

FROM THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION ...  
SOLA SCRIPTURA

# The Sabbath Watchman

January-February 2017

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# Knowing and Doing

It is 2017. Five hundred years of *Solo Scriptura*, and we are still here. However, things are changing around us in ways that no one would ever have imagined. What will keep us from being consumed by evil? We may not have thought much about it before; but the issues of life are much bigger than our human minds can grasp, so we need to raise our sights much, much higher than we ever have before!

The articles in this issue, some of which were written by giants of Reformation thought, will help us with this. But these rich spiritual concepts will require time and effort to penetrate to the center of our being. Reading them just once will not help us very much; joy will come when we search them with heartfelt intensity, along with the holy Scriptures that they uplift. These men devoted their very lives to spiritual matters, and nothing less is necessary now if we expect to be part of God's eternal kingdom. How should we approach these important articles? And, in the process, how should we consider our own spiritual experience? Is it possible that we need something more than theoretical "theology." Undoubtedly!

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*"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." James 1:25.*

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Starting out, it is good to know theory. But knowing without doing is a deadly mistake. It is *doing what we know* with right motives that changes us so we reflect the Master's character. "To go where we haven't gone, we must do what we haven't done." And where do we want to go? Heaven? We say, "Yes, heaven!" But if we expect to inhabit heaven, we must first have the atmosphere of that holy place here—in our hearts and minds!

Have you ever said or heard someone say, "I have the theory in my head, but how do I get its spiritual essence down here in my heart?" From our heads to our hearts is not a long distance. To travel that distance, electricity takes only a billionth of a second, called a *nanosecond*.

So, why is it hard to get the truth into our hearts? Jesus said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." John 7:17. It is because we are "forgetful hearers" that our hearts are empty. It is "the doing" that is neglected. "Yes," one may answer, "but only part of the time. Most of the time I'm on track."

But that is like a fence with holes in it, or a chain with weak links. We know what this means. "The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold. Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to tempt and destroy us." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 125.

Then, it is simple. Not giving Satan a foothold is the answer, and that is also the theory. But how can we "put it into practice"? Consider this: (1) We have only one thing that does not come from God—our personal experience. Everything else that we have comes from Him, even our time. (2) God gives us only one second at a time. Therefore, we just need to live that one second for His glory and leave everything else to Him.

Let the articles and concepts in this issue inspire you to live the rest of your life one second at a time for God's glory. This means commitment—placing your plans and time in His hands and seeing everything that comes your way as part of His holy will for you and His kingdom, moment by moment. Maranatha!



**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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# What Will Happen Soon

## to Give a Revelation of God to All Mankind?

By Larry Watts

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*"But as truly as I live,  
all the earth shall be  
filled with the glory of  
the Lord."  
Numbers 14:21.*

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**J**esus is coming again! The Bible calls that day "the great day of His wrath," and it also says that just before He returns "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." Daniel 12:1. Despite the great confusion that will come on the earth, God's "people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Revelation 7:1. But "who shall be able to stand" in that day? That is the question at the end of Revelation chapter 6. We need very little patience to know the answer to that all-important inquiry, for it follows in the very next verses: "Those who are sealed!" Revelation 7:1-3.

It is clear from the context that only those who are "sealed" "shall be able to stand in the great day of judgment," and that the book of Revelation, as well as the whole of Scripture, turns around this reality. Perhaps that is one of

the reasons why the inspired pen states that "In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585.

As for the question of who will be sealed, the answer is: Those how have "the patience of the saints." Revelation 14:12. That answer appears in the very heart of the last book of the canon, where four captivating symbols (the pure woman, the dragon, the beast and the false prophet) represent all the world's religions. That there are four should not surprise students of Scripture, because their prototypes are repeatedly exemplified throughout Scripture by prophetic symbols, parables, and allegories drawn from real life experiences—in the book of Daniel, the illustrations of Jesus, and the lives of Abraham and Isaac, Sarah and Hagar, Jacob and Esau, Ruth and Boaz, etc. Thus, the gospel message was in the world from the beginning of time. John 8:56.

These four symbols portray four different views of God and the gospel, as is apparent when we ourselves have a clear understanding of the “good news.” Naturally the first of the four symbols is that of the true faith (the pure woman). Before we can recognize a counterfeit, we must know the real—Christ before the anti-christ. The woman clothed in the sun with the moon under her feet fitly signifies those of all generations who have exercised a simple “faith which worketh by love.” Galatians 5:6.

This one compact word picture presents a complete overview of the great controversy and God’s purpose in creating man: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” Revelation 12:1.

Without the sun, the moon cannot shine; and precisely here an important jewel lies right beneath the surface: God’s day begins at sunset: “And the evening and the morning were the first day....” Genesis 1:5, etc. Therefore, the symbol appears before the reality—type before antitype. The Old Testament is replete with related illustrations. For example, when the Passover lamb was slain and eaten at midnight, the people were commanded: “And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning....” Exodus 12:10. The implication is plain: When the reality appears (the true gospel symbolized by the sun), type, or symbol, disappears (all the sacrificial antitypes symbolized by the moon), because the “day” of salvation is no longer far off but near at hand!

The pure woman clothed with the sun of righteous exquisitely portrays those who are faithful, not only in earth, but also in heaven—those angels who DID NOT leave their first estate and who are now ministering to the heirs of salvation. As heirs, God’s faithful children on earth have been adopted into the family of heaven with its multitudes, to be included in the promise given to Abraham that his descendants would be numbered “as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore....” “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Genesis 22:17; Galatians 3:29.

Praise God that a special promise is given to the faithful remnant of earth: “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” Daniel 12:3. The reference could not be clearer. As God’s people come to the end of time, those who pass through the test will be likened to the faithful of heaven who have never fallen. Then “all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” Numbers 14:21. The purpose of man’s creation will be fulfilled, for the image of God will be restored in those who are faithful in the final day of test.

“‘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 Object Lessons*, p. 69.

### Basic religious assumptions

The first of these three schemes standing in opposition to those who put God first is symbolized by the dragon. In this religious system, salvation is seen as obtained by Works: Like Pharaoh, its adherents declare, “Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice?” Exodus 5:2. *Dragon religion* encompasses all self-reliant systems of appeasement and salvation by works. The basic assumption is that man’s deeds are needed to avert or ward off evil.

The second system of religion is that of the *Beast*: Salvation is believed to be obtained by Faith AND Works. This religion bonds the individual to itself through rituals led by priests and the performance of required deeds (confession and works of penance) to atone for sin. The basic assumption is that God can be bought if you bless the system with your offering.

The third counterfeit of true worship is that of the *False Prophet*: Salvation by presumption, or Faith in one’s Faith, “only believe!” The basic assumption is that belief in Jesus equals favor with God.

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The purpose of man’s creation will be fulfilled, for the image of God will be restored in those who are faithful in the final day of test.

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### Three false views of God

The *Dragon Religion* views God (or the gods) as one who must be appeased, His anger assuaged, His wrath averted, and His favor obtained through sacrifices and rituals. "Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his great triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. By contemplating and worshiping their own conceptions, the heathen had lost a knowledge of God, and had become more and more corrupt. So it was with Israel. The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion.... Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin." –*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 35, 36.

*Beast Religion* presents a slightly different view of God. "Should faith and works purchase the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under obligation to the creature. Here is an opportunity for falsehood to be accepted as truth. If any man can merit salvation by anything he may do, then he is in the same position as the Catholic to do penance for his sins. Salvation, then, is partly of debt, that may be earned as wages. If man cannot, by any of his good works, merit salvation, then it must be wholly of grace, received by man as a sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is wholly a free gift. Justification by faith is placed beyond controversy." –*Faith and Works*, pp. 19, 20.

The *Religion of the False Prophet* presents God as a benevolent father who has done everything for the one who confesses belief in Him. "Its advocates teach that sanctification is an instantaneous work, by which, through faith alone, they attain to perfect holiness. 'Only believe,' say they, 'and the blessing is yours.' No further effort on the part of the receiver is supposed to be required. At the same time they deny the authority of the law of God, urging that they are released from obligation to keep the commandments." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 471.

"Faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption, for presumption is Satan's counterfeit of faith. Faith claims God's promises and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises but uses them as Satan did,

to excuse transgression." –*Mind, Character and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 534.

### The true faith

In contrast to all false systems of worship and incorrect views of the true God is the religion of the *Pure Woman*. Here is demonstrated a faith that works by love and purifies the soul: "Salvation is [by grace] through faith in Jesus Christ alone." –*Faith and Works*, p. 18. See John 3:16, 18, 36; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:1-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 20; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12, 13; Colossians 3:1-5.

In the religion of the *Pure Woman*, God is known as the Father, Creator, Redeemer, and Provider. He is infinite, loving, holy, pure, merciful, forgiving, and gracious. Sin cannot exist in His presence. He relates to every single person as a Father who does only what is best for His child. Sin destroys people from the inside out, along with all joy and happiness, so God's personal, loving relationship with each individual is for the purpose of cleansing him from sin and changing his mind and heart so he can live in His holy (sinless) presence for eternity—but only with that person's full permission, cooperation, and response of love.

"The true religion, the only religion of the Bible, that teaches forgiveness only through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, that advocates righteousness by the faith of the Son of God, has been slighted, spoken against, ridiculed, and rejected." –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 468.

"True religion works out the principles of God's law—love to God and love to man. Those who will be accepted of heaven, will have put their talents out to the exchangers for the glory of God and the good of humanity." –*Review and Herald*, February 14, 1888.

"The good tree will produce good fruit. If the fruit is unpalatable and worthless, the tree is evil. So the fruit borne in the life testifies as to the condition of the heart and the excellence of the character. Good works can never purchase salvation, but they are an evidence of the faith that acts by love and purifies the soul. Galatians 5:6; 1 Peter 1:22. And though the eternal reward is not bestowed because of our merit, yet it will be in proportion

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"Faith claims God's promises and brings forth fruit in obedience."

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to the work that has been done through the grace of Christ.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 314.

“In the trust given to the first disciples, believers in every age have shared. Everyone who has received the gospel has been given sacred truth to impart to the world. God’s faithful people have always been aggressive missionaries, consecrating their resources to the honor of His name and wisely using their talents in His service.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.

### ***No merit in repentance or faith***

“There is no salvation without repentance. No impenitent sinner can believe with his heart unto righteousness. Repentance is described by Paul as a godly sorrow for sin that ‘worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.’ 2 Corinthians 7:10. This repentance has in it nothing of the nature of merit, but it prepares the heart for the acceptance of Christ as the only Saviour, the only hope of the lost sinner....

“Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ’s perfect obedience instead of the sinner’s transgression and

defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfailing promises, God pardons his sin and justifies him freely....

“He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure.... All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. ‘Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,’ we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation.” –*Faith and Works*, pp. 99-101, 94.

“The question to be settled is, ‘Are we willing to separate ourselves from the world, that we may become children of God?’” –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 167.

“No one can be a successful soul winner till he himself has settled the question of surrender to God. We are individually to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” –*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 49.

“But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” Numbers 14:21. **SW**

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“No one can be a successful soul winner till he himself has settled the question of surrender to God.”

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## **Look Away from Self to Jesus**

“The word of God is the foundation of our faith, and therefore it is by the word of God that we may obtain evidence of our standing before God. We are not to make our feelings a test by which to discern whether we are in or out of favor with God, whether they be what we consider encouraging or not. As soon as one begins to contemplate his feelings, he is on dangerous ground. If he feels joyous, he is confident he is in a favorable condition; but when a change comes, as it will, for circumstances will be so arranged that feelings of depression

will make the heart sad, then he will be naturally led to doubt that God has accepted him. It is not wisdom to look at the emotions, and try to test your spirituality by your feelings. Do not study yourself; look away from self to Jesus. While you acknowledge yourself as a sinner, yet you may appropriate Christ as your sin-pardoning Redeemer. Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.... The Christian must not study his emotions, and give way to his feelings, or he will soon entertain the evil guest, doubt, and become entangled in the perplexities of despair. Expel the suggestions of the enemy by contemplating the matchless depths of your Saviour’s love.” –*Signs of the Times*, December 3, 1894.



# Prophetic Symbols

SYMBOL	MEANING	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
Angel	Messenger	Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26; Hebrews 1:14
Ark of testimony	Place where God dwells	Exodus 25:10-22; Psalm 80:1
Babylon	Apostate religion/confusion	Genesis 10:8-10; 11:6-9; Revelation 17:1-5; 18:2, 3
Balaam's doctrine	Self-seeking compromise for gain	Numbers 22:5-25
Beasts	Political, religious powers	Daniel 7:23
Binding of Satan	Symbolic chain of circumstances	Isaiah 14:12-20
Black	Moral darkness, sin, apostasy	Exodus 10:21-23; Jeremiah 4:20-28; 8:21; Acts 26:18; John 12:35; Joel 2:1-10
Blood	Life	Leviticus 17:11; Deuteronomy 12:23
Bottomless pit	Earth in chaos, dark, empty	Genesis 1:1, 2; Jeremiah 4:23-28; Isaiah 24:1-4, 19; Revelation 20:1-3
Bow	Success in battle against evil	Psalms 7:11, 12; 45:4, 5
Crowns	Kingship, victory	1 Chronicles 20:2; Ezekiel 21:26, 27; James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8
Cup	Suffering, judgment/sharing fate	Psalms 11:6; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17, 22-23; Jeremiah 25:15-17
Day	Literal year	Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34
Day of the Lord	God's day of judgment	Isaiah 28:21; Joel 2:2; 11; 2 Peter 3:7-12; Revelation 16:14
Door	Opportunity, probation	2 Corinthians 2:12; Revelation 3:20; Luke 13:24, 25
Dragon	Satan, his agents	Isaiah 27:1; 30:6; Revelation 12:7-9; Ezekiel 29:3; Jeremiah 51:34
Eagle	Speed, power, vision, vengeance	Deuteronomy 28:49; Habakkuk 1:6-8; Revelation 12:14
Eating the book	Assimilating the message	Ezekiel 3:1-3; Jeremiah 15:16
Egypt	Atheism, the world	Exodus 5:2
Eyesalve	Holy Spirit's discernment of truth	Ephesians 1:17-19; Psalm 119:18; 1 John 2:20-27; John 16:7-13
Faithful Witness	Christ	John 18:37; 3:11; Revelation 1:5; 3:14; 19:11
False prophet	Apostate Protestantism	Revelation 13:13, 14; 16:13, 14; 19:20
Forehead	Mind, conscience	Romans 7:25; Ezekiel 3:8, 9
Fornication	Mixing truth with error	Ezekiel 16:15, 26; Isaiah 23:17; James 4:4; Revelation 14:4
Four beasts...	Representatives of God's character	Ezekiel 1, 10; Revelation 5:8-10; 4:6-9; 6:1-7; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4
Four corners...	Four directions of the compass	Jeremiah 49:36
Garments	Covering of righteousness	Genesis 35:2; Isaiah 61:10; 52:1; Zechariah 3:3-5; Romans 13:14
Gold	Faith, truth	Psalm 19:7-10; Galatians 5:6; James 2:5; Job 23:10
Hand	Labor, work	Ecclesiastes 9:10
Harlot	Apostate church, religion	Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 3:1-3, 6-9
Heads	Ruler, ruling entity	Daniel 7:6; 8:8, 22; Revelation 17:3, 10
Horn	Power, king, kingdom	Deuteronomy 33:17; Zechariah 1:18, 19; Psalm 89:17, 24; Daniel 8:5, 21, 22
Horse	Battle/angels performing God's work	Exodus 15:21; Isaiah 43:17; Jeremiah 8:6; Ezekiel 38:15; Zechariah 10:3; 1:8-10
Image	Likeness	Exodus 20:4; Genesis 1:26; 5:3; Deuteronomy 4:25; Romans 8:29
Incense	Prayers of the saints	Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4
Jezebel	Immorality, idolatry, apostasy	1 Kings 21:25; 2 Kings 9:22
Key of David	Power to open and close sanctuary	Revelation 3:7, 8; Isaiah 22:22
Keys	Control, jurisdiction	Isaiah 22:22; Matthew 16:19
Lamb	Perfect atonement of Jesus	Leviticus 4:32, etc.; John 1:29, 36; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6, etc.
Lamb's wife	New Jerusalem	Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2, 9, 10
Lion	Kingship of Christ	Genesis 49:9; Revelation 5:4-9; Psalm 7:2
Locusts	Agencies of destruction	Joel 1:4; Deuteronomy 28:38
Lord's Day	Sabbath	Isaiah 58:13; Matthew 12:8; Exodus 20:10
Man Child	Jesus	Psalm 2:7-9; Revelation 12:5
Mark	Sign, seal, mark of power	Romans 4:11; Revelation 7:2, 3; Ezekiel 9:4

SYMBOL	MEANING	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
Measuring rod	God's law, His word	James 2:10-12; Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; Isaiah 8:19, 20; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17
Merchants	Advocates, practitioners	Isaiah 47:11-15; Nahum 3:16; Revelation 18:3, 11, 15, 23
Moon	Ceremonial types/shadows	Psalm 89:35-37; Hebrews 10:1, 11
Morning Star	Jesus	Revelation 22:16
Mountains	Religious, political powers	Isaiah 2:2, 3; Jeremiah 17:3; 31:23; Ezekiel 17:22, 23; Daniel 2:35, 44, 45
Mystery of God	Gospel of Jesus Christ	Ephesians 1:9, 10; 3:9; 6:19; Colossians 1:26, 27
New Jerusalem	Holy City in heaven	Revelation 3:12; 21:2
Oil	Holy Spirit	Zechariah 4:2-6; Revelation 4:5
Open door	Unlimited opportunity	1 Corinthians 16:9; Acts 14:27; John 10:7-9; Hosea 2:15; Colossians 4:3
Rainbow	Sign of God's covenant promise	Genesis 9:11-17
Red (color)	Sin, corruption, persecution	Isaiah 1:18; 26:21; Psalm 75:8; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 32:6, 11
Reins	Seat of will, affections	Psalm 7:9; 16:7; 26:2; 73:21; Proverbs 23:16; Jeremiah 17:10
Seal	Sign, seal, mark	Romans 4:11; Revelation 7:2, 3; Ezekiel 9:4
Seat	Location of throne	1 Samuel 20:25; Acts 25:10; Romans 14:10; Revelation 13:2; 16:10
Second death	Lake of fire	Revelation 21:8; 20:14
Serpent	Satan	Revelation 12:7-9; 20:2
Seven	Number of completeness	Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 29:35; Leviticus 16:14, 19; Revelation 15:1, 7; etc.
Seven candlesticks	God's holy light, seven churches	Exodus 25:31-40; Revelation 1:20
Seven heads	Political powers	Revelation 17:9, 10; Isaiah 2:2-4; Jeremiah 17:3
Seven lamps	Jesus, God's word	John 9:5; 1:9; Psalm 119:105; Revelation 4:5
Sickle	Harvest, end of the world	Matthew 13:39; Revelation 14:14
Sodom	Moral degeneracy	Ezekiel 16:46-55; Jeremiah 23:14; Genesis 19:4-14
Stars	Angels	Revelation 1:16-20; 12:4, 7-9; Job 38:7
Sun	Gospel of Jesus	John 9:5; Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2; Matthew 17:2; John 8:12
Sword	Power to destroy, destruction	Isaiah 3:25; 13:15; Acts 12:1, 2; Jeremiah 48:2
Testimony of Jesus	Spirit/gift of prophecy	Revelation 19:10; 22:9; 1 Corinthians 13:2
Thief	Suddenness of Jesus' coming	1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10
Time	One literal year	Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32; 7:25; 11:13; Revelation 12:6, 14; 11:2, 3
Torment/trouble	Testing, proof by trial	Isaiah 33:14; 1 Corinthians 3:13; Hebrews 12:29; Revelation 8:7
Twenty-four elders	First redeemed from earth	Revelation 5:9, 10; 4:4; 7:9-14
Two witnesses	Old and New Testaments	John 5:39; Zechariah 4:1-14; Psalm 119:130, 105; John 12:48
Two-edged sword	God's word/sword of the Spirit	Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Matthew 10:34; Isaiah 49:2
Waters	Inhabited land mass, people	Revelation 17:15
White (color)	Purity	Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 1:18
Winds	Strife, war	Jeremiah 25:31-33; 49:36, 37; 4:11-13; Zechariah 7:14
Wine	Doctrine, Jesus' blood	Jeremiah 25:15-18; 51:7; Matthew 26:21-29
Wings	Speed	Habakkuk 1:6-8; Jeremiah 4:13; Exodus 19:4
Woman, corrupt	Apostate church	Ezekiel 16:15-58; 23:2-21; Hosea 2:5; 3:1
Woman, impure	Apostate church	Ezekiel 23:2-21; Revelation 14:4; Hosea 2:5; 3:1; Ezekiel 16:15-58
Woman, pure	Faithful church	Jeremiah 6:2; Isaiah 51:16; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-35
Wormwood	Sorrow, bitterness	Jeremiah 9:15; 23:15; Lamentations 3:19
Wrath of God	Seven last plagues	Revelation 15:1





# I Am the Truth

## The worst deception

**T**he worst deception for a human being is to come into this world and for one's entire life believe something false as if it were true—for example, that this world is flat, supported by a gigantic turtle, beyond which there is only emptiness. Other theories have been formulated that are just as absurd as this and without scientific basis. These fallacies were believed for many centuries, influencing science and cultural, social, and economic development. Thousands died believing such falsehoods until the great explorers verified that the earth was spherical. But this was already revealed in the Bible, for the books of Isaiah and Job testify that the earth is round and suspended in space.

Is sincerity able to change or make falsehood true? Or what about intense enthusiasm? No! Falsehood will never change. Or can blind faith change falsehood? Not either. Believing a falsehood can absolutely influence life, as already said. For example, people think that a vegetarian diet is nutritionally inferior and that vegetarians can get sick or suffer serious deficiencies that threaten their lives. This is false. On the contrary, if a person follows a vegetarian diet, he can be freed from many modern diseases and premature death, besides contributing to respect for the animal kingdom and the environment. Well, how much more a person can suffer in the spiritual realm, to the point of losing eternal life, if he believes not the truth but lies, such as reincarnation, that

*By Jose Vicente Giner*

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How much more a person can suffer in the spiritual realm, to the point of losing eternal life.

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the dead can appear to the living, evolution, atheism, predestination, eternally burning hell, the false day of rest, etc.

### God's Truth

As human beings, we are composed of spirit, soul, and body, thus having physical, intellectual, and spiritual sides. 1 Thessalonians 5:23. God created us with physical, emotional, moral, and intellectual needs. We need to know, then, the truth from the Bible and testimonies in regard to health reform so we will be healthy and our brains, thoughts, and decisions will be positively affected. We also need to know Biblical truth so that we understand where we came from, where we are right now, where we are going, what to believe, what we should love, and what we should reject. The enemy constantly tries to introduce errors among the people of God. The apostle Paul warned the early church: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:3.

"When Satan can bring his craftiness to bear on human minds, deceptive influences are received [as] from heaven. If his deceptions are allowed to enter, many souls will be ensnared by them, before it is seen that they are not from God, but from the enemy of all righteousness.

"I assure you that it will be one of our perplexities to distinguish the genuine from the spurious. Deception steals in unawares, just as it stole into the heavenly courts." —*The Upward Look*, p. 135.

The physical, moral, and intellectual sides of man are affected by lies or doctrinal errors. For example, when it is preached that God's law has been abolished, if people are made to believe this lie, their eternal life can be at risk. When the falsehood is spread that Sunday is the Lord's day in place of the Biblical Sabbath, people are enticed to believe a lie and thus lose the blessing and sanctification of the sacred Sabbath day. Isaiah 58:13, 14. People can be sincere and earnest in defending this teaching, but it is false and cannot be sustained by the Bible. The Sabbath is the only true day of rest.

A person who does not believe in God, or in the Bible as His inspired word, will commit sin. Sin is the violation of the law, and the wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23. Do we see the influence of believing a lie? Thousands and thousands of people in the world are suffering because they do not embrace the truth of Christ. It is not that the Lord is punishing them for this, but they hurt themselves by not following the Master. Jesus wants to enlighten and save every human being, not condemn him and make him suffer; this is the work of the enemy, not God. Luke 9:56.

Ignorance does not free us from the consequences of our mistakes; but when the truth of Christ comes to us, it is our responsibility to accept it, for if we reject it, we continue to cling to error; and there is no worse blindness than that of one who does not want to see.

Here is a practical example: If I tell my son not to stick his finger into the electric socket because it is dangerous, and then, regardless of the truth or the warning, he deliberately sticks his finger into the socket, the result is already known. Here is another example: If someone smokes daily for years, thinking that the tobacco is not hurting him, will he be free from the harmful effects of it? If he acquires an illness, can he blame God for it?

### Jesus is the Truth

Jesus taught that He is the Truth (John 14:6)—"the Truth"—not a part of the truth or a vision of the truth. Jesus speaks in absolute, not relative, terms. When He says that He is the Truth, it means that there is no one else like Him. People can speak the Truth and teach the Truth, but they are not the Truth. Christ is the Truth that we must believe to be saved. Christ is the Truth that we must teach to enlighten the world. We are all invited to embrace Him as our personal Saviour. Acts 4:12; John 15:1; 11:25, 26.

The Truth is encompassed within the Bible; the fundamental doctrines of the Bible are the Truth of Jesus. Only the Truth will set us free. John 8:32. The Truth, then, is the gospel, the good news of eternal salvation. The fact that Christ saves man is a part of the Truth, which includes many more teachings for us to learn,

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such as the fact that accepting Christ as our personal Saviour means to obey His holy law of love. John 14:15.

The Truth will free us from error, from believing lies and deceit that lead us to ruin. The Truth will free us from the power of the evil one. The Truth will enlighten us at the end of the time of grace, when the world will be guided by the lies of the beast and its image.

### *The everlasting gospel*

The gospel message is as old as the world itself and presents the saving Truth of God. Its rays shine from Eden to our time. That message has not changed, because in the three angels' messages it is said that the first angel has the "everlasting gospel" to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Revelation 14:6.

This message is the gospel for our time and is condensed in a very special way in the messages delivered by the three angels of Revelation 14. It is the present truth that the Adventist leaders defended, the message that the Adventist Reformers held in their hearts during the First and Second World Wars. The first angel says to give glory to God and worship Him, because He is the Creator and the hour of His judgment has come. Revelation 14:7. How does one give glory to God and worship Him? By embracing His Truth and obeying His commandments. Revelation 14:12.

The second angel says that Babylon has fallen and has made the nations drink the wine of her fornication. Revelation 14:8. False religion is thus characterized as giving wine—false doctrines—that "intoxicate"; that is to say, they imprison, deceive, mislead, and cause people to be disoriented spiritually. How many negative repercussions there are when one believes a lie on a spiritual level!

The third of the three angels urges all mankind not to believe the lies of Babylon so as not to receive the plagues that will fall when the final hour of this world comes. It is very interesting that the third message warns of an extraordinary lie—the exaltation of Sunday in place of the holy Sabbath day. Revelation 14:9-11. "The mark of the beast" is its identifying characteristic, and this is a separate study. However, we can say,

in short, that just as God has a seal, which is the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8; Ezekiel 20:12, 20), the beast and its image require worship on Sunday, which will identify the false worshipers (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13:11-17).

Receiving the mark of the beast and its image is to accept the lie that Sunday is the day of the Lord. This false day of worship is not supported by the Holy Scriptures. The people of God in the Old Testament observed the Sabbath of the Lord, as did the Christians in the first centuries after Jesus returned to heaven. It was in the fourth century that the Roman emperor Constantine made a law mandating Sunday as a day of worship, and he had no Scriptural basis or authority for doing this. The church went into apostasy by incorporating this and other false doctrines into their worship, and the religious leaders persecuted and excommunicated all who opposed this false day. However, there were always believers who stood on the side of the Truth, and that is still the case today.

The Truth that the Lord teaches us is that the Sabbath is His holy day of rest and that it would never change, for the Sabbath is at the heart of His holy law; it is unbreakable, immovable. Matthew 5:18. Thus, at the end of time, everyone's destiny will be determined by whether he or she accepts Truth or error. What will we do? Only with the help of the Holy Spirit can we recognize error and refuse it. Zechariah 4:6.

Other Biblical teachings that tend to be blurred and distorted in Adventist circles today are: The personality of the Holy Spirit, the eternal existence of Christ, the 144,000, the validity of the Spirit of prophecy, true health reform, the one faithful people that God has in this world, true marriage for life as given by God Himself, etc. Is it important for these points of truth and others to be believed as the Bible teaches them? Is the idea correct that, even if we do not embrace the same belief, we can be united in doctrinal diversity? This is the philosophy of the worldwide ecumenical movement; but it does not correspond to the Biblical Truth, which teaches the following: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called

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in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism." "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Amos 3:3; Ephesians 4:5; 2 John 8, 9.

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Every minister,  
worker, and layman  
has the duty to  
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### Our duty

The system of Truth that our Lord Jesus Christ sets forth in His Word is the Truth for every son and daughter of Adam. His church, which has the sacred duty to protect this spiritual legacy, was established for missionary purposes, to transmit from generation to generation the saving Truth. Every minister, worker, and layman has the duty to protect the Truth and to proclaim it. In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ will come when the gospel has been made known throughout the world. Matthew 24:14.

We need to embrace the Truth, to believe the Truth, to live the Truth, and finally to proclaim the Truth if we want it to transform us and we want to be translated to heaven. He who believes the Truth of God, even though he dies, will live, for the Truth that is believed and obeyed sanctifies the Lord's people. Truth in the soul establishes it on the stable, sure foundation of God. No one can move a person who clings to the Truth that is Jesus Christ.

Let no one be deceived. This is not my opinion or yours; it is not what I feel or perceive but what God wants us to believe, as contained in the Bible—the Truth that will enlighten the world and that is revealed in the message proclaimed

by the angel of Revelation 18. When everyone has heard this message, Jesus will come. Will we do our part to make that happen?

"The truth must be studied, it must be searched for as hidden treasure. Wonderful illuminations will not be given aside from the Word, or to take the place of it. Cling to the Word, receive the ingrafted Word, which will make men wise unto salvation." —*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 48.

"The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 593.

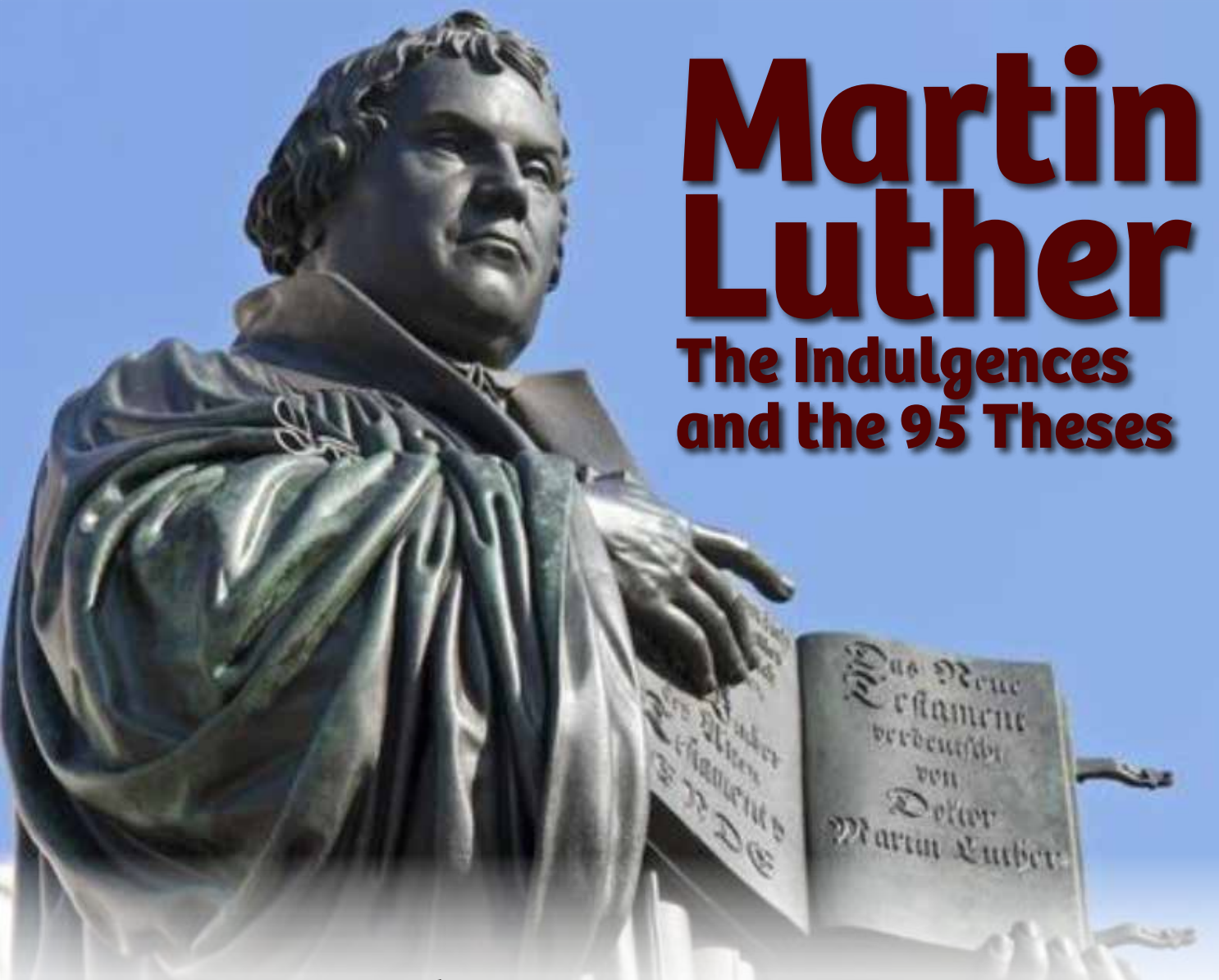
### Conclusion

My dear brothers, sisters, and friends, the time has come for the church to put forth more determined efforts to make the Truth known in the world. We must continue to sow in every field and let the Spirit of God do His work. We should not hide, minimize, or misrepresent the fundamental truths that were transmitted to the church through much prayer and fasting. We need to be on guard so the enemy does not come in and sow his seed of falsehood among us. We must watch and pray that we will not enter into temptation. Our mission is to sow the Truth, but the work of making the seed germinate and bear fruit belongs to God.

"I know from the light that God has given me that there should be a revival of the messages that have been given in the past, because men will seek to bring in new theories, and will try to prove that these theories are scriptural, whereas they are error, which, if allowed a place, will undermine faith in the truth. We are not to accept these suppositions and pass them along as truth. No, no; we must not move from the platform of truth on which we have been established." —*The Upward Look*, p. 199.

Will we fulfill our mission? Let us say, "Yes!" We are not alone in this work. God bless us all. **SW**





# Martin Luther

## The Indulgences and the 95 Theses

**O**n October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted 95 theses against the selling of indulgences on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. He thus triggered an earthquake that would shake the Roman Catholic Church to its very foundations. Since that time, doubts have arisen whether the posting of the theses actually occurred. Some say that it did; others, that it did not. However, it is certain that Luther is the author of this writing.

He wrote the document in Latin, because he saw it as an object of discussion within the academic, internal church sphere. Such debates were frequent in his time and served, among other things, to prove the suitability and ability of the university lecturers. In prior years, Luther himself posted a whole series of other theses on different subjects; and his friend and colleague

Andreas Bodenstein, called Karlstadt, produced 152 theses against the scholastic theology in the same year—1517.

Making a case and presenting it for discussion before a cultured audience was therefore nothing special. What was new was the content. When Luther posted his theses, he was still a loyal, devoted son of the church; and he also believed in the doctrine and practice of indulgences and in the pope: “He who speaks against the truth of apostolic indulgence, be anathema and cursed.” (Thesis 71.) Nevertheless, he strongly insisted on limiting the efficacy of the indulgences (Theses 5 and 6.) and criticized papal avarice. (Thesis 86.)

What Luther was strongly opposed to was the theological distortion and the shamelessness of the indulgence seller: “But blessed be he who is on his guard against the naughty and

*By Franco Di Franca*

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When Luther posted his theses, he was still a loyal, devoted son of the church.

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impudent words of the preacher of pardons.” (Thesis 72.)

### Money and religion

“The Roman Church had made merchandise of the grace of God....

“Tetzel, ascending the pulpit, extolled the indulgences as the most precious gift of God. He declared that by virtue of his certificates of pardon all the sins which the purchaser should afterward desire to commit would be forgiven him, and that ‘not even repentance is necessary.’ –*Ibid.*, b. 3, ch. 1. More than this, he assured his hearers that the indulgences had power to save not only the living but the dead.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 127.

The Dominican presumed to assert that his certificates of pardon were so effective that they could even release a man from his sin who would assault the mother of God. Luther answered, without mentioning him, with his 75th thesis: “To think that the popish pardons have power to absolve a man even if—an utter impossibility—he had violated the mother of God, is madness.”

In the 27th and 28th theses, he took up a then-current slogan to denounce the avarice of the indulgence preachers.

“With one single sentence Luther pulls the carpet out from under the feet of Tetzel, ‘and of all those who colluded with him’: ‘And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’

“He wanted the entire life of the believer to be constant penance.” –Willi Winkler, *Luther—ein deutscher Rebell*, Berlin, 2016, p. 173.

As already mentioned, Luther wrote his theses in Latin because he planned on a discussion within the narrow circle of experts. To be fair, he also sent a copy to Johannes Tetzel, the indulgence salesperson, and to Albrecht von Brandenburg, the papal indulgence representative for Germany. He added to the theses a letter with which he admonished the recipient to stop the excesses of the sale of indulgences. But in so doing, Luther achieved exactly the opposite of what he intended. He did not know that his addressee desperately needed money, and he crossed a highly organized commercial model

in taking this step. His theses were an attack on the financial system of the archbishop as well as the pope.

Albrecht von Brandenburg was an office hunter, and he had already managed to become the bishop of Magdeburg and the archbishop of Mainz. “In the process, huge bribes had been paid, first because the candidate was still too young, and secondly because it was expressly forbidden by the ecclesiastical law to get such a double office. A special papal dispensation could provide a release from this—for the payment of a lot of money. To erase the 50,000-guilder debt that had in the meanwhile piled up, Albrecht turned to the Fugger banking house. The bank granted additional time for payment of the amount because there was a view of considerable profit, since Albrecht had the idea to participate in the selling of Peter’s indulgence, which was widespread in the German empire. Half of the income should go to Rome, and the other half would serve to pay the debt at the banking house which managed this trade, of course not free of charge. Every guilder therefore was disbursed into three pouches—the pope’s, the archbishop’s, and the Fugger’s.” –Martin Luther, *Die 95 Thesen. Übersetzt und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Karl-Heinz Göttert*, Frankfurt am Main, 2016, p. 114.

A fourth pouch into which money flowed, and which is not mentioned here, was Tetzel’s—300 guilders per month. By way of comparison, the court artist Luca Cranach earned 100 guilders in an entire year; and a day laborer, one guilder per week.

Albrecht von Brandenburg did not answer Luther’s theses, but he realized their importance and how dangerous they were. He immediately had them delivered to the University of Mainz, so a heresy process could be initiated against the author as soon as possible. He also informed Pope Leo X.

But other people as well quickly recognized the explosiveness of the writing, translated it into German, and circulated it to a wider audience. The theses spread like wildfire in Germany and throughout all of Europe, ultimately leading to that political and religious revolution that became the Protestant Reformation, which has had a lasting effect to this day. **SW**

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His theses were an attack on the financial system of the archbishop as well as the pope.

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# The 95 Theses

**Nailed to the door of the Castle Church, Wittenberg, Germany  
by Martin Luther on October 31, 1517**

Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, and ordinary lecturer therein at Wittenberg, intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place. Therefore he asks that those who cannot be present and dispute with him orally shall do so in their absence by letter. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying, "Repent ye, etc.," intended that the whole life of His believers on earth should be a constant penance.
2. And the word "penance" neither can, nor may, be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, to confession and atonement as exercised under the priest's ministry.
3. Nevertheless, he does not think of inward penance only; rather is inward penance worthless unless it produces various outward mortifications of the flesh.
4. Therefore, mortification continues as long as hatred of oneself continues, that is to say, true inward penance lasts until entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.
5. The pope will not, and cannot, remit other punishments than those which he has imposed by his own decree or according to the canons.
6. The pope can forgive sins only in the sense that he declares and confirms what may be forgiven of God; or that he doth it in those cases which he hath reserved to himself; be this contemned, the sin remains unremitted.
7. God forgives none his sin without at the same time casting him penitent and humbled before the priest His vicar.
8. The canons concerning penance are imposed only on the living; they ought not by any means, following the same canons, to be imposed on the dying.
9. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, acting in the pope, does well for us, when the latter in his decrees entirely removes the article of death and extreme necessity.
10. Those priests act unreasonably and ill who reserve for purgatory the penance imposed on the dying.
11. This abuse of changing canonical penalty into the penalty of purgatory seems to have arisen when the bishops were asleep.
12. In times of yore, canonical penalties were imposed, not after, but before, absolution, as tests of true repentance and affliction.
13. The dying pay all penalties by their death, are already dead to the canons, and rightly have exemption from them.
14. Imperfect spiritual health or love in the dying person necessarily brings with it great fear; and the less this love is, the greater the fear it brings.
15. This fear and horror—to say nothing of other things—are sufficient in themselves to produce the punishment of purgatory, because they approximate to the horror of despair.
16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ as perfect despair, imperfect despair, and security of salvation differ.
17. It seems as must in purgatory love in the souls increase, as fear diminishes in them.
18. It does not seem to be proved either by arguments or by the Holy Writ that they are outside the state of merit and demerit, or increase of love.
19. This, too, seems not to be proved, that they are all sure and confident of their salvation, though we may be quite sure of it.
20. Therefore the pope, in speaking of the perfect remission of all punishments, does not mean that all penalties in general be forgiven, but only those imposed by himself.
21. Therefore, those preachers of indulgences err who say that, by the pope's indulgence, a man may be exempt from all punishments, and be saved.
22. Yea, the pope remits the souls in purgatory no penalty which they, according to the canons, would have had to pay in this life.
23. If to anybody complete remission of all penalties may be granted, it is certain that it is granted only to those most approaching perfection, that is, to very few.
24. Therefore, the multitude is misled by the boastful promise of the paid penalty, whereby no manner of distinction is made.
25. The same power that the pope has over purgatory, such has also every bishop in his diocese, and every curate in his parish.
26. The pope acts most rightly in granting remission to souls, not by the power of the keys—which in purgatory he does not possess—but by way of intercession.
27. They preach vanity who say that the soul flies out of purgatory as soon as the money thrown into the chest rattles.
28. What is sure is that as soon as the penny rattles in the chest, gain and avarice are on the way of increase; but the intercession of the church depends only on the will of God Himself.
29. And who knows, too, whether all those souls in purgatory wish to be redeemed, as it is said to have happened with St. Severinus and St. Paschalis.
30. Nobody is sure of having repented sincerely enough; much less can he be sure of having received perfect remission of sins.
31. Seldom even as he who has sincere repentance, is he who really gains indulgence; that is to say, most seldom to be found.

32. On the way to eternal damnation are they and their teachers, who believe that they are sure of their salvation through indulgences.
33. Beware well of those who say, the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to God.
34. For the forgiveness contained in these pardons has reference only to the penalties of sacramental atonement which were appointed by men.
35. He preaches like a heathen who teaches that those who will deliver souls out of purgatory or buy indulgences do not need repentance and contrition.
36. Every Christian who feels sincere repentance and woe on account of his sins has perfect remission of pain and guilt even without letters of indulgence.
37. Every true Christian, be he still alive or already dead, partaketh in all benefits of Christ and of the church given him by God, even without letters of indulgence.
38. Yet is the pope's absolution and dispensation by no means to be contemned, since it is, as I have said, a declaration of the divine absolution.
39. It is exceedingly difficult, even for the most subtle theologians, to praise at the same time before the people the great wealth of indulgence and the truth of utter contrition.
40. True repentance and contrition seek and love punishment; while rich indulgence absolves from it, and causes men to hate it, or at least gives them occasion to do so.
41. The pope's indulgence ought to be proclaimed with all precaution, lest the people should mistakenly believe it of more value than all other works of charity.
42. Christians should be taught, it is not the pope's opinion that the buying of indulgence is in any way comparable to works of charity.
43. Christians should be taught, he who gives to the poor, or lends to a needy man, does better than buying indulgence.
44. For, by the exercise of charity, charity increases and man grows better, while by means of indulgence, he does not become better, but only freer from punishment.
45. Christians should be taught, he who sees his neighbor in distress, and, nevertheless, buys indulgence, is not partaking in the pope's pardons, but in the anger of God.
46. Christians should be taught, unless they are rich enough, it is their duty to keep what is necessary for the use of their households, and by no means to throw it away on indulgences.
47. Christians should be taught, the buying of indulgences is optional and not commanded.
48. Christians should be taught, the pope, in selling pardons, has more want and more desire of a devout prayer for himself than of the money.
49. Christians should be taught, the pope's pardons are useful as far as one does not put confidence in them, but on the contrary most dangerous, if through them one loses the fear of God.
50. Christians should be taught, if the pope knew the ways and doings of the preachers of indulgences, he would prefer that St. Peter's Minster should be burnt to ashes, rather than that it should be built up of the skin, flesh, and bones of his lambs.
51. Christians should be taught, the pope, as it is his bounden duty to do, is indeed also willing to give of his own money—and should St. Peter's be sold thereto—to those from whom the preachers of indulgences do most extort money.
52. It is a vain and false thing to hope to be saved through indulgences, though the commissary—nay, the pope himself—was to pledge his own soul therefore.
53. Those who, on account of a sermon concerning indulgences in one church, condemn the word of God to silence in the others, are enemies of Christ and of the pope.
54. Wrong is done to the word of God if one in the same sermon spends as much or more time on indulgences as on the word of the gospel.
55. The opinion of the pope cannot be otherwise than this: If an indulgence—which is the lowest thing—be celebrated with one bell, one procession and ceremonies, then the gospel—which is the highest thing—must be celebrated with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, and a hundred ceremonies.
56. The treasures of the church, whence the pope grants his dispensation, are neither sufficiently named nor known among the community of Christ.
57. It is manifest that they are not temporal treasures, for the latter are not lightly spent, but rather gathered by many of the preachers.
58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and of the saints, for these, without the pope's aid, work always grace to the inner man, cross, death, and hell to the other man.
59. St. Lawrence called the poor of the community the treasures of the community and of the church, but he understood the word according to the use in his time.
60. We affirm without pertness that the keys of the church, bestowed through the merit of Christ, are this treasure.
61. For it is clear that the pope's power is sufficient for the remission of penalties and forgiveness in the reserved cases.
62. The right and true treasure of the church is the most Holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.
63. This treasure, however, is deservedly most hateful, for it makes the first to be last.
64. While the treasure of indulgence is deservedly most agreeable, for it makes the last to be first.
65. Therefore, the treasures of the gospel are nets, with which, in times of yore, one fished for the men of Mammon.
66. But the treasures of indulgence are nets, with which nowadays one fishes for the mammon of men.

67. Those indulgences, which the preachers proclaim to be great mercies, are indeed great mercies, forasmuch as they promote gain.
68. And yet they are of the smallest compared to the grace of God and to the devotion of the cross.
69. Bishops and curates ought to mark with eyes and ears, that the commissaries of apostolical (that is, popish) pardons are received with all reverence.
70. But they ought still more to mark with eyes and ears, that these commissaries do not preach their own fancies instead of what the pope has commanded.
71. He who speaks against the truth of apostolical pardons, be anathema and cursed.
72. But blessed be he who is on his guard against the naughty and impudent words of the preacher of pardons.
73. As the pope justly disgraces and excommunicates those who use any kind of contrivance to do damage to the traffic in indulgences.
74. Much more it is his intention to disgrace and excommunicate those who, under the pretext of indulgences, use contrivance to do damage to holy love and truth.
75. To think that the popish pardons have power to absolve a man even if—to utter an impossibility—he had violated the Mother of God, is madness.
76. We assert on the contrary that the popish pardon cannot take away the least of daily sins, as regards the guilt of it.
77. To say that St. Peter, if he were now pope, could show no greater mercies, is blasphemy against St. Peter and the pope.
78. We assert on the contrary that both this and every other pope has greater mercies to show: namely, the gospel, spiritual powers, gifts of healing, etc. (1 Cor. XII).
79. He who says that the cross with the pope's arms, solemnly set on high, has as much power as the cross of Christ, blasphemes God.
80. Those bishops, curates, and theologians, who allow such speeches to be uttered among the people, will have one day to answer for it.
81. Such impudent sermons concerning indulgences make it difficult even for learned men to protect the pope's honor and dignity against the calumnies, or at all events against the searching questions, of the laymen.
82. As for instance: Why does not the pope deliver all souls at the same time out of purgatory for the sake of most holy love and on account of the bitterest distress of those souls—this being the most imperative of all motives—while he saves an infinite number of souls for the sake of that most miserable thing money, to be spent on St. Peter's minster—this being the very slightest of motives?
83. Or again: Why do masses for the dead continue, and why does not the pope return or permit to be withdrawn the funds which were established for the sake of the dead, since it is now wrong to pray for those who are already saved?
84. Again: What is this new holiness of God and the pope that, for money's sake, they permit the wicked and the enemy of God to save a pious soul, faithful to God, and yet will not save that pious and beloved soul without payment, out of love, and on account of its great distress?
85. Again: Why is it that the canons of penance, long abrogated and dead in themselves, because they are not used, are yet still paid for with money through the granting of pardons, as if they were still in force and alive?
86. Again: Why does not the pope build St. Peter's minster with his own money—since his riches are now more ample than those of Crassus—rather than with the money of poor Christians?
87. Again: Why does the pope remit or give to those who, through perfect penitence, have already a right to plenary remission and pardon?
88. Again: What greater good could the church receive, than if the pope presented this remission and pardon a hundred times a day to every believer, instead of but once, as he does now?
89. If the pope seeks by his pardon the salvation of souls, rather than money, why does he annul letters of indulgence granted long ago, and declare them out of force, though they are still in force?
90. To repress these very telling questions of the laymen by force, and not to solve them by telling the truth, is to expose the church and the pope to the enemy's ridicule and to make Christian people unhappy.
91. Therefore, if pardons were preached according to the pope's intention and opinion, all these objections would be easily answered, nay, they never had occurred.
92. Away then with all those prophets who say to the community of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace.
93. But blessed be all those prophets who say to the community of Christ, "The cross, the cross," and there is no cross.
94. Christians should be exhorted to endeavor to follow Christ their Head through cross, death, and hell.
95. And thus hope with confidence to enter heaven through many miseries, rather than in false security.

MDXVII

—<http://www.uncommon-travel-germany.com/martin-luther-95-theses.html>.





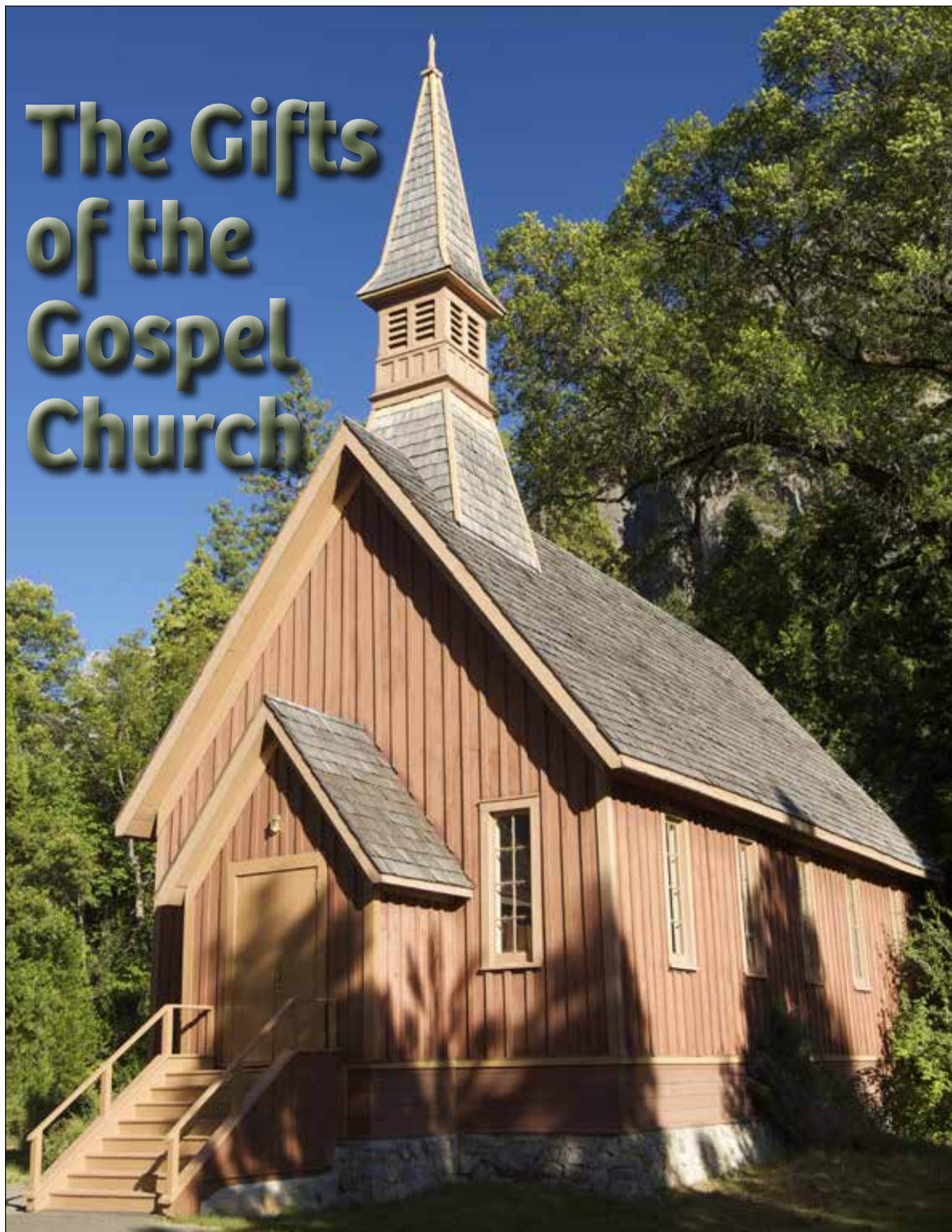
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*"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-14.*

*"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:28.*

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**By James White  
with sidebar  
by Larry Watts**



**W**hen the design of the gifts is clearly seen, then the importance of this subject will be understood. They were given for the perfecting of the church of Christ. When the apostolic church was pure and holy, having just learned the gospel from the Great Head of the church, and having been baptized with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the gifts of the Spirit were given to them, for their edification and profit. And we have no

Scripture evidence that they were designed for a limited portion of the gospel age, to be taken away from the church in a few years; but the proof is abundant that they were designed to exist in the church as long as the saints in their mortal state needed the teaching of the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

It is universally admitted that a portion of the gifts exists in the church at this day, such as "the word of wisdom," and "the word of

knowledge"; and no one denies that "pastors" and "teachers" were to be in the church until its perfection. Then, if a portion of the gifts were to remain in the church, why not all of them remain? Why should the professed church of Christ pick out from the catalog of gifts, so freely bestowed by the Great Head of the church, those that suit them best, and trample the others in the dust? It is sometimes asserted, by those who oppose the operations of the Spirit of God, that the gifts were designed for the apostles alone: but if this is true, then the church of Christ has been destitute of "the word of wisdom," "word of knowledge," and the gift of "faith" for about 1,800 years, and those who have professed to be "teachers" and pastors" have assumed a calling which ceased to exist at the death of the apostles. It is therefore very evident that all the gifts run parallel with each other, none of them ending before the rest, and that they were to extend quite through the gospel age.

The gifts were given for "the perfecting of the saints;" and as the church is in an imperfect state, they are all needed. They were to be employed for this purpose "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:13. The church has never yet reached this state of unity, knowledge, fullness and perfection; therefore the gifts should not be dismissed, until the object for which they were given is gained. It is admitted that they were necessary for the infant church in the days of the apostles, in confirming the covenant with "signs and wonders," and "gifts of the Holy Ghost." Hebrews 2:4. But let it be remembered that Paul's instructions, relative to the gifts, were given full twenty-five years after the week of confirmation, and the beloved John had his visions in the isle Patmos twenty-six years later still; therefore, none should assert that the gifts of the Spirit were given merely to confirm the covenant. They were then necessary for that object; but they are tenfold more necessary now to bring together the scattered members of the body of Christ, and to perfect the church to stand in the great day of the Lord, and to be changed to immortality when Christ comes in

IF it is true, and we think it is, according to the reasoning of Elder James White, that God has honored His faithful followers in all preceding generations with at least a measure of ALL the gifts Christ ascended to heaven to give to His church since He entered His high priestly work, THEN the wisdom of past ages and sages belongs not only to the time when it was written but also to the following generations, including this one. And IF God revealed His will through such utterances in past times, and they were not just of some man, THEN who can dare judge them as ONLY belonging to that man through whom they were given?

IF the above is true, THEN we must conclude that those revelations of the past belong to God and are of God, not of man. Then, how can we accuse a later prophet or inspired writer of plagiarism for quoting what a former inspired writer has shared? He (or she) is only taking that which is of God and putting it in a fresh light, as Jesus said would happen: "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Matthew 13:52. Cannot God quote Himself?

The reference of a later inspired writer to a former one is but confirmation that the former was a messenger of Heaven for his time as well as for ours. It is in this way that the Bible itself has come to us. To deny the process is to deny the working of God, but to accept and understand that process is to know something about God and how He works. His ways are not our ways. His ways lay the glory of man in the dust, while man's ways lay the glory of God in the dust.

It is quite sad to see those who have once been enlightened be bitten by the proud serpent and come to the point of refusing to look upon the word of God as His, until they are so dead to the working of the Holy Spirit that nothing can reach them.

It is true that as we treat Christ, so we will treat His Word. And if we take this thought further and apply it to our own personal experience, we will either come to see in all the happenings of our lives the working of men or the leading and providences of God. Our view of everything is determined by what we value, and our values determine our faith and the direction of our lives. By our faith let us neither seek glory for ourselves—by adding to or taking away from His word and glory—but in all our ways seek to confirm His ways and word by reflecting upon them spiritually so we may reflect them to the world in our actions, for spiritual things can only be discerned spiritually. A good part of our preparation to meet Jesus at His coming is to treat His messengers with humility and honesty. The command is, "Look and live." Numbers 21:8. But how are we to look? That is the greater question. And the answer is, "By faith!" "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Galatians 5:6.





His own, and His Father's glory. If the apostolic church needed the gifts to enable them to stand in their peculiar trials, how much more are they needed in the perils of the last days, to prepare the church to stand firm in the time of trouble *"such as never was."*

But why have the gifts of the Spirit been no more manifest in the church? We think the principal reasons are, first, because the church has been too blind to understand them, being almost destitute of the Spirit, and too proud to acknowledge them before the world, therefore has rejected those gifts, in which the Spirit of God is most manifested; and second, because many of those who have shared these gifts have made such poor use of them. Says the apostle Paul, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14.

There was a striking example of the truth of this text on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the disciples. The multitude were amazed, some "mocking, said, These men are full of new wine." But Peter showed to them that those manifestations were a fulfillment of prophecy, and the work of God. Whenever the church has become worldly, proud, destitute of the Spirit and blind, they have not been able to discern the things of the Spirit, and have looked upon the operations of the Holy Spirit with suspicion....

But it is a lamentable fact that a great portion of those who have had any of the gifts of the Spirit of God bestowed upon them, have soon become exalted, and have fallen. Such is the weakness of human nature that God has to bring His people through the furnace of affliction in order to save them. He often withholds His rich blessings from His people, lest they make a wrong use of them and perish. It was necessary that the apostle Paul should have a "thorn in the flesh," lest "through the abundance of the revelations" he "should be exalted." It has too often been the case, when the Lord has bestowed any great spiritual blessing or gift upon any of His humble children, that the church, instead of carefully watching over them to see that they still kept humble, has heaped upon them

compliments and flatteries, which in most cases has exalted and ruined the brightest lights set in the church.

If the apostle had not had such an abundance of "visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 12:1), he would not have needed a "thorn in the flesh." Verse 7. This proves that those on whom Heaven bestows the greatest blessings are in most danger of being "exalted," and of falling; therefore, they need to be exhorted to be humble, and watched over carefully. But how often have such been looked upon as almost infallible, and they themselves have been apt to drink in the extremely dangerous idea that all their impressions were the direct promptings of the Spirit of the Lord. And how often has it been the case that such have become self-righteous, puffed up, denunciatory, and finally gross fanatics, and the most efficient agents of the devil to scatter wild fire, and to divide the flock of God. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18.

We think it is a fact that many of the greatest fanatics in the land have once shared largely in the gifts of the Holy Spirit; but by not having good instruction, they have fallen through pride. This has had a tendency to cause the skeptical and prudent to doubt all the operations of the Spirit of God. And in this last hour of Satan's triumph, when he calls to his aid mesmerism, mysterious knockings, etc., to deceive the people, if God manifests His power, and employs any of the gifts of the Spirit, we may expect that a multitude of voices will be raised pronouncing it fanaticism, or anything save the work of the Spirit. But shall we sink in this mire of unbelief, and reject, or prize lightly the gifts of God's Spirit because some have made a bad use of them? God forbid. Men in their blindness and folly have dishonored every precious truth in the Bible, yet we shall not do well to think less of the Scriptures, or any portion of them, because many have made a bad use of them. Rather let the servants of the Lord preach the whole truth as revealed in the Word.

The gifts of the Spirit should all have their proper places. The Bible is an everlasting rock. It is our rule of faith and practice. In it the man of God is "thoroughly furnished unto all good

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Whenever the church has become worldly, proud, destitute of the Spirit and blind, they have not been able to discern the things of the Spirit, and have looked upon the operations of the Holy Spirit with suspicion.

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works." If every member of the church of Christ was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, and searched the Holy Scriptures diligently and with much prayer for duty, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we think, they would be able to learn their whole duty in "all good works." Thus "the man of God may be perfect." But as the reverse exists, and ever has existed, God in much mercy has pitied the weakness of His people, and has set the gifts in the gospel church to correct our errors, and to lead us to His Living Word. Paul says that they are for the "perfecting of the saints," "till we all come in the unity of the faith." The extreme necessity of the church in its imperfect state is God's opportunity to manifest the gifts of the Spirit.

Every Christian is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word should be in front, and the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom, from which to learn duty in "all good works." But if a portion of the church err from the truths of the Bible, and become weak, and sickly, and the flock become scattered, so that it seems necessary for God to employ the gifts of the Spirit to correct, revive and heal the erring, we should let Him work. Yea more, we should pray for Him to work and plead earnestly that He would work by the Spirit's power, and bring the scattered sheep to His fold. Praise the Lord! He will work.

When the seventy returned and told Jesus that the devils were subject unto them through His name, He said to them, "Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." See Luke 10:17-20. Jesus saw their danger, and gave them this caution to save them from exaltation. O, what an instructive lesson is contained in these few words from our Lord. By this we may learn that to possess the gifts of the gospel

church is not so much a matter of rejoicing, but rather a cause of humiliation before God, and fear and trembling, lest a wrong use be made of them. But to have our names written in heaven, to know that God owns us as His is a sufficient cause for any child of God to rejoice.

We say, then, that one great reason why the gifts of the Spirit are no more manifest among us is because the church is not humble enough to bear them. Will the Lord trust those whose affections are still attached to this world, and who have a large share of pride left, with the gifts of the Spirit? If He should, it would be very likely to build them up in their errors, and ruin them. This He will not do. The latter rain is coming, and God is waiting to be gracious. The refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord, and it should be our concern to be ready for it, so as to share it largely.

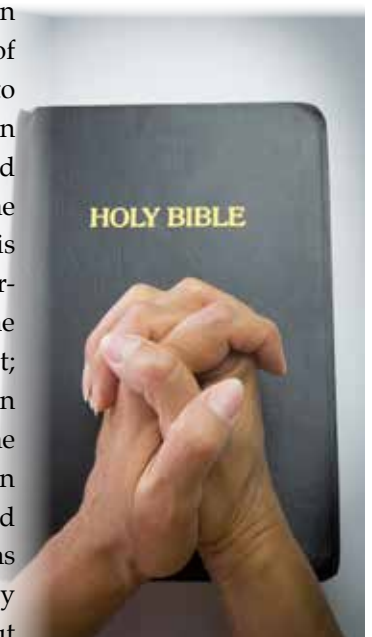
"And it shall come to pass in the *last days*, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." Acts 2:17-20.

There are many things of importance to us in this prophecy quoted from Joel 2:28-32; some of them we will notice. First, its fulfillment was to be in the *last days*. There can be no days later than the last, therefore the last days certainly extend to the second advent; and we should expect the manifestations of the Spirit mentioned in this prophecy, until that event. We admit that a portion of the prophecy was partially fulfilled in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; but it is not possible to show that it was all then fulfilled, therefore it is perfectly plain that the entire prophecy has a complete fulfillment in the "*last days*." Second, the signs in the sun and moon, the "wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath," were not seen on the day of Pentecost. No one believes that they were. But

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The outpouring of the Spirit, the gift of prophecy and dreams and visions of the Lord, are to be sufficiently remarkable to constitute signs of the second advent.

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it has been the unanimous and settled faith of those who have been looking for the Lord that they were not seen until more than 1,700 years after the day of Pentecost. Third, there is no evidence that any of the disciples had visions on the day of Pentecost, and it is not at all likely that any of them were asleep, dreaming dreams on that very exciting occasion. They were exercised only with the gift of tongues. Fourth, it will be seen by referring to Joel that this prophecy refers especially to the “remnant.” “And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord [when the saints cry day and night, Luke 18:7] shall be delivered [delivered out of the time of trouble, not converted]: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the *remnant* whom the Lord shall call.” Chapter 2:32.

Finally, we see that the outpouring of the Spirit, the gift of prophecy and dreams and visions of the Lord, are to be sufficiently remarkable to constitute signs of the second advent, and that they are classed with the signs in the sun and moon; with “wonders in the heavens and in the earth.” To the skeptic and worldly wise this sentiment will probably seem heretical; but when compared with Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:14-22, it will be seen to be truth. Heaven and earth will pass away, but God’s word will stand.

As God has ever distributed His spiritual blessings according to the necessities of His people, it is rational and right to conclude that

the abundant manifestations of the Holy Spirit, mentioned by the prophet Joel and the apostle Peter were designed for the “remnant,” just before they enter the “time of trouble such as never was,” the “great and terrible day of the Lord.” Before the world was drowned with the flood, God interposed and Noah was instructed to prepare the ark. The divine Power moved upon the beasts, cattle, fowls, and creeping things, and they two by two moved along into the ark with Noah and his family, “and the Lord shut him in.” Genesis 7:16.

Just before fire and brimstone was rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, two angels were sent to hasten Lot in his escape. God showed signs and wonders to His people in Egypt, through Moses and Aaron. He also parted the Red Sea before them. When the powers of earth and hell were arrayed against Christ and His apostles, the covenant was confirmed by signs and wonders and mighty deeds of the Holy Ghost. And can we believe that the saints are to pass the perils of the last days, the time of trouble such as never was, unaided by the power of the Spirit? Certainly we cannot. He, whose ways are equal, and who knows our wants, will pour out His Spirit, according to the prophet Joel, and will impart strength to the meek, to enable them to “stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.” Those who “seek meekness” and “righteousness” will be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger. —*Review and Herald*, April 21, 1851. SW



## Dispensation of the Holy Spirit

“The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness....

“What can I say to my brethren in the name of the Lord? What proportion of our efforts has been made in accordance with the light the Lord has been pleased to give? We cannot depend upon form or external machinery. What we need is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit of God. ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Pray without ceasing, and watch by working in accordance with your prayers. As you pray, believe, trust in God. It is the time of the latter rain, when the Lord will give largely of His Spirit. Be fervent in prayer, and watch in the Spirit.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 511, 512.

# Sola Scriptura

from the apostle Paul  
through the eyes of John Calvin  
(1509-1564)

From Calvin's Commentaries, translated from Latin  
into English by Rev. William Pringle (1812-1888)  
for The Calvin Translation Society, 1854

*"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:14-17.*

**V**erse 14: *But as for thee, continue in those things which thou hast learned.* Although wickedness prevail, and push its way forward, he [the apostle Paul] advises Timothy nevertheless to stand firm. And undoubtedly this is the actual trial of faith, when we offer unwearied resistance to all the contrivances of Satan, and do not alter our course for every wind that blows, but remain steadfast on the truth of God, as on a sure anchor.

*Knowing from whom thou hast learned them.* This is said for the purpose of commending the certainty of the doctrine; for, if anyone has been wrongly instructed, he ought not to persevere in

it. On the contrary, we ought to unlearn all that we have learned apart from Christ, if we wish to be His disciples; as, for example, it is the commencement of our pure instruction in the faith to reject and forget all the instruction of popery. The apostle therefore does not enjoin Timothy to defend indiscriminately the doctrine which has been delivered to him, but only that which he knows to be truth; by which he means that he must make a selection. Besides, he does not claim this as a private individual, that what he has taught shall be reckoned to be a divine revelation; but he boldly asserts his own authority to Timothy, who, he was aware, knew that his

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We ought to unlearn all that we have learned apart from Christ, if we wish to be His disciples.

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Faith ought to be accompanied by prudence, that it may distinguish between the word of God and the word of men.

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fidelity and his calling had been proved. And if he was fully convinced that he had been taught by an apostle of Christ, he concluded that therefore it was not a doctrine of man, but of Christ.

This passage teaches us that we ought to be as careful to guard against obstinacy in matters that are uncertain (such as all the doctrines of men are), as to hold with unshaken firmness the truth of God. Besides, we learn from it that faith ought to be accompanied by prudence, that it may distinguish between the word of God and the word of men, so that we may not adopt at random everything that is brought forward. Nothing is more inconsistent with the nature of faith than light credulity, which allows us to embrace everything indiscriminately, whatever it may be, and from whomsoever it proceeds, because it is the chief foundation of faith to know that it has God for its Author.

*And which have been intrusted to thee.* When he adds that the doctrine had been intrusted to Timothy, this gives additional force to the exhortation, for to “commit a thing in trust” is something more than merely to deliver it. Now Timothy had not been taught as one of the common people, but in order that he might faithfully deliver into the hands of others what he had received.

Verse 15: *And that from (thy) childhood.* This was also no ordinary addition, that he had been accustomed, from his infancy, to the reading of the Scripture, for this long habit may make a man much more strongly fortified against every kind of deception. It was therefore a judicious

caution observed in ancient times, that those who were intended for the ministry of the word should be instructed, from their infancy, in the solid doctrine of godliness, that, when they came to the performance of their office, they might not be untried apprentices. And it ought to be reckoned a remarkable instance of the kindness of God if any person, from his earliest years, has thus acquired a knowledge of the Scriptures.

*Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.* It is a very high commendation of the Holy Scriptures, that we must not seek anywhere else the wisdom which is sufficient for salvation, as the next verse also expresses more fully. But he states, at the same time, what we ought to seek in the Scripture, for the false prophets also make use of it as a pretext; and therefore, in order that it may be useful to us for salvation, it is necessary to understand the right use of it.

*Through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.* What if any one give his whole attention to curious questions? What if he adhere to the mere letter of the law, and do not seek Christ? What if he pervert the natural meaning by inventions that are foreign to it? For this reason, he directs us to the faith of Christ as the design, and therefore as the sum, of the Scriptures; for on faith depends also what immediately follows.

Verse 16: *All Scripture; or, the whole of Scripture,* though it makes little difference as to the meaning. He follows out that commendation which he had glanced at briefly. First, he commends the Scripture on account of its authority; and secondly, on account of the utility which springs from it. In order to uphold the authority of the Scripture, he declares that it is *divinely inspired*; for, if it be so, it is beyond all controversy that men ought to receive it with reverence. This is a principle which distinguishes our religion from all others, that we know that God hath spoken to us, and are fully convinced that the prophets did not speak at their own suggestion, but that, being organs of the Holy Spirit, they only uttered what they had been commissioned from heaven to declare. Whoever then wishes to profit in the Scriptures, let him, first of all, lay down this as a settled point, that the Law and the Prophets are not a doctrine delivered according to the will and pleasure of men, but dictated by the Holy Spirit.



If it be objected, “How can this be known?” I answer, both to disciples and to teachers, God is made known to be the Author of it by the revelation of the same Spirit. Moses and the prophets did not utter at random what we have received from their hand, but, speaking at the suggestion of God, they boldly and fearlessly testified, what was actually true, that it was the mouth of the Lord that spake. The same Spirit, therefore, who made Moses and the prophets certain of their calling now also testifies to our hearts that He has employed them as His servants to instruct us. Accordingly, we need not wonder if there are many who doubt as to the Author of the Scripture; for, although the majesty of God is displayed in it, yet none but those who have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit have eyes to perceive what ought, indeed, to have been visible to all, and yet is visible to the elect alone. This is the first clause that we owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God, because it has proceeded from Him alone and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it.

*And is profitable.* Now follows the second part of the commendation that the Scripture contains a perfect rule of a good and happy life. When he says this, he means that it is corrupted by sinful abuse, when this usefulness is not sought. And thus he indirectly censures those unprincipled men who fed the people with vain speculations, as with wind. For this reason, we may, in the present day [written in 1548], condemn all who, disregarding edification, agitate questions which, though they are ingenious, are also useless. Whenever ingenious trifles of that kind are brought forward, they must be warded off by this shield, that “Scripture is profitable.” Hence it follows that it is unlawful to treat it in an unprofitable manner; for the Lord, when He gave us the Scriptures, did not intend either to gratify our curiosity, or to encourage ostentation, or to give occasion for chatting and talking, but to do us good; and, therefore, the right use of Scripture must always tend to what is profitable.

*For instruction.* Here he enters into a detailed statement of the various and manifold advantages derived from the Scriptures. And, first of all, he mentions *instruction*, which ranks above

all the rest; for it will be to no purpose that you exhort or reprove, if you have not previously instructed. But because “instruction,” taken by itself, is often of little avail, he adds *reproof* and *correction*.

It would be too long to explain what we are to learn from the Scriptures; and, in the preceding verse, he has given a brief summary of them under the word *faith*. The most valuable knowledge, therefore, is “faith in Christ.” Next follows instruction for regulating the life, to which are added the excitements of exhortations and reproofs. Thus he who knows how to use the Scriptures properly is in want of nothing for salvation, or for a holy life. *Reproof* and *correction* differ little from each other, except that the latter proceeds from the former, for the beginning of repentance is the knowledge of our sinfulness, and a conviction of the judgment of God. *Instruction in righteousness* means the rule of a good and holy life.

Verse 17: *That the man of God may be perfect.* *Perfect* means here a blameless person, one in whom there is nothing defective, for he asserts absolutely that the Scripture is sufficient for perfection. Accordingly, he who is not satisfied with Scripture desires to be wiser than is either proper or desirable.

But here an objection arises. Seeing that Paul speaks of the Scriptures, which is the name given to the Old Testament, how does he say that it makes a man thoroughly perfect? for, if it be so, what was afterwards added by the apostles may be thought superfluous. I reply, so far as relates to the substance, nothing has been added; for the writings of the apostles contain nothing else than a simple and natural explanation of the Law and the Prophets, together with a manifestation of the things expressed in them. This eulogium [eulogy], therefore, is not inappropriately bestowed on the Scriptures by Paul; and, seeing that its instruction is now rendered more full and clear by the addition of the gospel, what can be said but that we ought assuredly to hope that the usefulness, of which Paul speaks, will be much more displayed if we are willing to make trial and receive it? —*Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 21, pp. 245-251. **SW**




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The Scripture is sufficient for perfection. Accordingly, he who is not satisfied with Scripture desires to be wiser than is either proper or desirable.

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# Searching the Scriptures



*By Ellen G. White*

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If there are those  
whose faith in  
God's word will  
not stand the test  
of an investigation  
of the Scriptures,  
the sooner they are  
revealed the better.

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**H**ow shall we search the Scriptures in order to understand what they teach? We should come to the investigation of God's word with a contrite heart, a teachable and prayerful spirit. We are not to think, as did the Jews, that our own ideas and opinions are infallible; nor with the papists, that certain individuals are the sole guardians of truth and knowledge, that men have no right to search the Scriptures for themselves, but must accept the explanations given by the Fathers of the church. We should not study the Bible for the purpose of sustaining our preconceived opinions, but with the single object of learning what God has said.

Some have feared that if in even a single point they acknowledge themselves in error, other minds would be led to doubt the whole theory of truth. Therefore they have felt that investigation should not be permitted; that it would tend to dissension and disunion. But if such is to be the result of investigation, the sooner it comes the better. If there are those whose faith in God's word will not stand the test of an investigation of the Scriptures, the sooner they are revealed the better; for then the way will be opened to show them their error. We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is

but one who is infallible—He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Those who allow prejudice to bar the mind against the reception of truth cannot receive the divine enlightenment. Yet, when a view of Scripture is presented, many do not ask, Is it true—in harmony with God's word? but, By whom is it advocated? And unless it comes through the very channel that pleases them, they do not accept it. So thoroughly satisfied are they with their own ideas, that they will not examine the Scripture evidence, with a desire to learn, but refuse to be interested, merely because of their prejudices.

The Lord often works where we least expect Him; He surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits—because it is truth.

The Bible must not be interpreted to suit the ideas of men, however long they may have held these ideas to be true. We are not to accept the opinion of commentators as the voice of God; they were erring mortals like ourselves. God has given reasoning powers to us as well as to them. We should make the Bible its own expositor.



All should be careful about presenting new views of Scripture before they have given these points thorough study, and are fully prepared to sustain them from the Bible. Introduce nothing that will cause dissension, without clear evidence that in it God is giving a special message for this time.

But beware of rejecting that which is truth. The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men, and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men, and accept the decisions they make, and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them.

No one should claim that he has all the light there is for God's people. The Lord will not tolerate this. He has said, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3:8. Even if all our leading men should refuse light and truth, that door will still remain open. The Lord will raise up men who will give the people the message for this time.

Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make manifest its strength. We should never refuse to examine the Scriptures with those who, we have reason to believe, desire to know what is truth. Suppose a brother held a view that differed from yours, and he should come to you, proposing that you sit down with him and make an investigation of that point in the Scriptures; should you rise up, filled with prejudice, and condemn his ideas, while refusing to give him a candid hearing? The only right way would be to sit down as Christians, and investigate the position presented, in the light of God's word, which will reveal truth and unmask error. To ridicule his ideas would not weaken his position in the least if it were false, or strengthen your position if it were true. If the pillars of our faith will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew it. There must be no spirit of Pharisaism cherished among us.

We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. All lightness and trifling should be laid aside. While some portions of the word are

easily understood, the true meaning of other parts is not so readily discerned. There must be patient study and meditation, and earnest prayer. Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and the promise is sure, that it will be given.

The spirit in which you come to the investigation of the Scriptures will determine the character of the assistant at your side. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance. But if the Bible is opened with irreverence, with a feeling of self-sufficiency, if the heart is filled with prejudice, Satan is beside you, and he will set the plain statements of God's word in a perverted light.

There are some who indulge in levity, sarcasm, and even mockery toward those who differ with them. Others present an array of objections to any new view; and when these objections are plainly answered by the words of Scripture, they do not acknowledge the evidence presented, nor allow themselves to be convinced. Their questioning is not for the purpose of arriving at truth, but was intended merely to confuse the minds of others.

Some have thought it an evidence of intellectual keenness and superiority to perplex minds in regard to what is truth. They resort to subtlety of argument, to playing upon words; they take unjust advantage in asking questions. When their questions have been fairly answered, they will turn the subject, bring up another point, to avoid acknowledging the truth. We should beware of indulging the spirit which controlled the Jews. They would not learn of Christ, because His explanation of the Scriptures did not agree with their ideas; therefore they became spies upon His track, "laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him." Let us not bring upon ourselves the fearful denunciation of the Saviour's words, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered in not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Luke 11:54, 52.

It does not require much learning or ability to ask questions that are difficult to answer. A child

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Their questioning is not for the purpose of arriving at truth, but was intended merely to confuse the minds of others.

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Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. We must not become set in our ideas, and think that no one should interfere with our opinions.

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may ask questions over which the wisest men may be puzzled. Let us not engage in a contest of this kind. The very same unbelief exists in our time as prevailed in the days of Christ. Now as then the desire for preferment and the praise of men leads people away from the simplicity of true godliness. There is no pride so dangerous as spiritual pride.

Young men should search the Scriptures for themselves. They are not to feel that it is sufficient for those older in experience to find out the truth; that the younger ones can accept it from them as authority. The Jews perished as a nation because they were drawn from the truth of the Bible by their rulers, priests, and elders. Had they heeded the lessons of Jesus, and searched the Scriptures for themselves, they would not have perished.

Young men in our ranks are watching to see in what spirit the ministers come to the investigation of the Scriptures; whether they have a teachable spirit, and are humble enough to accept evidence, and receive light from the messengers whom God chooses to send.

We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. We must not become set in our ideas, and think that no one should interfere with our opinions.

When a point of doctrine that you do not understand comes to your attention, go to God on your knees, that you may understand what is truth, and not be found as were the Jews, fighting against God. While warning men to beware of accepting anything unless it is truth, we should also warn them not to imperil their souls by rejecting messages of light, but to press out of the darkness by earnest study of the word of God.

When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom

is no guile!" Nathanael said, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answered, "When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." John 1:47, 48. And Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer, if we seek Him for light that we may know what is truth.

If a brother is teaching error, those who are in responsible positions ought to know it; and if he is teaching truth, they ought to take their stand at his side. We should all know what is being taught among us; for if it is truth, we need to know it. The Sabbath school teacher needs to know it, and every Sabbath school scholar ought to understand it. We are all under obligation to God to understand what He sends us. He has given directions by which we may test every doctrine—"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20. But if it is according to this test, do not be so full of prejudice that you cannot acknowledge a point simply because it does not agree with your ideas.

It is impossible for any mind to comprehend all the richness and greatness of even one promise of God. One catches the glory of one point of view, another the beauty and grace from another point, and the soul is filled with the heavenly light. If we saw all the glory, the spirit would faint. But we can bear far greater revelations from God's abundant promises than we now enjoy. It makes my heart sad to think how we lose sight of the fullness of blessing designed for us. We content ourselves with momentary flashes of spiritual illumination, when we might walk day after day in the light of His presence.

Dear brethren, pray as you never before prayed, for beams from the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon the word, that you may be able to understand its true meaning. Jesus pleaded that His disciples might be sanctified through the truth—the word of God. Then how earnestly should we pray that He who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10), He whose office it is to bring all things to the remembrance of God's people, and to guide them into all truth, may be with us in the investigation of His holy word. —*Gospel Workers* (1892), pp. 125-131 **SW**





*Fiji evangelistic team present for evangelistic meetings*

## Fiji evangelistic meetings

*"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1.*

"Evangelism, the very heart of Christianity, is the theme of primary importance to those called to herald God's last warning to a doomed world. We are in time's closing hours, and the Advent message, proclaimed to make ready a people prepared for our Lord's return, must swell to a loud cry reaching the uttermost parts of the earth." *—Evangelism, p. 5.*

The Fijian Field embarked on its first evangelistic outreach series since its establishment. The meetings were organized by our newest church group and ran from October 16 to 20, 2016.

The program was one week long with the theme, "What More to Be Done?" This theme was broken down into five topics which became the subject of each night's presentation. Our three preachers took one hour each night for five nights, speaking on different subjects. Earlier we had distributed invitations to the villages and settle-

ments around our location and also arranged for transportation to pick up people before the meetings and take them home afterward.

It was a very exciting experience for the members. They stayed together for the week-long program and had close fellowship as we stayed together in the same location for eating, sleeping, and prayer. The result was that some backsliding members were revived. They became the frontline supporters of the work that we were doing. Despite some drawbacks and a little frustration here and there, the people listened attentively to the messages that were presented, for they were projected by loudspeakers throughout the entire village.

We had the feeling that negative attitudes of the past had changed and people are now more concerned about their eternal destiny. Two precious souls took their stand at the end of the meetings, and we thank the Lord for the success. Despite opposition, they were baptized on Sunday, October 23.

We are planning more short evangelistic series around the

islands, where our subjects will be presented briefly and to the point for the people to understand easily and make a decision.

We thank the Lord for His guidance and help and also for the support of the Union in this outreach. We believe that the Lord will continue to guide

## Good news from Togo

It has been very hectic for me since I arrived, but God is so good. On Friday we visited all of the interested souls. The Sabbath attendees included 4 members, 22 interested souls, and 22 children.



*Seven precious believers were baptized in Togo, West Africa*

our efforts as we increase our capacity to touch the lives of lost souls before probation closes.

May the Lord richly bless you all for your support of the missionary work.

*—Senaila Kenivale  
Fiji Islands*

After that, we travelled 15 kilometers to the place where those who were preparing for baptism lived. There were ten of them, but in the examination it was determined that three were not ready.

It was a joyful ceremony as seven were baptized. I am going



*Acceptance of new members into the Sydney, Australia, church*



# News to inspire



Group present for baptism in Benin; Elder Simon Satsi Agbey is on the second row, far right

to study with them more about the history of the IMS.

Please let me know about the property for the headquarters. God bless you.

—Elder Louis Joe Mensah

## Baptism in Sydney, Australia

*"And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." John 1:32-34.*

John Robic, Chand, and his wife Lis were baptized into the IMS, SDA Church, Reform Movement, in Sydney on Sabbath afternoon, September 24, 2016. The whole church group and many visitors were present to witness this significant event in the spiritual lives of these precious souls.

They decided to stand together with God's people after they had some studies with church leaders and testified before our God that they would withdraw their affections from this world and hold fast to Christ. Each of these new souls decided to turn to Jesus for a new mind, new purpose, and new motive. They truly believe that they are children of the heavenly King, members of the royal family, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Let us remember these wonderful souls in our prayers, as our Lord Jesus has gone to prepare mansions to receive those who are pure and obey His words. A huge welcome to John, Chand, and Lis into our Lord's family!

It was an additional blessing to the Sydney local church when a couple from Peru was officially accepted as members of our spiritual family. May God continue to bless these dear souls,

for they love to carry on Jesus' labor and express the gladness of their hearts to serve our heavenly Master here in Australia. Welcome, Brother Fernando, Sister Soila, and your daughter, to our church here in Sydney!

The evening was filled with joy and peace when we all came together to participate in the Lord's Supper and the closing of the Sabbath. All the new members were welcomed by the leaders and church members, and we felt the Lord's presence under the power of His divine grace, as His presence made every plan possible.

—Paula Prendergast

## New members in Benin

On Sunday, October 2, 2016, three new souls were baptized in Benin by Elder Simon Satsi Agbey, a foreign missionary who was sent to Benin from Ghana. The General Conference coordinated his transfer to Benin. Brother Agbey wrote that it was raining very hard before the baptism, but the brothers were determined in passing through



Conference group and new officers in Burundi; Elder Parmenas Shirima is seated at center





*Greetings from the believers in Ethiopia*

the rain on the way to their baptism. May God give them and all the believers in Benin much courage in their walk with God.

## News from Cameroon

Greetings with 2 Corinthians 4:1: *"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."* This email is to inform you of the recent missionary activities in Cameroon.

For over a month, Brother Eric Minkonda (Nkoabang church leader), Brother Christophe Gamaleu, and I have been doing missionary work in Mfou, a community about 25 kilometers from Yaounde. Our objective is to open a branch in the upcoming months by God's grace. We appreciate your prayers for this.

In addition, we held the Lord's Supper and a wonderful conference on October 16 and October 29. The new group from Fong was invited and was represented. We praise God that ten souls have accepted the message, and we pray that He will sustain them in their

decision. This is the third conference we have held in Yaounde. The three conferences have helped 32 souls to join with us, and they need to be supported. God bless you all.

*—Normand Sindayihebura  
Cameroon Field President*

## Joy in Sierra Leone

The peace and love of God be with you in the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ. The missionary work is advancing gradually. We had a wonderful conference. Ten people were baptized, most of them coming from a Muslim background. My son Enoch was also baptized. It was raining very hard, and the baptism actually took place in the rain.

A conference was held on Sabbath with two churches in attendance—the Grafton Branch and the Kamayama Branch.

Interested souls from these two groups also came to the conference.

We hope to go to the provinces soon and visit the brethren at the Deima Branch in Kenema. Thank you for your support. God bless you!

*—Elder Lameck B. Otenyo,  
President*

*Christopher George, Secretary  
Sierra Leone Mission Field*



*Ten young people were baptized in Sierra Leone, including Elder Lameck Otenyo's son, second from right*

# Supreme Authority



“**T**he principle for which the disciples stood so fearlessly when, in answer to the command not to speak any more in the name of Jesus, they declared, ‘Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye,’ is the same that the adherents of the gospel struggled to maintain in the days of the Reformation. When in 1529 the German princes assembled at the Diet of Spire, there was presented the emperor’s decree restricting religious liberty, and prohibiting all further dissemination of the reformed doctrines. It seemed that the hope of the world was about to be crushed out. Would the princes accept the decree? Should the light of the gospel be shut out from the multitudes still in darkness? Mighty issues for the world were at stake. Those who had accepted the reformed faith met together, and their unanimous decision was, ‘Let us reject this decree. In matters of conscience the majority has no power.’ –Merle d’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, b. 13, ch. 5.

“This principle we in our day are firmly to maintain. The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God’s witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of His word. We are to receive this word as supreme authority. We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God’s word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A ‘Thus saith the Lord’ is not to be set aside for a ‘Thus saith the church’ or a ‘Thus saith the state.’ The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 68, 69.