

The background of the entire page is a painting. It depicts a large, ancient tree on the left side, with its trunk and branches extending across the upper half of the image. The foliage is dense and green. In the lower right, three figures are walking along a path that leads into the distance. The figure in the center is wearing a white robe and has their right arm raised. The figure on the left is wearing a red robe, and the figure on the right is wearing a brown robe. The overall scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The title 'The Sabbath Watchman' is overlaid on the top left of the painting.

The Sabbath Watchman

July-August 2016

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Absence of Evidence Is Not Evidence of Absence

*"So then faith cometh
by hearing, and
hearing by the word of
God." Romans 10:17.*

There is a Latin dictum, *Faber est quisque fortunae suae*, that is prominent among postmodern "intellectuals" that means man is "the architect of his own fortune." This saying is to a large extent quite true. Jesus said the same thing but with simpler words: "The measure you give will be the measure you receive," for "all those that take the sword shall die by the sword." Matthew 7:2; 26:52, *Phillips*. And the apostle Paul said it even more broadly: "Don't be under any illusion: you cannot make a fool out of God! A man's harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows." Galatians 6:7, *Phillips*.

This is none other than the law of cause and effect: "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction"—the third law of motion, as formulated by Sir Isaac Newton. But postmodern intellectuals do not repeat, "*Faber est quisque fortunae suae*," to identify and agree with the great men of faith who have preceded them. On the contrary, they repeat the saying to contradict them! How is it that they can say the same thing but not say the same thing? Simple! They redefine the terms for what it means to have faith! And then they make an assertion with a wink of the eye and a "gotcha" smile on their face by repeating another dictum: "What can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence." —Christopher Hitchens.

"Faith and trust are often used interchangeably, as though they're one and the same. They are not. In fact, they are entirely different things. One may even argue, faith and trust are contradictory.

"Faith has been called 'the substance of hope.' It requires no evidence for belief or practice. The very nature of faith surmises that tangible evidence doesn't exist. Otherwise, there is manifestation. On the other hand, trust is based largely on evidence that is real. Trust is the core conviction of judgment based on knowledge, instinct, and experience." —Nolan Dalla, <http://www.nolandalla.com/difference-faith-trust/>

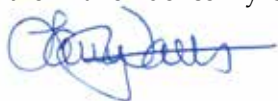
The same article by secular humanist Dalla goes on to say that "faith is an act of stupidity, if not madness. Faith has become dangerous."

In answer, first, the portion of Scripture that is only partially [mis]quoted above states: "Now faith is the substance [*hupostasis*, or *deed of trust*] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. So, according to the Book of faith, the Bible, FAITH is related to TRUST and is based on evidence, not something believed despite a lack of evidence. Thus, the kind of faith the Bible speaks of is an intelligent faith based on evidence.

To look at the secular humanist side, by their own definition, the case for a godless, self-created universe is based on a faith with much less evidence. The presence of design speaks of a designer. This argument has been made many times but with little effect, because those who do not want to give account to the Creator simply dismiss Him.

The ultimate question for every person is: "What will you do with Jesus?" The testimonies of hundreds tell of His resurrection and that He is who He said He is, The Son of God.

This edition of *The Sabbath Watchman* addresses the real issue, the best evidence of all: Real-Christianity, faith that is lived to the point of being a true revelation of the Creator. That will be the final evidence. By God's grace, let us be a part of that!



Beacon of hope, faith, and truth in a confused world.

We believe:

- The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its Owner and Sustainer.
- He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.
- The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth, convicts of sin, guides into truth, and, when abiding in man, overcomes all unrighteousness.
- The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine; the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.
- His people, in harmony with God's Word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.
- Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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one would expect that there will be many people who have faith and are ready to meet the Saviour at His return. But Jesus indicates the opposite.

Classes of faith

Jesus asks a question to each of those who claim to follow Him, and it is for you and me: “Who will truly believe in Me when I return to the world?” This question should make us think about the kind of faith we have.

We can see that there are many concepts of faith today. Most people believe that faith is **to believe in God, whom they do not see**. With this thought, people think about

what they should do in relation to their Maker. Others believe that having faith is **to believe what their church says**—its teachings, culture, and traditions—and honor the customs inherited from their parents. Others say that having faith is **to be guided by what one’s heart says**; that is, the emphasis is placed not so much on the teachings of the church to which they belong as on something that they themselves hold as a criterion: “I’m Catholic” or “Protestant, but I have my own idea of faith.” There are also those who say that having faith is **to believe that Christ is one’s personal Saviour** and that this is enough to please God: “Believe and be saved” is their motto. One need not do anything, because Christ has paid his debt. It’s just a matter of believing that He has done everything for us. And, of course, there are those who **believe they have a genuine and deep faith**. But will that faith be found to be genuine?

Here we want to reflect on Biblical faith, which each of the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ must have, because without this kind of faith we cannot be saved or grow in the knowledge of God or experience a change of heart. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6.

Will there be faith when Jesus returns?

The subject we want to address in this article is the most important in the life of those who love God. Christians often speak about faith; we say that we have faith and that it is the pillar of eternal salvation. For each of us faith is something clear on a theoretical level. But what does it mean to have faith? It is to believe what is not seen and to have the conviction that the things we hope for will come true one day, according to God’s promises.

But I would like us to reflect on one aspect of faith. Christianity is the first religion in the world, with about 2.2 billion people who claim to follow the teachings of Christ, and there are some 1.6 billion Muslims. Christians represent almost a third of humankind.

Now, if the concept of faith is obvious to Christians, why does the Bible tell us something about faith that perplexes us? Let’s see: “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8. Another version reads: “But when the Son of Man comes again, will He find people on earth who believe in Him?” Luke 18:8, *Easy-to-Read Version*.

Why do I say that the above verse perplexes us? The answer seems obvious. Since there are so many millions of Christians in the world,

Faith on Earth

By Jose Giner

True faith is based on revelation

Actually, to know what faith is we must go to the Bible: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. To have faith does not seem so complicated; there are many people who believe in aliens without ever having seen them; so why don't all Christians believe that God exists and that Jesus is His Son who came to this earth to die for man? But this is just one step.

Faith must be based on what is revealed in the Bible, not on tradition or what my church says (because many churches teach false doctrines), or popular opinions, or my private opinions, or culture, or tradition. The Lord Jesus Christ, Source of true faith, taught that in any conflict or problem one needs to go to what is written. Remember that when He faced the devil in the desert Jesus used the written revelation, not His ideas: "It is written," was His response to each of the devil's temptations. Matthew 4:1-10.

In His earthly ministry, Jesus always drew the people's attention to what the Scriptures declared about Him; and even after His resurrection, He quoted the sacred Scriptures to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Luke 24:25-27.

Luther and the whole Protestant movement that transformed the world on the political, scientific, educational, and social levels adopted principles that were dead in the church to which the Reformers belonged. Five Latin phrases came to express the five fundamental beliefs that were understood as the foundation or pillars of authentic Christianity. These principles are:

- *Sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone).
- *Sola fide* (by faith alone).
- *Sola gratia* (by grace alone).
- *Solus Christus* or *Solo Christo* (in Christ alone or through Christ alone).
- *Soli Deo Gloria* (Glory to God alone).

It is interesting to note that these principles were formulated by the Reformers when they belonged to the Catholic church, loved it, and did their best to reform it. The first principle was *Sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone). In their time, there were many beliefs that were contrary to the word of God, such as (1) people should not

study the Bible; (2) works alone save a person; (3) dead saints intercede for human beings; (4) the pope is the successor of Peter and the vicar of Christ on earth, holding maximum ecclesiastical and infallible authority in matters of faith; (5) one can please God by making sacrifices; (6) the mass can help to get the deceased from purgatory; (7) one can receive forgiveness and divine recognition through a bull, etc.

Let us pause for a moment on the subject of purgatory, a basic concept of the aforementioned church to this very today. What is this place? According to the Catechism: "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

"The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire."¹

How, then, are souls helped in purgatory? Catholic teaching says: "The matter of interceding for the souls in purgatory is not only a duty of justice and charity but is also a great benefit, for the souls in purgatory are very grateful for the relief we give them, and they protect us. If we choose to intercede for them, they certainly respond by praying for us. Their prayers are very effective, for they are holy and seek immense benefits for both our physical and spiritual life. Among the works of suffrage for the souls in purgatory, there are three that have a great effect: Prayer, the mass, and indulgences."²

These teachings are doctrines and commandments of men, in every respect, because they cannot be supported by an "It is written." It is the same with the idea that Sunday is the Lord's day, or one can kill in case of capital punishment or war, without coming into conflict with God's law. In the time of Christ, the Jews had this same attitude. Jesus rebuked them and made it clear that much of what people were taught were "commandments of men." Matthew 15:1-9.

These teachings are doctrines and commandments of men, in every respect, because they cannot be supported by an "It is written."



This was a demonstration of weak faith, based not on what God said but on what man thought and decided.

The first characteristic, therefore, of genuine faith is that it is based on what is written—what God says. Remember **Abraham**. He received from God the promise that he would be the father of multitudes. “And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” Abraham believed what God told him. In fact, the next verse says, “And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Genesis 15:5, 6. You could say that he was a man of deep faith.

But in the next chapter we find something very sad about Abram and his wife Sarai. Rather than trusting the word of God, they devised a way to do something different from what God had planned; they made up their own faith. Sarai was unable to have children and gave her husband the idea that he should go and sleep with her maid and have the promise fulfilled in that way. But the result was not Sarai’s son but one conceived out of wedlock. This was a demonstration of weak faith, based not on what God said but on what man thought and decided. However, genuine faith that works by love and does what the Bible teaches, whether or not one feels like it, whether or not there is evidence for it. As the apostle Paul says, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” 2 Corinthians 5:7.

If Abram had had a wife of childbearing age who was fertile, what faith would have been needed to believe God’s promise that he would have many descendants? Any! It would have been something obvious, or at least quite likely. But walking by faith and not by sight means that one is willing to believe what God says, whether or not it can be demonstrated, whether it is logical or not, or whether it appears to be achievable or not. Only believe because God says so. In this both Abram and Sarai failed. They had faith, but it was not sufficient. Can this be the case with us? One important thing we learn in this story is that faith is evident in moments of trial.

True faith is a gift from God

I am not able to fabricate faith. Faith is at our disposal to live it; **it is a gift from God**; it is a gift given to those who ask for it and want it: “For

it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13.

Incredulously, my father said to me several times: “I wish I had the faith that you have.” I always told him that he should ask God for it, that He is willing to give it to everyone.

I remember after my father died, I went to his house and found on his nightstand a Bible that I had given him long before; my mother told me that my father had read it at night in recent months. I believe God helped him to believe, because on occasion I prayed with him. It would be absurd for God to require us to believe and, knowing our fallen condition of human inability to generate even a gram of faith, not give us faith.

In Galatians 5:22, we are taught that faith is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The second characteristic of true faith is that it comes from God, and it is from Him that we should request it. Abraham had a personal relationship with God; he knew from personal experience that only God can fill the void in every human heart. He was willing to follow, respect, and love Him; but he was aware that his faith was a divine gift and not something generated by himself.

True faith is a gift that can be developed

We have seen that faith is a gift from God; if we ask for the gift, He will give it to us. But it will not be developed and strengthened if we do not exercise it; that is the reason why there are Christians with little faith and others with a lot. Faith is not measurable. A faith that hesitates in time of danger, that dies when there is a test, that trembles when there is a threat, or doubts the promises of God, is not true faith. It is one thing not to exert the necessary faith out of weakness and quite another for our faith to be so weak that it disappears at the slightest hint of rain.

Jesus praised the faith of certain people, and interestingly some of them did not belong to the people of God, like the Syrophenician woman who asked Christ to heal her daughter. Jesus said to her, “O woman, great is thy faith.” Matthew 15:28. Of the Roman centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant the Saviour said, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” Matthew 8:10. These



statements show that just as there are people who have great faith, there are also those whose faith is dwarfed.

If God were to develop our faith without our consent, we would not be free. It is like the farmer who goes and buys a seed. The life in that seed is not his; he cannot make the seed grow. If he left it at home, would it produce fruit? Definitely not. It needs to be buried in the ground, watered, fertilized, and cared for. Only then will it grow and bear fruit. "Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 303.

Therefore, we must ask God to increase our faith, as did Jesus' disciples: "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." Luke 17:5. Abraham came to be called God's friend (Isaiah 41:8), but he had to learn to develop his faith; he could not keep walking by sight; he had to be completely guided by God. Shortly after he learned this, his wife was found to be with child.

Against all human odds, Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to Isaac, the son of promise. She was old and logically could not conceive, but by the power of God it was possible. Now it was easy for Abraham to believe in the fulfillment of God's divine promise. But as the patriarch had to learn to trust the Lord fully, glorify Him with his obedience, and acknowledge the mistake that he made in producing a child with Sarah's maid, he was confronted with the most difficult test of his life: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Genesis 22:2.

For the elderly Abraham, it was terrible. "... In His providence God reserved His last most trying test for Abraham until the burden of years was heavy upon him and he longed for rest from anxiety and toil.... It seemed to him a fearful impossibility.

"Yet God had spoken, and His word must be obeyed." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 144.

Abraham obeyed God without reproaching Him, he did not criticize the divine order, he did not reveal discontent or bitterness on the way, and he did not waver in his duty; he simply trusted that God knew what He was doing. This

was walking by faith and not by sight. When they arrived at the place, the aged patriarch and his son Isaac demonstrated a mature faith. I include Isaac because he could have refused and escaped, but he did not; humbly he accepted his tragic fate. When Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, God stopped him, commending his obedience. Genesis 22:12. The refiner's fire had done its work of strengthening the patriarch's faith.

"This great act of faith is penciled on the pages of sacred history to shine forth upon the world as an illustrious example to the end of time. Abraham did not plead that his old age should excuse him from obeying God. He did not say: 'My hairs are gray, the vigor of my manhood is gone; who will comfort my waning life when Isaac is no more? How can an aged father spill the blood of an only son?' No; God had spoken, and man must obey without questioning, murmuring, or fainting by the way." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 145. The third characteristic of faith is that it has to be cultivated so that it may get stronger, and the only way to follow for this purpose is to implicitly obey God's word.

True faith produces miracles

When there is true faith, certain things are reached that can be received in no other way. Let us remember the woman who had the issue of blood for twelve years and whom the doctors had not been able to help. She sought Christ, touched His garment in faith, and in that moment was healed. She obtained what she desired. Jesus' words to her were: "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." Matthew 9:22. That which the doctors of her time were unable to do, faith accomplished.

Faith cannot be analyzed in laboratories nor scientifically explained; it can only be accepted. Jesus said that faith moves mountains. Matthew 11:22-24. Lazarus was dead for several days, and his body was already decomposing; but the word of Christ resurrected him. Christ calmed the stormy sea with His command. He healed lepers, restored sight to the blind, multiplied bread and wine, walked on water, and much

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If God's word does not become part of us, if the Holy Spirit does not inspire us, our heart will continue on without regeneration.

more. The Red Sea was in front Israel and there was no escape; that was when God told Moses to go forward by faith. The people advanced, and the sea opened. Elijah prayed for fire to come down from heaven, and it came to pass. Daniel was in the den of hungry lions, and they did not touch him. His three companions were thrown into a fiery furnace and did not die. We can cite hundreds of other cases. Miracles are not always necessarily going to happen in our lives, but it is certain that faith will allow us to see and experience extraordinary things; and this is the fourth characteristic of genuine faith.

True faith produces transformation of character

We could say that genuine faith is a spiritual transaction with God, and that brings enormous spiritual benefit. We all know that to go to heaven we need to believe in Christ as our personal Saviour. But this is only the first step. When we enter into close communion with God through Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to produce fruit in us: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,..." Galatians 5:22. These "profits" are manifested in the characters of believers. If a person claims to have faith but does not submit to the holy law of God, his faith is vain. James 2:17, 18. Faith without works is dead. Faith works by love and purifies the soul. We must accept Christ as our personal Saviour (this is what we know as imputed righteousness) and show whether our faith is genuine or not through our characters (this is the work of imparted righteousness). A mere declaration of faith is not enough.

We can believe at face value everything that the Bible says; but if God's word does not become part of us, if the Holy Spirit does not inspire us, our heart will continue on without regeneration. The devils also believe and know the Bible better than we do; but they are devils, originators of evil, and will remain so until their final destruction. James 2:19. Justification by faith is the work of God in the human soul that makes the sinner's salvation possible by the grace of the Lord Jesus (Romans 5:1), without any human merit; but if it is sincere and genu-

ine, faith sanctifies one's purposes and actions. Therefore, as Adventist Christians, eternal salvation is a divine gift that is effective for our acceptance with Him. The unequivocal proof that faith has been accepted by an individual and that faith is genuine is found in the production of the fruit of the Spirit, which reveals the change of character.

The above characteristics show that faith produces miracles, and special manifestations may happen in our lives. But the greatest miracle that can happen to a person who has faith in the promises of God is a transformed character, because no one can bring that about in anyone except God. It is impossible for a human being to change his heart of stone, because this is a process of spiritual character. The last characteristic of faith that we want to mention here is the ability that God gives us in Christ Jesus to change our sinful hearts. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Conclusion


Our faith will be tested to the utmost, and only with God's help can we overcome every difficulty and shine as burnished gold. Authentic faith is not easily shaken, because God encourages it, it comes from Him, it relies on Him, and no one can uproot it from the heart. But to make this experience we need to give ourselves completely to God. And we must do this for our own good, because all signs are pointing to the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The events that are taking place on this planet as we approach the close of probation surpass every prediction and shake every human being, from the highest to the lowest. Only those who have embraced faith in Christ and His word and who have made deep experiences of faith in this time of grace will be able to stand with God's help. My hope and prayer is that when the Lord Jesus returns we will be those who have genuine faith. God bless you. **SW**

¹ Articles 1030 and 1031 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part 1, Section 2, Chapter 3, Article 12 in <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/p123a12.htm#1030>.

² <http://www.iglesia.org/articulos/el-mas-alla/item/1147-%C2%BF%C3%B3mo-podemos-ayudar-a-las-almas-del-purgatorio>





Jesus'

Central Theme

Before Jesus began His ministry, John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of the Messiah, a voice crying in the wilderness, preached a very strong message: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is He that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Matthew 3:2, 3.

The prophet Isaiah writes the following about how the way of the Lord would be prepared: "... Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 40:3-5.

The Messiah came to the nation of Israel exactly at the time prophesied, as confirmed by the sacred Word: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Galatians 4:4, 5.

And what did He preach? The very same message that John the Baptist did! "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In addition, the disciples were sent out to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 10:7.

What does this phrase—"the kingdom of heaven"—mean? In one place, Jesus told His followers, "Unto you it is given to know the

mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Luke 8:10. Over and over again, He used that phrase as introduction to the parables—"The kingdom of heaven is like ..." and then continued telling a story illustrating a specific concept relating to the everlasting heavenly kingdom.

Particularly in the sermon on the mount, Jesus laid out the huge contrast between the holy dwelling place of God and the kingdoms of this world. The prophet Isaiah's beautiful prophecy concerning the Messiah spoke of that kingdom. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Isaiah 9:6, 7.

The angel's promise to Mary concerning the Saviour's birth included the promise concerning the kingdom: "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:30-33.

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The kingdom
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This is the same kingdom that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, saw at the end of the dream that God gave him. Daniel explained its significance: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Daniel 2:44.

But what was meant when John the Baptist, Jesus Himself, and the disciples preached that that kingdom was at hand right then? After all, the messianic kingdom was supposedly what everyone wanted. The kingdom of heaven encompasses deep spiritual values. If those values strike an answering chord in a person’s heart, if he cherishes them so much that he considers everything on earth worthless in comparison, then he becomes a part of that divine kingdom. But the Pharisees of Jesus’ day not only didn’t care about the spirituality of God’s kingdom, they completely rejected it. What they desperately wanted was the power and glory that thought would come to Israel by having their enemies overthrown. The day will come when the power and glory of the heavenly kingdom will be manifested; but if one is going to be part of it, he must first embrace the moral principles, righteousness, and love that it encompasses.

Besides, how can a person be trusted with outward glory, power, and wealth unless he has

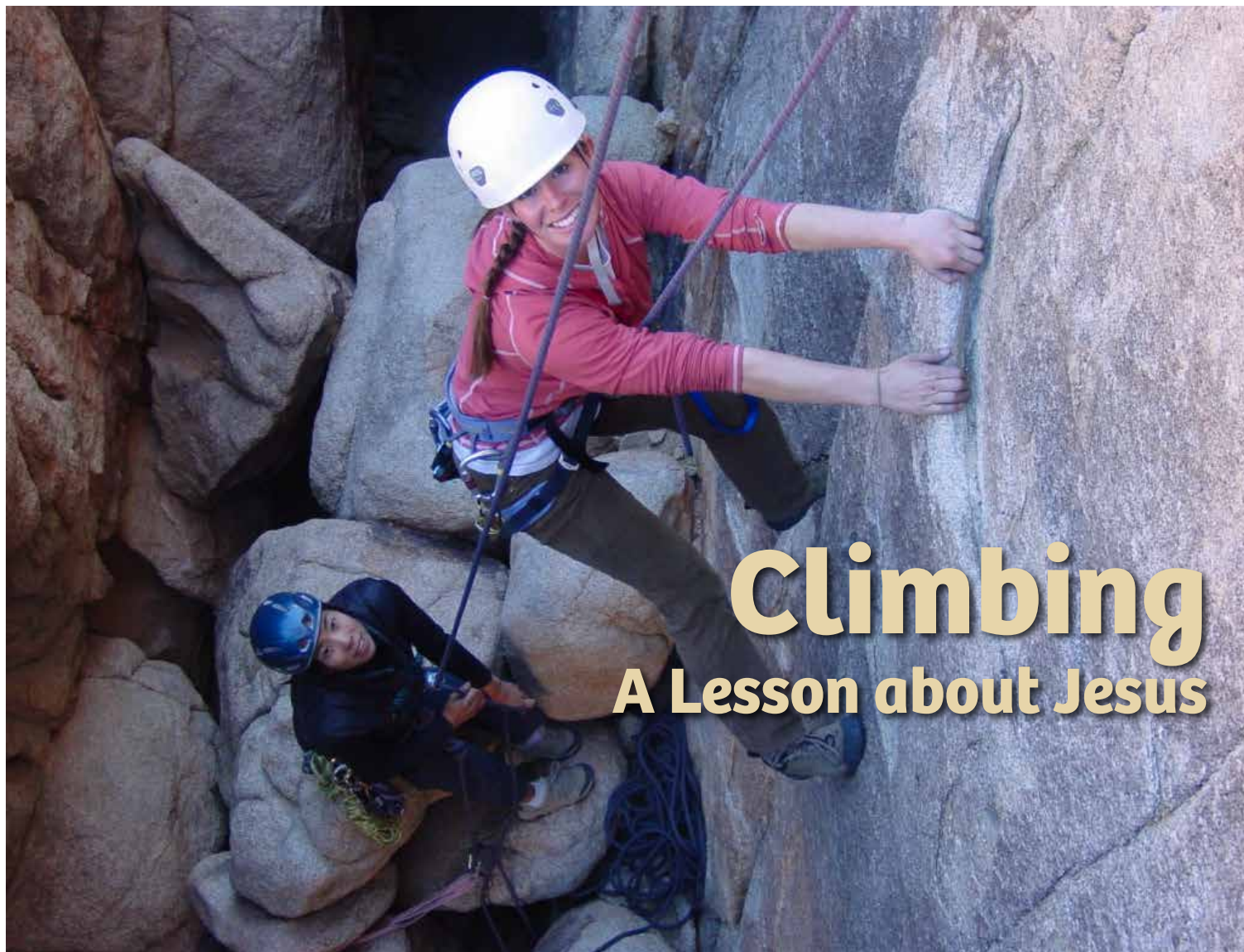
learned how to handle them in a righteous, holy manner? The world is full of despots who have such earthly power, and they consider it normal to impoverish their own societies for their own selfish desires. If one has not proven that he knows how to manage well in little things, it would be disastrous to give him greater power and responsibility. Furthermore, it is impossible for any kingdom except a holy, righteous one to last forever, for, given enough time, even the slightest selfishness will grow and destroy everything under its control.

So, Jesus made it clear that the only kingdom that will last forever is a perfect, holy one. “And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And He said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day. But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.” Luke 17:20-25.

The King of kings walked as a human being on earth; He did not reveal His divine beauty, glory, and power at that time. Many would no doubt have accepted Him if He had done so. Instead, from then until now—and even back to the very beginning—people have been invited to be part of the eternal kingdom for the right reasons. All who want to be cleansed of physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual impurity through the love and grace of God will repent of everything sinful and be part of the kingdom of heaven. Amazing! What an offer! Everyone can choose to “walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory.” 1 Thessalonians 2:12.

—*Hope of the Ages*, Religious Liberty Publishing Assn., Denver, CO, 2012, Chapter 10. **SW**





Climbing

A Lesson about Jesus

There I stand with climbing shoes on and a rope tied to my climbing harness. An 18-meter-high (54-foot) wall is in front of me. I look up to the top and realize how challenging the climb actually is, but I can also clearly see my goal; there is no turning back now. I turn my head to my friend, we nod to each other, and I say “Climb ready.” My heart starts beating fast as I do the first grips. With concentration I ascend the route, step by step; but at some point I feel the sweat on my hands, and my muscles start to burn. I am almost at the top, so with intensified determination and effort, I do the last grips and finally reach the anchor.

When I started top rope climbing, I did not know that I would actually learn a great deal about Jesus.

Usually when you go rock climbing, there is a lead climber who climbs up first, moving up

without there being any helping features in the rock in front of him. Then, as you ascend your route, you take the rope with you and clip it into the fixed quickdraws. When you reach the anchor, you secure the rope; and then the belayer lowers you back to the ground.

The leader shows that the climb is possible and sets a good example. Jesus also went ahead of you to prepare the way. In John 14:3, He promised: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” “Thomas smith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” John 14:5, 6.

The word for “prepare” in Greek is *prodromos*, which describes a person running ahead

By Manuela Di Franca

Every time you trust Him and have more and more experiences with Him, your relationship with Him gets stronger.

(a forerunner) to reach the destination before others (that is, arriving safely in advance for the benefit of others who also need to get there). He wants to show that even though the climb can be tough, it is possible to reach the top. Jesus went through all the difficult situations and temptations. As one of us He was to give an example.... For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences." *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

After the lead climber is back on the ground, he becomes the belayer and it is time for the other climbing partner to ascend the route. The belayer wears a harness that has a belay device attached to it. The rope threads through the belay device. The climber has to fully trust that if he falls—he might fall a bit but never all the way to the ground—the belayer is in full control of the situation.

Jesus wants to be your belayer as well, the one you trust 100%. He wants to teach you that you are not in control. He is. He wants to show you that when it seems as if He is absent and you are falling, He really is right there to catch you. Jesus walks beside you even when you cannot see, hear, or feel Him. He provides you with what you need to get through deep pain and unbelievable circumstances. Place your trust in Him, and let Him prove to you He will not disappoint you. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Proverbs 3:5. Trusting your climbing partner strengthens the bond between the two of you. You know that the other person would never let you get hurt. It is actually the same with Jesus: Every time you trust Him and have more and more experiences with Him, your relationship with Him gets stronger.

The belayer is also the one who motivates and gives advice to the climber, which helps him to keep going. My climbing partner often tells me, "Come on! You can do it!" "Put your foot on that left hold." "Try again! Don't be scared!" When I feel tired or my arms feel weak, I tell my friend, "Tight," which means to tighten the rope right away. That way I can take a break by just sitting back in the rope without falling. I can get new strength and concentrate on the next step.

In your life, Jesus is the one telling you: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Joshua 1:9. When you do not know the way, Jesus is calling to you from the bottom: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." Psalm 32:8. In times of weakness and fatigue He promises: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31.

On the way up, it is very important to focus on the anchor at the top of the climbing route. Sometimes you may take a quick glance at your fellow climbers or at the ground, only to realize that this is distracting you from your goal. Do not look down or to the side, because you might become too scared to continue. Keep your goal set in sight! When Peter took his eyes off of Jesus, he began to sink. So, always look "unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:2.

When you reach the anchor at the top of a climb, you shout, "Take!" and wait for a response from the belayer indicating that he has you on belay and is ready to lower you down. Then you have to lean back and let go of the rocks and the rope. Here, again, it is your turn to trust that your partner will get you safely back on the ground. It can cost a lot of will power to let go when one is so high up. Only when you let go can you make the experience that you will be held safely.

It is the same with trusting Jesus. Only if you depend on Him, if you let go completely, will you know that He will always catch you. He wants you to let go of your pride that keeps you from seeking Him. He wants you to let go of the jealousy that keeps you struggling for the things of this world that only bring disappointment and emptiness. He wants you to let go of getting your strength from other people and things, hopes, and desires so that you can find your strength in Him alone. Let go of your grip on the things that keep you from living the life that God has in mind for you! **SW**

Q/A

Without an Intercessor ...



Some people are asking, “How can the believers stand without the Holy Spirit when the intercession of Christ has ceased?”

There is a sentence in the Spirit of prophecy writings that says: “Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are **to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator.**” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

The original question makes two assumptions: (1) That the mediator and the intercessor are one and the same, and (2) That when Jesus leaves the Most Holy Place, the saints will no longer have the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Then the question would be restated to include these two assumptions:

Question: Since **mediator** and **intercessor** mean the same thing and relate to the same “Person” of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit—does the quotation in *The Great Controversy* not mean that the saints will be without the Holy Spirit after Christ ceases His priestly intercession in the heavenly sanctuary?

Answer: Yes and no. In the New Testament, the word used for “mediator” can also mean “intercessor;” and the apostle Paul uses that word, *entugchano*, in Romans 8 to apply to both the Holy Spirit and to Jesus. See Romans 8:27, 34. But he uses another word for mediator as well: “For there is one God, and **one mediator** [Gr. *mesites*: “mediator” or “intercessor”] between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5.

The sentence quoted above from *The Great Controversy*, p. 425, states that after probation closes, the saints will be without the mediation of Jesus; it does not say that they will be left without the support of the Holy Spirit.

This problem may occur partly when the Bible and the writings of the Spirit of prophecy are translated into other languages. If the word in 1 Timothy 2:5 was translated as “intercessor,” instead of “mediator,” then (combined with an incorrect translation of the statement from *The Great Controversy*, p. 425) it would seem logical to conclude that if the believers will be without an intercessor, they will also not have

By Larry Watts

It does not say that they will be left without support of the Holy Spirit.



the presence of the Holy Spirit after probation closes. But a closer study of Bible texts in Greek and the writings of the Spirit of prophecy in the original language (English) show that this is not the case. Let us examine this.

The saints who are alive at the time of the end and who have been accounted able and worthy to go through the great time of trouble will be those who have overcome every sin and besetment. —*Early Writings*, p. 71. Their sins have been blotted out. —*Review and Herald*, April 9, 1895, par. 8. They stand before God with no need of a Mediator, because they have received the “refreshing ... from the presence of the Lord.” Acts 3:19. They are sealed, having shown their heart loyalty in the time of the sealing; God will sustain and protect them. Ezekiel 9. —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 399.

Question: Who seals God’s people?

Answer: The command to the “man with the writer’s inkhorn” in Ezekiel 9:4 is: “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.”

Question: What does it mean to be sealed, and who performs the sealing?

Answer: “... Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully....

“Said the angel, ‘The third angel is binding, or sealing, them in bundles for the heavenly garner.’” —*Early Writings*, pp. 71, 89.

Question: What is included in the seal that is placed upon the saints?

Answer: The Holy Spirit is described as “the earnest,” or “pledge,” of redemption and salvation. “Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest [pledge] of the Spirit in our hearts.” 2 Corinthians 1:22. “The sealing is a pledge from God of perfect security to His chosen ones. Exodus 31:13-17. Sealing indicates you are God’s chosen.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 225.

“In the work that was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, we may see what can be done by the exercise of faith. Those who believed in Christ were sealed by the Holy Spirit.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1055.

Question: Exactly what is this seal that is so closely associated with the Holy Spirit?

Answer: “It [the Sabbath] is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever:...” Exodus 31:17.

“What is the condition of those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus? If in families there are those who are refusing obedience to the Lord in keeping His Sabbath, then the seal cannot be placed upon them. The sealing is a pledge from God of perfect security to His chosen ones. Sealing indicates you are God’s chosen. He has appropriated you to Himself. As the sealed of God we are Christ’s purchased possession, and no one shall pluck us out of His hands.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, pp. 225.

When probation closes, Jesus takes off His priestly garments, having completed His mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary. When He then puts on His kingly vestures (*Early Writings*, pp. 281, 282), God will not take away what He has given. Jesus said clearly, “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, **that He may abide with you for ever.**” John 14:16.

At the end of time, God’s gift of the Holy Spirit has at least two purposes: (1) To give power to the final message, just as He give power to the early church in the early rain, when “with great power gave the apostles witness” (Acts 4:32), and (2) To carry His people through that “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1.

The refreshing and early and latter rains

Question: What connects “the times of refreshing ... from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19), the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the latter rain?

“The sealing is a pledge from God of perfect security to His chosen ones.”

Answer: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea,” “this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” Acts 2:4, 14, 16, 17.

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain.” James 5:7.

Question: What does the early rain refer to? Is it symbolic of something?

Answer: It is used as a prophetic symbol of “the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,” the “pentecostal” or “early rain” experience that occurred fifty days after Christ rose from the dead. “Pentecost” means fiftieth.

Question: If the early rain is a type or symbol of the Pentecostal experience of Acts 2, what does the latter rain symbolize or point to?

Answer: In nature and Scripture, the latter rain is always mentioned in connection with the early rain. In nature, the “early rain” comes to help germinate the newly planted seed; the “latter rain” comes at the end of the growing season to ripen the grain for the harvest. Therefore, the latter rain symbolizes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will be given to prepare the very last saints on earth for heaven. “The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.” Matthew 13:39. See also Joel 2:23; Deuteronomy 11:14; Jeremiah 5:24; Hosea 6:3; Zechariah 10:1; James 5:7.

“In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help

He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

“‘When the fruit is brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.’ Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69.

Question: It is apparent that these texts apply to and illustrate the early and latter rains, but did Jesus say anything about this?

Answer: Yes. “He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” John 7:38, 39. See also Luke 11:13; 24:29; Acts 1:8.

Question: If the early rain fell on the apostles AFTER Jesus ascended, when does the latter rain fall on the remnant church—before or after Jesus ends His mediation in the heavenly sanctuary?

Answer: The latter rain comes to ripen the grain for the harvest. Therefore, the latter rain comes BEFORE Christ ends His mediatorial service.

Question: If the faithful receive the latter rain, or fullness of the Holy Spirit, as did the dis-

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church.”

ciples on the day of Pentecost, will God will take away the Holy Spirit when probations closes?

Answer: This idea—that God’s faithful people will be without the Holy Spirit after they receive the latter rain—is unsupported in Scripture. Nowhere in inspiration does it say that those who have received the latter rain will have to stand without the support of the Holy Spirit after probation closes. Jesus said, “If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it.

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you **for ever**.” “These things I have spoken unto you, that **My joy might remain in you**,...” John 14:14-16; 15:11.

Question: But doesn’t the Spirit of prophecy say that the saints will be without the Holy Spirit after probation closes?

Answer: No! The sentence quoted at the beginning says: “Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are **to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator**.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

The promises of God are: “And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” Isaiah 30:20, 21.

Conclusion

When Christ leaves the Most Holy Place and prepares to return to earth, there will be a period of time between the cessation of His mediation and His appearing in the clouds of heaven—the time during which the seven last plagues will be poured out one after the other. During that time, God’s faithful people will be under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. All earthly support will be gone, and especially then God will sustain His people. Jesus said, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20.

“When He should come forth from the tomb, their sorrow would be turned to joy. After His ascension He was to be absent in person; but through the Comforter He would still be with them, and they were not to spend their time in mourning. This was what Satan wanted. He desired them to give the world the impression that they had been deceived and disappointed; but by faith they were to look to the sanctuary above, where Jesus was ministering for them; they were to open their hearts to the **Holy Spirit, His representative**, and to rejoice in the light of His presence.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 277, 278.

“Now the Saviour’s eye penetrates the future; He beholds the broader fields in which, after His death, the disciples are to be witnesses for Him. His prophetic glance takes in the experience of His servants **through all the ages till He shall come the second time**. He shows His followers the conflicts they must meet; He reveals the character and plan of the battle. He lays open before them the perils they must encounter, the self-denial that will be required. He desires them to count the cost, that they may not be taken unawares by the enemy. Their warfare is not to be waged against flesh and blood, but ‘against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.’ Ephesians 6:12, R.V. They are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligences of heaven are in this army. And **more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord’s host, comes down to direct the battle**. Our infirmities may be many, our sins and mistakes grievous; but the grace of God is for all who seek it with contrition. The power of Omnipotence is enlisted in behalf of those who trust in God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 352. **SW**



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New study on American eating patterns

As America goes, so goes the world. The world loves American money and American clothes, particularly jeans and used clothes, as well as American pop music, American Hollywood films, and American fast foods. The developed and the developing world is eager to adopt American culture and lifestyles.

A study published recently in the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ)¹ suggests that the Standard American Diet (SAD) is sadder than researchers originally thought.² The authors researched the eating habits of 9,317 Americans in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). The conclusion was that added sugar, oils, and salt (SOS) are excessively present in the majority of foods that Americans consume. Ironically, the international signal for help is SOS in the old Morse code. But when it comes to the eating habits of Americans, SOS could stand for super-sugary, oily, and super-salty foods.

For decades, foods have been divided into two categories—whole foods and processed

foods. Now the new study in the *BMJ* has divided the processed foods into additional categories—unprocessed or minimally processed, processed, and ultra-processed foods. What foods are included in the ultra-processed category? Cakes, cookies, pies, salty snacks, frozen dinners or meals, soft drinks, pizza, fruit drinks, sauces, dressings, sweet snacks, ice cream, desserts, French fries, hamburgers, hot dogs, instant and canned soups, etc.³ Do any of these sound familiar? Are they in your diet?

The average American adult eats 2,000 calories per day. Of those 2000 calories, 1,400 calories (70 percent) come from ultra-processed foods and processed foods.⁴ And it is ultra-processed foods that contribute nearly 90 percent of all the added sugar in the US diet. In other words, three out of every five calories that Americans consume come from primarily sugary or fried (oily) foods.

Nutrition professionals have been urging Americans not to consume more than 10 percent of their calories in sugar. How many calories does the average person get from sugar? About 300 calories per day come from just added sugar in the Standard American Diet.⁵ That means

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Three out of every five calories that Americans consume come from primarily sugary or fried (oily) foods.

The benefits of whole foods consumed in home-cooked meals go beyond just the nutrition supplied.

that 15 percent of people's total caloric intake is from added sugar. Most of this is in soft drinks, fruit drinks, milk-based drinks, cakes, cookies, and pies.

The high intake of added sugars and fatty foods increases the risk of suffering caused by weight gain, excess body fat, obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, higher serum triglycerides, total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, high blood pressure, hypertension, stroke, coronary heart disease, cancer, and—in the case of sugar—dental caries.

The issue at hand is not only the ill effects that come from eating too many ultra-processed foods, but their displacement of wholesome foods from the diet. That means that when people choose to eat unhealthful food, they are leaving out or displacing healthful food that they could have eaten. For example, drinking a soft drink can never compare to the benefit of drinking carrot juice in terms of the nutrient density and content. The health benefits of eating whole, natural, unprocessed foods are thus lost; and the terrible consequences of disease are increased.

The *BMJ* study showed that more than 75 percent of all the sugar and high fructose corn syrup (which is worse than table sugar) available in the USA was used by the food industry.⁶ Home-prepared meals are more likely to be healthier than ultra-processed foods produced by food manufacturers.

Furthermore, the benefits of whole foods consumed in home-cooked meals go beyond just the nutrition supplied to each individual, for the family is brought together in shared mealtimes. Other studies suggest that families that eat together at the dinner table at least once a day are less likely to have children with problems of drug use, obesity, and educational deficits.⁷

The ancient warning against overindulging on sugar

The dangers of eating too much sugar are as old as the Bible. A "sweet tooth" may be enjoyed by the taste buds at the tip of the tongue, but the results will be very bitter in the belly. About 3,000 years ago, the wise Solomon wrote: "It is not good to eat much honey." Proverbs 25:27.

The prophet Isaiah makes a reference to sweet cane. Could this have been sugar cane? Sugar comes from sugar cane, which is very sweet to chew and looks like a cane. God says: "Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled Me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities." Isaiah 43:24.

The Lord forbade honey to be part of any sacrifices. "For ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire." Leviticus 2:11. In fact, He instructed His people to give Him the blood and fat of their animal sacrifices. These were not only detrimental to their health but also a symbol of sin. In the Old Testament, the Lord wanted all the foods that were not so healthful—namely, blood, fat, and salt—to be sacrificed. He wanted the worst to be given to Him, to be consumed by fire, not by the digestive system of His creatures.

So, what was the sweet cane that Isaiah mentioned? The rabbis say that it was a spice burned as incense on the golden altar in the tabernacle.⁸

Like Israel of old, America has become the new promised "land flowing with milk and honey." Exodus 3:8.⁹ Yet the excessive consumption of animal fat and sugar is the sources of the worst maladies that afflict the modern developed world.

Health advocate of the Nineteenth Century

In the nineteenth century, while America was undergoing the second and third great spiritual awakening, there were also voices of a number of health advocates. One of those was Ellen G. White, who wrote that consuming too much sugar was worse than eating meat. She warned against the free use of added sugar in food, because it would lead to disease.

"The free use of sugar in any form tends to clog the system, and is not unfrequently a cause of disease."¹⁰

"And from the light given me, sugar, when largely used, is more injurious than meat."¹¹

"The desserts which take so much time to prepare, are, many of them, detrimental to health."¹²



“Far too much sugar is ordinarily used in food. Cakes, sweet puddings, pastries, jellies, jams, are active causes of indigestion. Especially harmful are the custards and puddings in which milk, eggs, and sugar are the chief ingredients. The free use of milk and sugar taken together should be avoided.”¹³

Practical advice

When you go shopping the next time at the supermarket, read the labels. If you see sugar in the first or second place on the list of ingredients, you can expect the food product to be high in sugar. If you see ingredients you cannot pronounce, don’t risk buying the product. Or, if the food label has a long list of ingredients, then it is highly processed. Watch for hidden sugar in the ingredients list.

On food labels, the ingredients are listed in the order of concentration; this is also true of ultra-processed foods. But sugar and sweeteners may appear under different names, and several of them may be in the same product, such as brown sugar, sugar cane juice, maple syrup, agave, high fructose corn syrup, etc.

Don’t fall for the misconception that brown sugar, maple syrup, honey, or agave will not be as harmful as added sugar. Even those sugary substitutes are detrimental if over-consumed. Furthermore, artificial sweeteners and high fructose corn syrup may have more detrimental effects in the body than does added sugar.

Healthful sugars are found naturally in fruits as fructose and bound to soluble fibers; they are beneficial when eaten in a balanced diet. People with diabetes should consume all sweets in moderation and with other foods, unless their glucose levels are too low at a given moment.

Even after 3,000 years, the words of Solomon are just as valuable as when he penned them in Scripture: “It is not good to eat much honey” or sweets. Up-to-date research confirms this truth. **SW**

¹ E. Martinez Steele, L. Galastri Baraldi, M.L. da Costa Louzada, et al., “Ultra-processed foods and added sugars in the US diet: evidence from a nationally representative cross-sectional study,” *British Medical Journal Open*, 2016. Accessed on March 15, 2016, at <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/>.

² Alice Park, “The dark side of the way Americans eat,” *Time Magazine*, March 21, 2016.

³ Ibid.

⁴ E. Martinez Steele, et al, “Ultra-processed foods and added sugars in the US diet.”

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Accessed on March 21, 2016. <http://thefamilydinnerproject.org/about-us/benefits-of-family-dinners/>

⁸ Rabbi Shmuel Yerushalmi, “The Book of Yeshayahu,” [*Isaiah*,] *Me’ am Lo’ ez: The Torah Anthology* (New York: Moznaim Publishing Corp, 1997), p. 273.

⁹ The phrase “land flowing with milk and honey,” did not refer to the fact that the Jews should consume plenty of “milk and honey,” rather that it was a fertile land where cattle and bees would multiply. The presence of bees is a sign of a good ecology and agricultural potential because of their pollination contribution.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 1938 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976), p. 197.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 328.

¹² Ibid., p. 331.

¹³ Ibid, p. 333.



Names for sugar on food labels

Sucrose, Maltose, Dextrose, Fructose, Glucose, Galactose, Lactose, High fructose corn syrup, Glucose solids, Cane juice, Dehydrated cane juice, Cane juice solids, Cane juice crystals, Dextrin, Maltodextrin, Dextran, Barley

malt, Beet sugar, Corn syrup, Corn syrup solids, Caramel, Buttered syrup, Carob syrup, Brown sugar, Date sugar, Malt syrup, Diatase, Diatastic malt, Fruit juice, Fruit juice concentrate, Dehydrated fruit juice, Fruit juice crystals, Golden syrup, Turbinado, Sorghum syrup, Refiner’s syrup, Ethyl maltol, Maple syrup, Yellow sugar.

Love Is the Fulfilling of the Law

By Ellen G. White

"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." Luke 10:25-28.

To love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves is to keep the first four and the last six commandments. God has given to man a large field in which he may work; and in doing the work appointed him of God, man will not lift up himself, but will exalt Christ. He will cherish love for God, and love for his brethren, and for all men. Love will soon die out of the heart if it is left without cultivation; we can only keep divine love in the soul by doing the words of the Master. Are there not many claiming to keep the commandments who are living in transgression of the sacred precepts? We cannot keep the law of God unless we give to our Creator and Redeemer our undivided affection. It is impossible to keep the last six commandments unless we keep the first four.

John says: "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth

not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." "We love Him, because He first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." 1 John 4:7-11, 19-21.

Are we obeying the words of Christ, or are we following the impulses of our own depraved hearts? Do we have a clear conscience that we are doing our whole duty to our God in the line of raising joyful thanksgiving and praise for his constant care and love? We must cultivate the precious traits of character that abound in Jesus in all their divine fullness. We must daily learn in the school of Christ, and practice the graces of His spirit, till our lives shall shed the divine fragrance of His life. We shall be representatives of Christ if we are thoughtful of others, ministering to their necessities.

When we come into close sympathy with Jesus, He will impart His love, and this will

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flow out in loving acts, in tender compassion to others. When we fail to love God supremely, we surely fail to love our neighbor as ourselves. When you love God with all your heart, might, mind, soul, and strength, you will be as a living stream in the desert to all around you. There will be no expressed doubts, no sowing of tares in your suggestions. You will not rest satisfied with a meager experience. You will say with Paul: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14

There is no standing still in the Christian life. The follower of Jesus sees ever before him higher things to be attained, and he will not be satisfied with a low standard. There is great danger in being satisfied, in not pressing forward for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Why is it that so many are content with a limited knowledge of Christ? Why do not all professed Christians strive earnestly for growth in knowledge and experience, that they may grow up into Christ, even to the full stature of men and women in Him? It is painfully evident that many have ceased to advance heavenward. There is no growth in Christian character; they are but dwarfs in their religious life. When you see such persons, you long to open before them the value of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. You desire to inspire them with spiritual vigor that they may grow. You do what you can to open before them the privileges and opportunities of the gospel; you urge them to have faith and love and hope, and yet when you meet them in a year's time, you are pained to see the same listless spirit, the same stunted growth. They say the same things as before; there is no new idea in their testimonies, no fresh feature in their experience.

Again you set before them the prize of the high calling of God. They assent to all you say, declare that they are benefited, but the next year

you meet them with sadness, for you see that they indeed can say, "I have not attained;" and yet they would not go further and say, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is evident that they are not convicted of sin, nor converted to God. They have not responded to the drawing power of Christ. Like Nicodemus, the Holy Spirit must move upon them, and they must be born again. The truth must be received into good and honest hearts, before light can shine forth to the world in clear, distinct rays. Every follower of Christ is required to let his light shine forth to the world. But then they fail to gather increased light from the Sun of Righteousness, how can they diffuse light to others?

Why cannot the followers of Christ understand that they are to be taught, disciplined, and trained—that they are to learn obedience by the things which they suffer? Why is it that we do not have more love for Jesus? more love for the truth? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." Psalm 19:7-11.

In the truth, Jesus is unfolded in all His matchless loveliness; but of what advantage will be our knowledge of truth, if it does not lead us to Jesus, if it does not increase our knowledge of Him and our love for Him? As soon as you surrender your whole heart to God, you will render self-denying, cheerful obedience. God requires that we shall be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ. When, with grateful appreciation of His love, we open the door of our heart to Jesus, saying, "Come in," the heavenly Guest is with us. When we love Jesus, we love all whom Jesus loves. —*Signs of the Times*, September 22, 1890. **SW**

God requires that we shall be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ.

Work in the Pacific islands

Recently I was very pleased to receive an email letter from our brother in Christ Sanaila Ravia in regard to his missionary activity in Fiji and some other Pacific Islands. Below is part of his letter to encourage everyone to be continuously creative in sharing the everlasting gospel with those who are interested in understanding the message and with those who are close to you.

permission from the village chief to do the work and, of course, gives him also a set of the lessons. Then we knock on each door, and every single family receives about 16 lessons.

"For a couple of weeks this has been going on, and so far we have printed 650-700 lessons. Tomorrow we will be visiting 4-5 villages near Leme-ki's place, traveling by boat in the mangroves. We will be sending a report soon. Lately, we have received news that

good way to do outreach in the Fijian villages.

"We have also discussed the survey sheet, which I have translated, and also translating the correspondence course lessons to go hand in hand where appropriate."

Dear brethren around the globe, please pray for the Lord's work in the Pacific. The commission of Christ is about to be completed. The pure gospel of Christ is covering the Pacific islands. 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' Matthew 28:19, 20."

Let us have courage through the power of the Holy Spirit, knowing that Jesus said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."

—Anton Salavyov
Oceania Division

any work. Every Sabbath we respond to calls to help people with their health.

May the Lord bless the work all over the world.

—Tadious Chipiro

Following Ebola in Sierra Leone

Greetings with I Corinthians 4-2: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

I take this opportunity to give a summary of how God's work is progressing in the Sierra Leone Mission Field. The situation is as follows following the Ebola epidemics that struck the country.

Kenema Branch

Members: 30
Baptismal class: 7
Interested souls: 9
Children: 12

Grafton Branch

Members: 7
Baptismal class: 8
Interested souls: 5
Children: 10

Kamayama Branch

Members: 3
Baptismal class: 5
Interested souls: 10
Children: 12

The Ebola epidemics displaced some of our members who had



Baptism in Eastern Highlands, Papua, New Guinea.

"Greetings in the name of Jesus.

"'Keep silence before Me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.' Isaiah 41:1.

"As you know, we have been engaged weekly with the distribution of our *Sabbath School Lessons* translated into Fijian from previous years to non-Adventist villages. Because we have each weekly lesson printed on folded A4 paper, it is easy to give each person a copy to read.

"What we are doing is that every Tuesday our missionary work team goes to villages to get

these lessons are now being used as sermons and preached in non-Adventist churches. In this way we are building closer relationships with the villages for future evangelistic work. We believe that the Lord will bless this effort.

"We have been blessed that an interested person became a sponsor and is interested in printing all these lesson materials free of charge. Our plan is to print a thousand.

"It is a long-term plan to reach as many villages as possible, and we have seen the need for a photocopier or printer so we can print more in the future. We are glad that we have found a

Health outreach in Namibia

Please be informed that the work is in full swing in Namibia through the medical mission-



Bringing the health message to a neighborhood in Namibia.

to escape for their lives all over the country. Some have come back to their homes, and others have not.

Earlier this year, malaria took the lives of two brothers in the Grafton Branch.

The Kenema Branch is growing gradually; this church is about two hundred miles away from the capital city. This is a nice branch with keen interest in doing missionary work. I wish to take more time to help this branch by doing seminars and revivals when I return to my work in the field.

When I return from Kenya, we may find more souls in the Deima church, which is facing challenges presently in regard to their place of worship. They would like to have their own land where they can erect a house of worship rather than paying rent for a house. The owner of the house has already issued a notice that he wants to have the house back for his use.

The Kamayama Branch is also growing gradually. The believers are firm and progressing gradually under the leadership of the Field Secretary, Brother Christopher George

These three churches need to receive more information about our principles of faith, historical background, and organization, along with other things concerning our faith.

Their tithes and offerings are few, since the members are very poor with many challenges of life and little income. Personally, I will suggest that we help them by creating projects for them. At the Grafton church, I used most of my time teaching the members, preparing candidates for baptism, and doing missionary work in the city.

I also connected the church members with the Bible worker,

Brother Joseph Bob Deen. It was a wonderful experience when one Sabbath we were able to welcome many Muslim visitors and people who worship on Sunday. One of the sisters made the decision to join with us, and now she is worshipping with us.

I did not conduct any baptisms, since the candidates still need to learn many things pertaining to our faith. I left them under the instruction of our three brothers—Brother Joseph Bob Deen, Brother Christopher George, and Brother Albert Hindow—until I return to Sierra Leone.

The mission house is fair but unfinished. It has been under the care of the Bible worker, Brother Joseph Bob Deen. The back of the house is not plastered, and the ceiling boards are not firmly attached. One door in the washroom needs to be repaired. One sleeping room door is half fixed and plastered. The three sleeping rooms are empty, with no mattresses or beds.

The most urgent need is a fence to protect the house and those who live there. The building is located just 900 feet from the highway, which is good. But it is also easy for people, children playing and throwing stones, and robbers to come in from anywhere and cause problems in the mission compound, especially when I am away from the family. The compound is half fenced, but the left side of the land still needs to be fenced.

I may not feel safe alone in an open place like this in a foreign country. The house is dark and without electricity. If wiring can be done, we can apply for electricity, which will make it possible to have regular communication and do many other things.

I thank the Lord for protecting me during my two-month stay and greatly appreciate the cooperation of my co-workers in the Mission Field. I am also pleased to inform you that through the help and assistance of the brethren, I have been able to obtain a one-year multiple-entry visa (2016/2017), which will allow me to work freely.

May the peace and grace of the Lord be with you.

—Lameck Bichanga

More about the Ecuador earthquake

We conducted a tour of one of the provinces affected by the earthquake and where we have fellow believers. The first thing we saw is that these brethren are living in tents, because they lost their homes and belong-

the believers have brought large numbers of people together and answered their questions about why this natural phenomenon occurred.

Furthermore, the widow of Elder Riera lost her home, and we need to replace it. Please see the photos we have sent.

—Luis Ponce

Good Samaritan appeal for Ecuador

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.” Psalm 41:1. With these Christian greetings we are sending some pictures we took on a visit to the earthquake area. We found some families from our church who suffered in this disaster. Two walls were severely damaged on the church building.



Believers are living in tents following the earthquake in Ecuador.

ings. There are three widows and three families who are unable to work because factories, businesses, and stores were destroyed. We feel that we must help them rebuild their homes and provide them with food and household furnishings.

In the church, which had just been finished, two walls collapsed and need urgent repair;

Four families lost their homes, and others lost their belongings. As you can see in the pictures, they are living in plastic tents and have no place to cook or sleep. We hope that God will move hearts to send aid to help these families that are in most urgent need of help.

—Isabel Molina

Good Samaritan Department,
Ecuador

Valuing the Gifts



“Oh, what value we may see every day in the unspeakable gifts of God! Shall we not rid the heart of the base thing that has taken possession of it, which makes us incapable of appreciating the matchless love of our heavenly Father? Shall we not now tune our hearts to praise God from whom all blessings flow? Let us stop every breath of complaint, and shape our words into songs of joy and thankfulness for the gift of His dear Son to save a perishing world. If we would be among those who will praise God in the world to come, we must begin to praise Him here, and now. We must tune our hearts to the music of heaven, which is praise to God and to the Lamb forever and ever. Let Christians show that they are Christ-like, that they are breathing in the atmosphere of heaven....

“If Christians would manifest the joy that Christ is willing to give them, they would represent the religion of the Bible much better than they now do. We are to be in the world, but we are not to be of it. We are to see and appreciate all the beauties in nature, and we are to let the favors of God lift up our minds to the bountiful Giver. We are to express, by precept and example, that we are the possessors of peace, and trust, and fullness of joy. We are to cultivate gratitude and love and praise in our hearts, that through His promises, richer than precious pearls, we may discern the purposes of God toward us. As the flowers gather for themselves the hidden properties of earth and air, and develop into things of beauty to delight our senses, so Christians are privileged to gather from the garden of God’s promises, faith and hope, peace, joy, and support. They are to give out again to others a life fragrant with good works.” —*Signs of the Times*, June 29, 1888.