit, will also devote his property to God, and will become an agent whereby other souls will be reached. In his experience and example it will be made manifest that the grace of Christ has power to overcome covetousness and avarice, and the rich man who renders unto God his intrusted goods, will be accounted a faithful steward, and can present to others the fact that every dollar of their accumulated property is stamped with the image and superscription of God. He can present to those who are rich the truth as it is in Jesus, showing that it was God who intrusted him with ability to get wealth, and prospered his enterprises with his blessing that he might acquire wealth, and gladly acknowledging the fact that his talents are not his, but God's who gave. The wealthy man who is truly converted, can bring to bear upon his wealthy brethren the lessons of Christ, and show to them that their wealth is only safe as it is laid up in the bank of heaven.

There is great danger that the riches of the wealthy shall prove not a blessing, but a curse to them. Rich men are in danger of trusting in their riches, of placing God's intrusted treas-

ure where Christ should be in the heart, and interposing their wealth between the soul and God. Wealth thus becomes an idol, and separates the affection from its Giver. But let those who are fitted to work for the rich, and for those in high position, consecrate their all to God, and in the name of Jesus go forth to do this work. Paul had converts even in Caesar's household. Truth will have its adherents even in kings' courts. Paul wrote, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." The throne of the Caesars was then occupied by that monster of cruelty, Nero. If there ever was an atmosphere charged with the malarious influence of Satan, it was to be found in his household. The powers from beneath stirred up most fierce and determined hostility against Christians in that place, and Paul himself suffered death at the emperor's command. In such a household as this, it seemed impossible that truth should find favor, and yet in this place there were those who were worthy to be called saints, and who sent greetings to the saints of other cities. Nothing is impossible with God.

We need more faith to work for those who are rich and in high position. For though Christ has said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God," every rich man who does yield himself to the converting power of God, and is an overcomer will find an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. The rich who are truly converted to God, will understand that they are stewards of the Lord's property; and through the grace given unto them, they will discern that they have been intrusted with property, only that they may use it to advance the cause and kingdom of Christ in the world. There are many among the rich, who, were the truth presented to them as it is in Jesus, would be charmed with, and transformed through, the grace of Christ, and would see that money is of value only as it is devoted to doing good in the name and Spirit of Jesus. The wealthy

man or woman converted to God, will begin to comprehend what good may be done with their intrusted capital. They will see that institutions are to be established for the education of the youth, and that they are to be sustained by gifts and offerings. They will know that many youth must be trained for the missionary field, and the wealthy will become agents in the hands of God to set in operation the instrumentalities whereby men and women may become enlightened, and turned from degradation and error unto the living God. Through the grace of Christ, those who have riches and are connected with him, will sow abundantly, seeking out the youth, and running a risk in educating them, hoping that they will devote their lives to missionary work. God has intrusted the rich with gifts, that, if wisely used, will produce a hundred-

fold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting. To have the knowledge that our talents are being employed for the good of others, affords satisfaction in this life that brings a great reward. We know that if the Lord's intrusted capital is selfishly spent or hoarded, God will call us to an account. Because the rich are judgment-bound, we should put forth more decided efforts to win them to the service of Him who has intrusted them with large talents. God designed that through these very agents, many souls should be converted, and sent forth on a mission of blessing to the world. His cause would be greatly advanced if those to whom he has given talents of means, would devote their wealth to the upbuilding of his kingdom.—  
Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*,  
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Church Home Office:

1162 Old Highway 45 South  
Guys, TN 38539  
crmin@comcast.net  
888-284-2487

Editor:

Lucan Chartier  
claimvictory@hotmail.com  
662-287-9758

Distribution:

Barbara McGill  
Barbli@hotmail.com  
731-239-8000

Editor's Assistant:

Kimberly Gutierrez  
kgtrr@hotmail.com  
662-287-0214

Contributor:

David Aguilar  
flyingcreature@hotmail.com  
831-404-5702