

# The Sabbath Watchman

2020  
April – June

“Seek the Lord and his strength,  
seek his face continually”

1 Chronicles 16:11

*Advent*  
Pág. 3

*Slavery and the Civil War*  
Pág. 6

*Psalms 91*  
Pág. 10

*The Weight of Responsibility*  
Pág. 12

*World in Brief*  
Pág. 14



# Introducción

Now just now is our opportunity to open the windows of the soul heavenward and to close the windows earthward. Now is the time for every church member to say, I will close my heart to everything that would hinder my communion with Christ; I will open the windows of my soul heavenward that I may understand spiritual things.

Believers need to talk with God in regard to their individual need of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God must be their assurance. All heaven is inviting us to receive the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness into our lives. If we will talk faith and hope and courage, our souls will be strengthened, and our hope and courage and faith will increase. Let us seek this great gift of the Sun of Righteousness, that it may shine forth in our lives to others. Let us seek the Lord that we may learn how to work His works in the world. This will make us successful missionaries, able to help others to a hopeful, courageous experience.

In our service for the Master, let not the little things be overlooked. Every human being has a life web to weave, and if the pattern is complete and perfected at last, every thread of the pattern must be carefully and faithfully worked. The grace of Christ will enable us to weave skillfully and well. Day by day we are to put forth personal diligent effort to improve. Every day we are to use our Christian intelligence in the work of strengthening the weak, and encouraging the desponding. A great test is coming to every soul. Shall we not then work and watch and pray and praise the Lord? This will give us a most precious experience. Very much has been lost to many believers because they have neglected to seek the Lord with earnestness and with a faith that will not be denied.

Words spoken and works performed in a simple, humble, encouraging way will inspire faith in other hearts. The Lord is soon to come, and the natural heart must be daily converted. We must learn to speak words in the meekness of Christ; our works and our spirit must testify that we are serving the Lord.—*Letter 54*, March 7, 1909.

*Ellen G. White.*

“Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually.” 1 Chronicles 16:11.

## The Sabbath Watchman

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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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# Advent

Carlos Kozel

*“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14.*

These words signify that God’s work of spreading the gospel at the end time will be the most important of the signs foretelling His second coming.

For many years, the truth was nearly suppressed by the war waged against it during the height of Catholic power. At times, only a few copies of the Bible existed. For several centuries, the Word of God was closed to the people, so to speak, with its sacred truths hidden in languages known only to scholars and the Waldenses. In time, those darkest of hours came to an end and the first streaks of a new dawn began to appear in many countries.

It began in the fourteenth century, when “The Morning Star of the Reformation” appeared in England and concluded with the protest of Dr. Martin Luther at the beginning of the sixteenth century. During this time, the truths of the Bible were brought to light through translation into the native languages of the people.

Facts clearly demonstrate that the Reform was a work prepared and led by a divine hand. One historian of the Reformation, when comparing the Reform of Germany with that of Switzerland, said:

“The light of truth has not advanced from Germany to Switzerland, from here to France, and from France to England; if not all these churches have received it from God, in the same way that no part of the world gives light to another part, but a brilliant sphere spills it over the whole earth. Christ, immensely high above all men, at the time of the creation of Christianity, the divine fire from which the life

of the world arises, at the time of reform was the other sun of this spiritual movement.

“The same doctrine, in the sixteenth century has entered the homes and churches of the various nations; everywhere the same spirit has produced the same faith.

“This truth consists of the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland. Zwingli was not in connection with Luther; however, there was a link between them that was not of this world. Both had received the wisdom from heaven. ‘I have begun,’ Zwingli writes, ‘to preach the Gospel at a time when Luther’s name was still unknown in our country. It was not Luther who taught me Christian doctrine but I found it in the Word of God. If Luther preaches of Christ, he does what I do, that’s all.’ History of the Reformation, volume VIII, paragraph 1.

But a greater and deeper work of reform must still be done in order to call out and prepare a united people from all the inhabitants of the earth that are ready to stand in the great day of Christ’s return. Considering how all of this should be orchestrated, God had yet to pave the way.

We cannot imagine today’s civilization without taking into account the large strides of progress that have taken place in the technological world.

Take, for example, the press. The whole world has access to the news. And, where life pulses most actively, the newest developments are expected at every hour of the day. The past few decades have brought us great progress in this area. Has this always been so?

News broadcasts depend on the rapid dispatch of information by mail, telegraph, and telephone. This unequaled development of technological inventions barely spans a single century. On December 7, 1835, the first train moved between the cities of Nuremberg and Fürth, Germany. This train was pulled by a locomotive. In 1818, the first steamships sailed on the Weser River, near Bremen, Germany. Yet, in the time of Christ and the apostles, as well as during the Middle Ages, media and transportation were no different than in the days of Abraham.

Doesn’t all progress and whatever methods used to improve civilization, whether knowingly or unknowingly, ultimately serve God? Regarding the final work of God, Daniel was told, “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end time: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Daniel 12:4.

This text points to a time when knowledge and understanding would blossom. Today, most people can easily obtain, and also read, the Bible. The ability to do both places us at the end of time. Daniel’s prophecy cannot refer to the Middle Ages, since at that time many princes and kings did not even know how to read. In addition, up until the end of the eighteenth century, most Bibles were

so expensive that a poor man could not buy it.

The Renaissance of the fifteenth century and the Reformation of the sixteenth century were the results of God's agitation of society. These events were followed by the formation of biblical and missionary societies in all countries, which, in turn, caused a new and deeper religious awakening among all people. Independently of one another, Bible-believing Christians around the world began to announce the coming of Christ between the years of 1833 to 1844. Just as had happened during the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the men proclaiming the message did not know each other.

In Germany, the movement of the second advent began in Württemberg. Here, Johann Albrecht Bengel, the renowned interpreter of the New Testament, the "Father of the Church of Württemberg," was the instrument God used.

The following excerpt from *The Life of Bengel*, is significant.

"Since the Reformation, the evangelical truth has been transmitted from generation to generation, but they fail to understand the spiritual meaning of the gospel. For some time, however, extraordinary things of all kinds have occurred, such as visions, inspirations, etc. Everything shakes and moves, but there is still a long way to go to complete the total. However, it is clear that this situation will soon change. From 1140 to 1160 the deepest darkness reigned. Then Waldo, Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Arndt, Spener, and others appeared. This was the crowing of the rooster at dawn, until pure gold finally emerged from the crucible. In short, our church today is such a corrupt thing, a yeast so sour, that it could penetrate the whole world. It is as if we are approaching a spiritual winter; it is a miserable and indifferent time; a storm is bound to come."

Württemberg Pietists generally expected that in 1836 Christ would re-establish His kingdom. Several conventicles for which gifted men were accredited in a small circle were frequented. Thus, in 1785, a villager named George Rapp, gained supporters who separated from the Lutheran church to await the soon coming of the Lord. As a result of the interpretation of the book of Revelation

by Bengel and of works by Jung-Stilling, ideas regarding the approach of a 1000-year kingdom and of migrating east took root.

The government used harsh means against them in vain, and at last their intention to emigrate to southern Russia spread. Tsar Alexander I agreed to accept them, so in 1816 and 1817, about 1,400 families migrated to Russia. Others were retained in their homeland of Germany and granted permission to establish an autonomous church.

In Russia, the group was led by Leonberg's burgomaster, Gottlieb Hoffmann. The noble, stately land of Kornthal was purchased and the Autonomous Church founded on its fields in 1819. Within a short time, so many families had gathered in Kornthal that there was not enough room for all of them. Consequently, the community founded the Wilhelmsdorf Colony in 1848.

In 1824, Professor L. H. Kelber of Nuremberg published a pamphlet entitled "The End Comes," in which he wrote the following:

"Conscientiously and convincingly demonstrated by the Word of God and by the newest contemporary events; with complete denial of the prejudices against waiting for the coming of the Lord, as well as the verification that Prelate Bengel has been wrong by seven years regarding the decisive year, since the year 1843 and not 1836 is the one in which the great fight between light and darkness and the long-awaited kingdom of Jesus will begin on earth."

During the years 1840 to 1850, 700 ecclesiastics of the Anglican Church in England warned of the near coming of the Lord. In Schaff-Herzog's *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 2nd Edition, an article is found entitled, "Irvin." Here we read, "But all the aspirations of the preacher and theologian Irvin referred to the coming fulfillment of the kingdom of God, as the word had been promised. This was precisely the characteristic needed for the revival of ecclesiastical life in Scotland and England."

In the East, Joseph Wolff preached the coming of Christ. Regarding the life and activity of this preacher, the *Berlin Evangelical Church Magazine* wrote in 1835,

"Wolff has an understanding and pleasant character. He knows fourteen languages, has an extraordinary instruction in the doctrine of the Bible, and is clothed with the greatest missionary ardor.

"We found him in 1830 in Alexandria as a member of the English missionary society among the Jews. In this city he had the audacity to post proclamations on the walls, thus publishing his conviction that Christ in 1847 would return, a date he had taken from the book of Daniel. Due to this action, the rajah gave him orders to depart from Egypt.

"Of his travels he himself relates, 'Thus, by the grace of God, I have completed the journey from Malta to Egypt, Buttuch, Kiutahia, Brussa, Constantinople, Angora, Toact, Carahissach, Erzeron, Bayasid and Khoy, announcing charity everywhere from Christ to death, and His glorious coming, and as I had been, seven years ago, in Orfa Mosul, Baghdad, Bosra, Bushire, Tbilisi and Shusha, I have now traveled Armenia to its full extent.'"

In Latin America, Manuel Lacunza, a Jesuit priest convicted of the soon coming of Jesus shared his understanding of Scripture in 1827 in a Spanish work entitled "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty." This was later translated by Edward Irvin and shared in other places.

The settlers of Württemberg brought the joyous message of the Lord's coming to Russia, as can be seen from the following excerpt from the *Ecclesiastical History of Württemberg*, vol. IX, p. 593-623:

"However, the settlers in Württemberg, in Russia, have acted as a leaven, not only for social aspects, but also for religious aspects. The stundistas, already by their denomination manifest their origin. Thus, a stream of Pietists to Russia stirred, as through gigantic locks, when, due to the death of King Frederick, emigration was again permitted. Emigration would have dispossessed the state and the church of many more useful members still, if Pietism had not been granted the formation of autonomous congregations in the homeland, especially by the founding of Kornthal."

In Tartary, as early as 1821, the doctrine of the Lord's second coming was taught and believed. When, by chance, an Irish missionary, at this time, was sent to this place, a Tatar priest asked him,



“When will Christ return the second time?”

The missionary replied that he did not know anything about it, to which the surprised priest answered, “Everyone who owns a Bible can know it.” He then added that, in his opinion, Christ would return in 1844 or so. (This story is found in the magazine “*Irishes Magazin*,” 1821.)

In Holland, H. Hentzepeter, preacher and administrator of the Royal Museum in The Hague, published the doctrine of the coming of Christ. In June 1819, he published his first work in Amsterdam, entitled “*De aanstaande wederkomst van onzen Herr*” (“The Return of Our Lord”).

In Sweden, during the years 1843 to 1844, it was forbidden by law to preach a doctrine different from that of the national church. In this country, the hand of God was most clearly demonstrated in the movement of the Second Advent, since the coming of Christ was announced by the mouths of children.

The magazine entitled “*Advent-Review*” of October 7 states, “In the year 1843 there was a religious movement in the Karlskoga parish in the Oerebro province. Guides of that movement were children and young people who were given the name “*rupare*,” which means “crying voices.”

“These have preached with divine power, announcing with certainty the arrival of the hour of judgment.

“The people have gathered in great numbers to listen to them. The meetings lasted day and night, resulting in a great religious awakening.

“Finally, these children were invited to introduce themselves to the pastor of the national church. Forty young men and women appeared and were questioned for a long time. Some were allowed to return home, others were taken to the Oerebro prison.”

In North America, more than 300 preachers took part in announcing the “magnificent message,” as William Miller called it. The “*Christian Messenger*”

of Estugarda, of May 7, 1843, tells about this greatest movement of the second advent in America, in the following manner, “The American Millerite sect grows day by day. Its main doctrine is, that, within a short time. Christ will return in the same state in which he has ascended to heaven, and that he will resurrect all the righteous. The beginning of this event was enacted for the first days of April 1843.”

In 1842, the preacher Egbert Pinney related that pamphlets proclaiming the second coming of Christ were scattered in all the seaports. According to Miller’s account, more than 3,000 preachers announced the return of Christ on all continents. In a more wonderful way the word of the prophet Daniel could not be fulfilled. Daniel 12:4. With reference to the signs of the end, Christ said, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).” Matthew 24:15. ■



# Slavery and the Civil War

Antonino Di Franca

*“The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will exalt the law and make it onorable”. Isaiah 42:21*

## The Pioneers

The United States was founded with the problem of slavery still present. For nearly one hundred years, the southern states openly practiced slavery while the North ignored it.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after his election in 1860, President Abraham Lincoln began working to stop the expansion of slavery into all new federal territories. This caused immediate rebellion and the secession of the southern states. The North opposed the South’s actions, which caused the Civil War to break out.<sup>2</sup>

For the newly begun Seventh-day Adventist Church, slavery did not constitute a serious problem. With the exception of a handful of isolated members, there was unanimity in condemnation of the system by the church as a whole. Ellen G. White, affirmed in her writing, “In this land of light a system is cherished which allows one portion of the human family to enslave another portion, degrading millions of human beings to the level of the brute creation. The equal of this sin is not to be found in heathen lands.”<sup>3</sup> “Christ died for the whole human family, whether white or black. God has made man a free moral agent, whether white or black. The institution of slavery does away with this and permits man to exercise over his fellow man a power which God has never granted him, and which belongs alone to God.”<sup>4</sup>

An official statement filed by the General Conference to government

authorities explicitly affirms this ideal, “We would further represent that Seventh-day Adventists, are rigidly anti-slavery, loyal to the government, and in sympathy with it against the rebellion.”<sup>5</sup> However, recognizing the dignity of the population of color and declaring the church anti-slavery was one thing, while solving the problem of slavery through the use of force and violence, such as the North was doing, was something quite different. A multitude of questions troubled the conscience of many a faithful member. Can we, as Christians, participate in the acts of violence, suffering, and bloodshed which will surely result from this rebellion? How do we not become involved in this havoc? How can we protect ourselves from positions and actions that are not biblical? What is the ideal solution for remaining faithful to God in such a difficult time?

## Exemption during various periods

During the entire period of the Civil War there were several phases of laws regulating military service and in each one of them, thanks to the Lord, the possibility of exemption was always provided.<sup>6</sup> The four periods can be marked in this way: that of voluntary service, that of substitution or exemption by payment, that of recognition as a “non-combatant,” and finally, that of belonging to a recognized religious denomination.

**1** In the first phase, the period of “voluntary service,” enlistment to military service was, as the word indicates, voluntary. Therefore, the Adventist people had no difficulty remaining out of the war.

**2** In the second phase, known as “conscription,” is when compulsory recruitment began. However, at this time, a provision was made so that any person could be exempted from military duties by finding a substitute or paying the \$300 conscription fee.

**3** In the third phase we find some restrictions. Only those who were recognized as “non-combatants” could receive an exemption. However, to obtain such recognition the individual had to solemnly swear that it was because of reasons of conscience that he was not willing to bear arms. In addition, he was required to also submit evidence of having had this belief prior to the war.

**4** In the fourth stage, in which, to a certain point, the most difficult time seemed to have been, it was necessary to not only cite the conscientious beliefs of the individual, but also, demonstrate that the church to which he belonged also maintained this stand.

As we will see later on, in all these periods the church and members made remarkable efforts and endeavored to take advantage of each exemption, even when it required heavy financial sacrifices.



*"They were not enlisting"  
On April 12, 1861,  
the hostilities began.*

It was the opinion of many that the rebellion of the southern states would be quickly put down, and that the war would conclude after only a few battles. The victory, they assumed, would easily go to the North. However, in a vision given to Sr. White in Parkville, Michigan, on January 12, earlier that same year, she had warned that the conflict would include large armies that would bring massacre and misery to both sides. Death would plague more than a few families, even those among her acquaintances.<sup>7</sup>

During the first two years of the War, between April 12, 1861, to March 3, 1863, a call was made for volunteers to enlist in the military. Many, motivated by patriotism and the humanitarian cause of ending slavery, rushed to sign up. People spontaneously responded to the call as they felt motivated by idealistic desires to contribute to the war effort. But the monster of war, once unleashed, began to fearfully devour its victims. The first contingent of 75,000 men enlisted on April 15. This was followed by a second on July 21, raising the number of volunteers to 500,000. Meanwhile, disaster, injury, and heavy losses were registered on both sides.

Reflecting on the situation and the disappointment suffered by so many men who had enlisted as volunteers, Sr. White wrote on January 4, 1862, "Thousands have lost their lives, and many have returned to their homes, maimed and crippled for life, their health gone, their earthly prospects forever blighted; and yet how little has been gained! Thousands have been induced to enlist with the understanding that this war was to exterminate slavery; but now that they are fixed, they find that they have been deceived, that the object of this war is not to abolish slavery, but to preserve it as it is. ...

"A great share of the volunteers enlisted fully believing that the result of the

war would be to abolish slavery. Others enlisted intending to be very careful to keep slavery just as it is, but to put down the rebellion and preserve the Union."<sup>8</sup>

The church was miraculously protected from many misfortunes. Furthermore, while the call for voluntary service remained in effect, living out their faith was not problematic for the members. At the beginning of 1862, Sr. White clearly wrote that Adventists should not participate in the war.

"Sabbathkeepers now cannot expect this, and should not, upon any consideration, engage in this terrible war. They have nothing to hope for. The desolating power of God is upon the earth to rend and destroy; the inhabitants of the earth are appointed to the sword, famine, and pestilence."<sup>9</sup>

Referring to the position assumed by the church in this first period, Sr. White wrote in the first volume of the "Testimonies" in January 1863, "The attention of many was turned to Sabbathkeepers because they manifested no greater interest in the war and did not volunteer."<sup>10</sup>

Under these circumstances there was no threat of imprisonment, torture, or death for refusing to bear arms. Everyone knew, however, that the situation could change with time.

### Dramatic questions in view of imminent compulsory recruitment

Meanwhile, due to the staggering number of losses, the demand for volun-

teer soldiers continued to rise. But now, the number of volunteer recruits was no longer sufficient to meet the demand. To boost the number of new enlistments, local authorities began to offer rewards, the value of which gradually increased. In time, and with the commencement of events already foreseen, the government resorted to compulsory military recruitment. This was inevitable. A sense of anxiety permeated the church. All were perplexed as to how this problem should be dealt with. The Adventist pioneers did not foresee the possibility of an exemption clause for pacifist Christians. What were they to do now that they were faced with a draft? Could they conscientiously support a war if it had humanitarian motives? In this case, would the responsibility fall solely on the state? On the other hand, how could they expect exemption? What if by refusing to bear arms they faced capital punishment? Faced with such a risk, would it be better to simply move to another country? In the end, what was the correct position to take to avoid breaking the commandments and, at the same time, solve the problem threatening the life and faith of so many believers?

### Personal views

This test revealed a lack of true preparation and unity in the church. The history of this experience is marked by uncertainty, discussions, contrasts, and debates, often charged with heat-



ed emotions. It was an arduous test in which the strength and reasoning of men were stretched to their limits; a test that served to demonstrate how weak and contradictory personal ideas are without the clear rays of divine light.

In summary, the writings of the pioneers reveal at least three schools of thought. These beliefs were:

- active participation, those who would serve as active combatants,
- conditional participation, those who agreed to fight only under certain conditions, and
- non-participation, those who refused to engage in any form of military service.

The group who aligned themselves with the group of full combatants was constituted by those who, because of the humanitarian ideals surrounding this war, would accept the government's call to bear arms. Among those who initially were, more or less, in favor of participation in the struggle were Joseph Clarke,<sup>11</sup> J.N. Loughborough,<sup>12</sup> D.T. Bourdeau,<sup>13</sup> M.E. Cornell,<sup>14</sup> and Stephen Pierce.<sup>15</sup>

Br. James White at first stated that he favored conditional participation. He, in particular, held that it was permissible as an alternative against the death penalty. In his article entitled "The Nation," he, among other things, affirmed that in the case of mandatory recruitment it is not the individual, but the state, which must assume the responsibility for breaking the commandments.

Therefore, he added, absolutely refusing the call to arms at the risk of being shot, even though attempting to obey God's law, is not justified, and would make one guilty of suicide.<sup>16</sup>

This statement provoked strong reactions. On the one hand, many accused Br. White of violating both the fourth and sixth commandments.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, his stand offered a sense of relief as it provided an escape from the possibility of facing the death penalty. In reality, Br. White wrote this viewpoint to eliminate the suspicions circulated in certain environments against Sabbathkeepers and to calm the strong anxiety

of many church members. It was never his intent that he would give the final word about the subject. During that difficult time, Sr. White reports<sup>18</sup> that he had tried to do his best. He assumed that position not having anything better to propose and then invited others to give their opinions on the matter. This position was shared with Br. J.H. Wagoner and others. Some held it only temporarily while awaiting further light.<sup>19</sup> It was quite some time before there was a change of ideas.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, there were the non-participants or pacifists, defined by some as "non-combatants." These were those who maintained conscientious objections to military service and argued that it was not necessary to take up weapons and cooperate in the war effort, not even for the liberation of slaves, and not even when faced with the threat of imprisonment. It was a pretty consistent group. Among those who opposed the use of weapons by God's children, either initially or after examining the matter further, included the following: O. Nichols,<sup>21</sup> Henry E. Carver,<sup>22</sup> J.M. Aldrich,<sup>23</sup> George W. Amadon,<sup>24</sup> R.F. Cottrel,<sup>25</sup> Ellen G. White,<sup>26</sup> J.M. Wagoner, and others.

#### Personal methods proposed or practiced in order to obtain military exemptions

In the tense climate that had been generated within the church, not only were there varying thoughts on the war itself and the position that should take taken with respect to it, but thoughts differed also on how to obtain an exemption, at the time in which the draft was being introduced. In the line of non-combatants, objectors, or pacifists, various methods were proposed.

• Expatriation: One proposed solution of avoiding the dangers of recruitment was expatriation. According to this concept, those who were eligible for recruitment could, before being called to arms, emigrate to Canada or Europe.<sup>27</sup>

• Mutilation: Another idea, which was rather questionable, was that of self-mutilation or the provocation of rather serious diseases in order to be

considered unfit at the time of the required medical examination. This, in reality, was actually implemented by some. Those who attempted this were plagued by illnesses that dragged on for the rest of their lives. It was an unwise method of avoiding recruitment. Deploring such attempts, Sr. White wrote years later, "In order to escape the draft during the war, there were men who induced disease, others maimed themselves that they might be rendered unfit for service. Here is an illustration of the course which many have been pursuing in relation to the cause of God. They have crippled their powers, both physical and mental, so that they are unable to do the work which is so greatly needed."<sup>28</sup>

• Petitioning authorities: A procedure no less debatable was the one undertaken by some in the state of Iowa. They felt it was better to follow the legal path, and expose their conscientious objections to the authorities; but at the same time they behaved in such an unwise manner as to publicly denounce the authorities and openly defy public opinion. This inevitably sparked prejudice and hostility from society against Sabbath observers and achieved the opposite effect. In 1862, this group presented a petition to the authorities which was rejected. About them, the admonition was written, "In Iowa they carried things to quite a length, and ran into fanaticism. They mistook zeal and fanaticism for conscientiousness. Instead of being guided by reason and sound judgment, they allowed their feelings to take the lead. They were ready to become martyrs for their faith. Did all this feeling lead them to God? to greater humility before Him? Did it lead them to trust in His power to deliver them from the trying position into which they might be brought? Oh, no! Instead of making their petitions to the God of heaven and relying solely upon His power, they petitioned the legislature and were refused. They showed their weakness and exposed their lack of faith. All this only served to bring that peculiar class, Sabbathkeepers, into special notice, and expose them to be crowded into difficult places by those who have no sympathy for them... What they thought to be faith was only fanatic presumption."<sup>29</sup>



On one hand, they denounced the government, thus attracting the zeal of secessionists.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, they considered themselves to be martyrs when nobody had threatened them, thus showing themselves to be fanatics. In the end, instead of waiting for divine help, and relying on the Lord, they trusted in themselves, and thus they failed miserably.

### The correct procedure to gain an exemption

Since the methods previously presented were not the correct way to demonstrate one's conscientious objection to the authorities, how could it be done so that a good testimony was given and the principles of the church presented in the correct light? The recommended procedure was to share their position to authorities only when questioned. During this time, a careful explanation could be given supported by biblical reasons for refusal to bear arms. It was also necessary to clarify that this was not done out of sympathy for the rebellion.

This is the position recommended by the Spirit of Prophecy, "Those who feel that in the fear of God they cannot conscientiously engage in this war will be very quiet, and when interrogated will simply state what they are obliged to say in order to answer the inquirer, and then let it be understood that they have no sympathy with the Rebellion."<sup>31</sup>

Why was caution so necessary? In addition to the reasons already men-

tioned, namely, to avoid being reported to the authorities and defying public opinion, there was another detail. The position of the Adventists regarding military service was very similar to that of a pro-slavery group called the "Copperheads." It was very easy for anyone resisting recruitment to be labeled as a part of this group.<sup>32</sup> If they did not act with due prudence, the church would thus be endangered and portrayed in a false light.

Mentally reconstructing the scenario so that all parts are seen clearly, it can be better understood then how complex the situation was. It is not without reason that Sr. White wrote, "But few have had wisdom in this most trying time to think without prejudice and candidly tell what shall be done."<sup>33</sup>

The discussion among the leading brethren mainly developed while "voluntary service" was in force and before the law regarding mandatory recruitment was passed. Although opinions about recruitment remained divided, one thing was clear, the Sabbath observers "manifested no greater interest in the war and did not volunteer."<sup>34</sup>

### God's people cannot participate

To begin shedding light on the position that they should take with regard to the war, Sr. White in the month of January 1862, published the first testimony, "The North and South," through which she tried to present the gravity of

war and its devastations.<sup>35</sup> In her second testimony, "Slavery and War," which illustrated her vision of August 3, 1861, she added that through this war God was punishing both the South for the sin of slavery, and the North for having tolerated it for so long.<sup>36</sup> By studying these messages it is not difficult to interpret the events and understand that participation in the war, for whatever the purpose or reason, would bring down divine judgment upon the church.

Another message regarding the alienation of the people God with respect to the war was given in the year 1862. Here we read clearly, "Sabbathkeepers now cannot expect this, and should not, upon any consideration, engage in this terrible war. They have nothing to hope for. The desolating power of God is upon the earth to rend and destroy; the inhabitants of the earth are appointed to the sword, famine, and pestilence."<sup>37</sup>

During this particularly delicate moment, that is, before the draft laws were passed, the church received another message from heaven. On January 6, 1863, in the Review and Herald, it was announced, "Testimony for the Church, No. 9, will be ready in a few days. [...] Subjects— The war, and our duty in relation to it."<sup>38</sup> Three weeks later the announcement is repeated: "Testimony for the Church No. 9, is now ready. [...] Subjects— The war — Our duty in relation to it— Spirits lead our army, and others."<sup>39</sup> ■

1. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 258-259, 264, 359.
2. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 256, 258.
3. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 259.
4. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 358.
5. The View of the Seventh-day Adventists Relative to Bearing Arms, Battle Creek, 1864, págs. 8.
6. Ver Backgrounds of Selective Service, págs. 66.
7. Ver J. N. Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement (1905), págs. 337-340; Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 260 y Joyas de los Testimonios, tomo 1, págs. 88.
8. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 254, 256.
9. Manuscript 5, 1862, págs. 2, "Regarding the Civil War", en Manuscript Releases, tomo 7, págs. 112.
10. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 356.
11. Joseph Clarke, "The Sword vs. Fanaticism", Review and Herald, 23 de septiembre, 1862, págs. 135.
12. N. Loughborough, "Do Violence to no Man", Review and Herald, 30 de septiembre, 1862, págs. 140.
13. D. T. Bourdeau, "The Present War", Review and Herald, 14 de octubre, 1862, págs. 154-155.
14. M. E. Cornell, "Extremes", Review and Herald, 21 de octubre, 1862, págs. 163.

15. S. Pierce, "Obligation to Human Governments", Review and Herald, 28 de octubre, 1862, págs. 173-174.
16. Jaime White, "The Nation", Review and Herald, 12 de agosto, 1862, págs. 84.
17. Jaime White, "The Nation", Review and Herald, 26 de agosto, 1862, págs. 100.
18. Elena G. de White, Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 356.
19. J. H. Waggoner, "Our Duty and the Nation" Review and Herald, 23.9.1862, págs. 133-134.
20. R. W. Svchwarz, Light Bearers to the Remnant, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California, 1979, págs. 99.
21. O. Nichols, "Our Duty Relative to the War", en Review and Herald, 16.10.1862, págs. 22-23.
22. Henry E. Carver, "The War", en Review and Herald, 21.10.1862, págs. 166-167.
23. J. M. Aldrich, "The War", en Review and Herald, 23.12.1862, págs. 30.
24. George W. Amadon, "Why Seventh-day Adventists Cannot Engage in War", en Review and Herald, 7.3.1865, págs. 109.
25. R. F. Cottrell, "Should Christians fight? No. 1.", en Review and Herald, 9.5.1865; "Should Christians Fight? No. 2.", en Review and Herald, 23.5.1865; "Should Christians Fight? N. 3.", en Review and Herald, 30.5.1865.

26. Ellen G. White, "Regarding the Civil War", Manuscript 5, 1862, en Manuscript Releases, tomo 7, págs. 1-2; "The Rebellion", en Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 355-368.
27. Ver quanto riferito dal fr. J. White nel suo articolo "The Nation", en Review and Herald, 12.8.1862.
28. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 5, págs. 458.
29. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 356-357.
30. Ver J. White, "To Correspondents" en Review and Herald, 9.9.1862, págs. 118.
31. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 357.
32. A. Spalding, Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists, págs. 322.
33. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 357.
34. Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 356.
35. "The North and the South", en Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 253-260.
36. "Slavery and the war", en Testimonies for the Church, tomo 1, págs. 264-268.
37. Manuscript 5, 1862, págs. 2, "Regarding the Civil War", en Manuscript Releases, tomo 7, págs. 112.
38. Review and Herald, 6.1.1863, págs. 48.
39. Review and Herald, 27.1.1863, págs. 72.

# Salmo 91

Teresa Corti

1 He who dwells in the secret  
place of the Most High  
Shall abide under the shadow of  
the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, "He is  
my refuge and my fortress;  
My God, in Him I will trust."

3 Surely He shall deliver you  
from the snare of the [a]fowler  
And from the perilous pesti-  
lence.

4 He shall cover you with His  
feathers,  
And under His wings you shall  
take refuge;  
His truth shall be your shield  
and [b]buckler.

5 You shall not be afraid of the  
terror by night,  
Nor of the arrow that flies by  
day,

6 Nor of the pestilence that  
walks in darkness,  
Nor of the destruction that lays  
waste at noonday.

7 A thousand may  
fall at your side,  
And ten thousand  
at your right hand;  
But it shall not come near you.

It is with a beautiful promise that Psalm 91 begins. "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 91:1 ESV. One thing is a consequence of another. The shadow of the Almighty, who dwells on high, is a guarantee of protection and of perfect peace. He can do anything, His power is infinite, and He is always willing to use it for the benefit of those who love Him.

Man finds his hope and castle in God. Hope is the adoptive daughter of faith; indeed, it is the fruit of it. Whoever puts his hope in God will never be disappointed. Wise Solomon advises, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." Proverbs 3:5 ESV. A castle is a fortress that serves as a protection for those who take refuge in it from the attacks of the enemy. In this world, the children of God live on enemy territory and we need that castle, that fortress, that city of refuge that is our God. The psalmist well knew the kind of protection he could find by dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty.

Man, in this world ruled by the forces of evil, is like prey, frightened at the sight of the hunter; he runs in terror looking for a place to hide so as not to fall victim to the one who walks around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8.

Whoever seeks refuge in God, like chicks under the warm wings of their mother, instead of hiding among the bushes and trying to cover their nakedness with fig leaves, will not fear "the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day." Psalm 91:5 ESV. The darts of the enemy are always aimed at the children of God, but whoever

dresses in the divine breastplate, not forgetting any of its components (Ephesians 6:13-17), will emerge victorious from the most difficult trials and remain intact in the midst of plagues and destruction. Moreover, he will see thousands fall by his side, but he will not be touched by evil. Plagues, hunger, death—these are the judgments of God on earth, an alarm, a call to repentance, an invitation for men to return to their Creator with a contrite heart.

"Only with your eyes shall you look and see the reward of the wicked." Psalm 91:8 NKJV. The children of God will witness the reward of the wicked and thus become more aware of the grace that protects them. The faith and hope of man are richly rewarded by the God of love. Whoever hides in his Lord, who places the Most High as his habitation (Psalm 91:9), who builds his house on the Rock that is Jesus Christ our Lord, can face the most furious storms and remain unscathed. The Lord's promise to His children is, "Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Matthew 6:31, 33 ESV. Even in the days of hunger and persecution He promises that "...his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure." Isaiah 33:16 ESV.

"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and delivers them." Psalm 34:7 NIV. Angels are nothing less than "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation." Hebrews 1:14 ESV. Heavenly be-



8 Only with your eyes  
shall you look,  
And see the reward  
of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the  
Lord, who is my refuge,  
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,

10 No evil shall befall you,  
Nor shall any plague come near  
your dwelling;

11 For He shall give  
His angels charge over you,  
To keep you in all your ways.

12 In their hands they  
shall [c]bear you up,  
Lest you [d]dash your foot  
against a stone.

13 You shall tread upon  
the lion and the cobra,  
The young lion and the serpent  
you shall trample underfoot.

14 "Because he has set  
his love upon Me, therefore I  
will deliver him;  
I will [e]set him on high,  
because he has known My  
name.

15 He shall call upon Me,  
and I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble;  
I will deliver him and honor  
him.

16 With [f]long life  
I will satisfy him,  
And show him My salvation."

ings, perfect in their purity and obedience to God, are placed at the service of men. Oh, mystery of divine grace!

Every human being, from birth to death, has a guardian angel. One heavenly and holy being is assigned exclusively to serve as a protection and guide. His "angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." Matthew 18:10 ESV.

The story is told of a man who had believed the Lord's promise to stay by the man's side during the darkest moments of his life. However, when he had to go through great difficulties and walked the deserted path of a hostile and cruel world, he saw, with great uneasiness, that only one pair of footprints remained in the sand. With great pain and dismay, he addressed the Lord who had, until then, been the object of his trust and reminded Him of His promise. The Lord replied, "The footprints you see are those of My feet, because it was during those darkest hours that I carried you in my arms." We should not measure the Lord's fidelity by a human standard. He who is called "the faithful and true witness" (Revelation 3:14) will never disappoint us.

"You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot." Psalm 91:13 ESV. There is no force that does not submit to the power of the Almighty that is given to each of his children through faith. Jesus, when he gathered his disciples "gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction." Matthew 10:1 ESV. The last enemy to be defeated and annihilated by the force of divine grace will be Satan—that ancient serpent, the dragon, whose last appearance will be as an angel of light to deceive the world, and, if possible, the chosen ones. Why such divine protection? Why such a display of His grace? "Because He has set his love upon Me." Psalm 91:14. The love of man is a pale reflection of the love of God. "This is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us...." 1 John 4:10 ESV. We love Him because He first loved us, and that love is superlatively rewarded. Even when man goes through

hard tests, if he loves God, he must firmly believe in the promise, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28 ESV.

"He will call upon me and I will answer Him." Psalm 91:15 NIV. "The Lord is near to all who call on Him." Psalm 145:18 ESV. Whoever confesses the name of Jesus on earth, will have his name confessed before the Father in heaven. He who exalts God and His Law will be exalted in due course, not by men, but by the King of the universe. The Lord promises that He is with His people "in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him." Psalm 91:15 ESV. The highest desire of man is to be glorified with his Father and to become part of the heavenly family, not only spiritually but physically; to be taken up to heaven and appear before the throne of the heavenly Father every Sabbath; to see His face radiant with light and love. This is promised to us in Revelation 22:3, 4. "And His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads."

Before man can be glorified and brought into the presence of God, he must be sanctified and cleansed, not only of the sin that abides in him, but also of his sinful nature. Before that, he must be justified. That is, he must acknowledge and confess his sins, repent, and undergo the restoration process. The Lord promises, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation." Psalms 91:16. This is the promise He makes in the fifth commandment to children who honor their parents, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you." Exodus 20:12 ESV. By how much will the days of those who honor their Father in heaven be prolonged? Much more, since he will live for eternity, not in this earth, but in the earth made new, because the Lord will show him the way of salvation.

May God give us such experiences with His grace and mercy, that we long to live under His coat and dwell under His shadow. Amen. ■



# The Weight of Responsibility

Siegmund Gutknecht

*“Now I was cupbearer to the king.” Nehemiah 1:1*

“The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel, that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, ‘The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.’ As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, ‘O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, to hear the prayer of Your servant that I now pray before You day and night for the people of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against You. Even I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that You commanded Your servant Moses. Remember the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to Me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will

gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’ They are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand. O Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who delight to fear Your name, and give success to Your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.’ Now I was cupbearer to the king.” Nehemiah 1:1-11.

The history of God’s people tells us about their ups and downs, their apostasy, their idolatry and even their impiety, but also about their true repentance, their conversion, and their total surrender to God.

The book of Nehemiah tells us the story of the restoration of Jerusalem at the time when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. The holy city was deserted and given over to the arbitrariness of the enemy. Then God called Nehemiah, the butler to the king of Persia, whose heart was filled with a burning love for God and for His people. After obtaining the king’s permission, Nehemiah went to Jerusalem, gathered the people, and began construction of the wall, the temple, and the city. The work was started by trusting in the “mighty hand of God” and, despite great difficulties, completed soon afterwards.

What Nehemiah and the citizens of Jerusalem were able to do then, through obedience by faith, is what Jesus Christ entrusts to His church on earth as a holy

mission and what Paul summarizes with these words, “we are God’s fellow workers ...” 1 Corinthians 3:9.

This is the purpose of our redemption from the captivity of sin and death. We are redeemed not only to enjoy life, but also to serve. Jesus Christ has bought us with His precious blood, so that we may be His witnesses in this world, the builders who under His direction and with His power construct the spiritual temple.

We can summarize the first chapter of the book of Nehemiah with one very significant word: responsibility. This is the primary requirement in every duty carried out in the work of God, that is, having a clear awareness of the responsibility that one has before God and man. Yes, we must feel the weight of responsibility in order to serve correctly. By studying this chapter in Nehemiah we can understand two things:

1. How the sense of responsibility is awakened and strengthened,
2. How that responsibility works in a practical way.

Nehemiah served in the castle at Susa, the heavily fortified Persian capital. His position was not only a high responsibility, but one that was greatly appreciated. The report makes us see that Nehemiah was highly esteemed by the king and queen. As an Israelite captive, he was doing very well and had managed to gain noble employment. What was it that moved



him to ask the king for leave from this post so that for twelve years he could lead a painful, self-sacrificing life, full of danger and disappointment? It was the weight of responsibility that burdened Nehemiah's heart and hammered at his conscience.

We can understand this only when we see that Nehemiah was a man called by God. Nehemiah felt the call of God. Divine love exercised power over him, igniting in his heart a living faith and a deep reciprocating love. The faith and love of God in the hearts of men is always the work of God Himself. Because Nehemiah's love for God was genuine and of divine origin, it was not just a warm, pious feeling that would quickly evaporate, but a force that took over and governed his whole life. His natural selfishness was thus eradicated when he recognized that God was not there for him, but that he was there for God. He recognized that his life, his strength, his time did not belong to him, but came from God, and that he had a responsibility before Him.

At the same time, the love of God made him look at his neighbor, his people. He understood that they were not only his people, but God's property, when he so movingly declared, "They are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand." Nehemiah 1:10 ESV.

He recognized that his countrymen were the dear property of God. Jerusalem's reproach was also an affront to the name of God and ignited a burning flame in his soul. This couldn't be! He felt responsible before God for the condition of the city and for the miserable situation in which the people found themselves. The weight of responsibility did not leave him alone while he was in the castle at Susa. He was to go and make himself available to God to help rebuild the city. Love for God and His people constrained him. Here we learn that the driving force behind responsibility is love.

If you recognize that you love Jesus, but feel no responsibility towards your neighbor, who is still in the world and lives in sin, and if your love for Jesus does not move you to serve your neighbor, then you have not yet experienced the irresistible love of God.

Herein lies the secret of the great zeal shown in the service of the Apostle Paul.

He, too, had been called by Jesus. Jesus' love impacted his life, shook him to the depths of his being, threw him from the horse of his pride, dragged him out of the castle of his glorious self-righteousness and pious selfishness. The scales fell from his eyes. His love for Jesus placed him immediately under the weight of responsibility. He felt indebted to all men and threw his whole life into the service of Jesus. He boldly took the life of Jesus upon himself and was willing to have his name erased from the Book of Life if by so doing his contemporaries could thus be saved.

In the love of Christ is also found for us the secret of heart service and the driving force to bear witness. It is His

love that places us under the imperative weight of responsibility. Suddenly, one feels responsible, together with God, for his neighbor, for his superiors and for all those who need help. This love transforms us into debtors of all humanity.

How does this awareness of the responsibility of love that one has towards one's neighbor work in practical life?

This is the second point that these verses show us. From the beginning we must observe something. The weight of responsibility Nehemiah felt in his heart did not immediately lead him to render an external service, but first brought him to a place of peace. What Nehemiah did first was listen—listen to what his brother told him about the miserable situation





of his beloved people and of his beloved city. Yes, you must also listen with all your heart. Introduce yourself to the misery of another, so that it becomes your own misery. It's no wonder that F.B. Meyer, a Baptist pastor and friend to D.L. Moody, once said,



We can hear with our ears, but what is heard does not penetrate our being if it is not heard with love. You can also hear from the heart, as Joseph heard the prisoners in jail when they shared with him their dreams. Love allows us to listen through the communion of our hearts, through which the need of the other person penetrates our being, becomes our own need, and awakens a genuine, deep, and priestly compassion.

Dear friend, if you want to serve your neighbor you have to know their needs and take them upon yourself. We must, as Nehemiah did, become informed as to what is the condition "of Jerusalem." As far as possible, we must inform ourselves about the situation in the mission fields of the world. The needs and difficulties of God's work will no longer leave us unresponsive.

Another aspect that we see in Nehemiah's sense of responsibility are his tears. "When I heard these words ... I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven." Nehemiah 1:4.

Do we also know the tears of love, those tears shed for the miseries and sins of the world? We demonstrate against the abominable acts we read about in the newspapers, we rebel against injustices, but have we shed tears of compassion like those Jesus shed over Jerusalem? The tears of holy love are the most effective power to bear fruit in the vineyard of the Lord. A son whose heart has hardened and who, despite all his father's admonitions and warnings, remains unmoved, is shaken to the depths of his being by tears of maternal love.

Nehemiah did not remain inactive in his sadness, nor did he run to render service, but, instead, fell to his knees and shed tears in a moving penitent prayer. The penitent spirit gives rise to the action of God.

Before taking action in the face of the unprecedented situations of the world and the inconveniences within the church, I must first realize that I myself am partly responsible and guilty for this situation. My indolence, my disobedience, my sins make me a contributor towards the guilt.

This weight of responsibility does not lead Nehemiah to repentance only, but closer to God. He seeks an intimate connection with God, with His word, with His power. Nehemiah clings to God's promises and covets only one thing, to fear the name of God and to do His will. Nehemiah 1:11.

The most important thing we can do for Jesus is to let Him work in us. Jesus is the one who builds His church and finishes His work. It is not through our strength, our knowledge, our organization, nor through our brochures or books, not even through our preaching that this is accomplished.

God's kingdom is built by His Holy Spirit and of those peculiar people who are sanctified and consecrated to Him. These are the living stones with which He builds His temple. Our service will be fruitful only to the extent that Jesus sanctifies us. ■







# WORLD IN BRIEF

## News from Europe



Children's Activities



Youth Activities



International Youth Conference  
11- 18 August 2019, Spain



Youth Workshops



Workshops with Teenagers



South Korean Representatives

## Activities



# Activities



Prayer for Candidates for Baptism



Representatives of Venezuela



GC President, GC Youth Leader and Youth  
Committee of Spain



Pastoral Blessing

We appreciate your prayers for the work in Europe,  
God bless you!



*The Sabbath*

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