

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

The Great World War

by Allen Stump

I am fascinated by certain aspects of the study of war, especially World War II, not just with the different airplanes, tanks, ships, and battles, but also because I am intrigued about why people fight one another to acquire territory, possessions, and control over other people. The history of our earth is riddled with warfare. In the Bible war is first noted in Genesis 14 with the battle of the kings in the valleys of Sodom and Gomorrah and it continues right on through Scripture. In fact, some of the major lines of prophecy we study are connected to the rise and fall of nations based upon their warfare. When you look at a map in a history book of the ancient kingdom of Babylon and compare it with the next world empire of Medo-Persia, you will notice that the territory of Medo-Persia is larger, and then in comparison the territory of the Grecian empire is even larger, and the territory of the Roman empire is by far the largest. Wars were fought primarily over territory and all that was encompassed within the territory—the people, the minerals such as gold, the land, the rivers, and the water supply.

Ideology

Today wars are still being fought over land and the treasures it holds, oil, for example, but there is another frontier that wars are fought over and that is the frontier of ideology—what men believe and why. You are probably familiar with the term “the cold war.” I grew up in the midst of the cold war and I remember how my schools were to be used as a nuclear fall-out shelters. Young people growing up today don’t see signs for such shelters at schools now. They don’t know what it is like to have a neighbor build a bomb shelter in his back yard or under his house. When I was young, people were afraid there would be a nuclear holocaust between the United States and the Soviet Republic. A “cold war” of ideologies was taking place between these superpowers. Not many actual shots were fired, although the countries of Korea, Laos, Vietnam, and others became pawns in the superpowers’ “cold war.”

Al-Qaeda has strongholds in Pakistan, Iran, and in other places. If I were to get the same history map out showing the territories of Babylon, MedoPersia, Greece, and Rome and then I asked you to superimpose on it the territory of Al-Qaeda, that would be nearly impossible to do because Al-Qaeda formulates an ideology not a territory.

In many respects modern warfare is conducted very differently from the past. Past or present though, war is a horrible thing. If you do not understand the devastation and the evilness of war, visit Auschwitz in Poland and you will

Prayer Requests

We urgently need God’s Spirit in all of its richness to lead us into all truth, especially as we consider the important concepts presented in this issue of *Old Paths*. I am also particularly burdened that we, with all our brethren worldwide, be kept in prayer as we all seek to bring honor and glory to our heavenly Father in every aspect of our lives.

As noted on page 7, next month we will begin a series of studies on victorious living and I would like to encourage all of us to be in earnest prayer now in preparation for this study, as it is of the utmost relevance and importance to our lives, not only for today, but for all eternity, for we know that, “When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69)

Editor

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begin to understand the depravity of man. This depravity of war—death, starvation, murder, rape, pillaging, etc.—brings about imprisonment not only of body but of soul as well.

War is Satan's Idea

War is not the conception of God but rather is that of Satan. The Bible says the very first place war began was in heaven. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out..." (Revelation 12:7-9) It was not simply territory that Satan wanted. His war was based on ideology. What did Satan say? "I will be like the most High." (Isaiah 14:14) What is it that the most High had or received that Satan wanted? He wanted the worship God was receiving. Satan wanted the power, authority, and position that would enable him to receive the worship God had, and this was one of the great temptations that Satan brought to Christ. He said, "Do You see all the kingdoms of the world, all the territories, and all the possessions? You can have it all if you will bow down and *worship me.*" And, of course, Christ told him that it would not be so. Area and territory were not as important to Lucifer as was worship. Ideology was being fought over.

When Satan brought warfare to this earth, he set up his camp in the only place God would allow him—at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as is described in Genesis chapter 3. Satan told Eve she would be like God (*elohiyim*). What was the emphasis? She would be like God, a great, majestic person, and she would receive worship. We know both Adam and Eve accepted Satan's idea and war began on earth, but the war actually began as soon as Eve started to talk to Satan. Unfortunately, Satan won the first battle, but friends, one battle does not win the war. Wars are won on the accumulation of all the battles. Adam and Eve lost the first battle with ideology and they also lost their territory. They were driven out of the Garden of Eden and this whole earth became usurped by Satan. The Bible says that he is now the god of this earth and the prince of the power of the air. (Ephesians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 4:4) This earth came under the dominion of Satan. This is why beautiful roses today have thorns. This is why the earth is hard to till and yields its harvest sparingly. This is why we have such destructive weather at times. More than anything else, Adam and Eve lost their face-to-face communion with God over this battle of ideology and over whom they were going to worship.

We need to understand there is a great conflict going on. As Adventists we are familiar with the book, *The Great Controversy*, and we understand better than any people on earth that a controversy is going on that is really a war between Christ and Satan. We know that Satan uses heathen powers and powers of false ideologies to war against God's people. Daniel foresaw this in prophecy and declared, "I beheld, and

the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." (Daniel 7:21) There was a time when the truth was cast down to the ground, the place of the sanctuary was removed, the daily was taken away, and war was made, but friends, the war was a two-front war. It was primarily a war of ideology, but in warring with ideology, Satan also later attempted to physically destroy God's people in order to destroy the truth about God. Notice the emphasis in Revelation 12:17. "And the dragon [Satan] was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." He went to make *war* with God's people. Friends, you are in a war.

Today we celebrate Veteran's Day, formerly called Armistice Day, which commemorated the end of World War I, and V-E Day was to commemorate the victory in Europe during World War II. People celebrate when wars are over, but friends, our war is not over! We have been in this war since the Garden of Eden and the universe has been in it since the fall of Satan. The war is going on today and you are all soldiers on one side or the other, friends, whether you realize it or not. During the Civil War, Confederate soldiers would draft men into their army from Union-held areas as they passed through, and the Union army did likewise in Confederate territories. The fact of the matter is, we are in this together, whether we realize it or not. Jesus says, "He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Luke 11:23) We are in this war, but unlike some of the men in the Confederate and Union armies, we have a choice about who our Captain will be and on whose side we shall fight. The question is, "Are we making an active choice or accepting one by default?" "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." (Revelation 12:13) Revelation 13 speaks about a beast coming up out of the sea and "it was given unto him to make war with the saints." (Revelation 13:7) So, we are in a battle.

The Real Battlefield Is the Mind

As we have noted, this battle is not for the flesh or territory, but for the mind. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh," but we are still in war, right? But, our war is not after the flesh. "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [or fleshly], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down [or bringing down] imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5) Notice what Peter says in 1 Peter 2:11. He starts with "Dearly beloved." Remember, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21) These are simply not the words of Peter but they are the words of God to us, so when he says "Dearly beloved," he is writing as God's penman and telling us today that we are dearly beloved of God.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you [I beg of you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” (1 Peter 2:11) There are fleshly lusts that war against us and we need to realize that the body and the mind sympathize with each other. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, Paul says we are to bring into “captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” The battle, friends, is in our minds, but our bodies can be used to try to manipulate the minds. One of the primary purposes of torture is to make the one being tortured change his mind about something, in other words, to change his ideology. During the Dark Ages, the papacy used instruments of torture to persuade people to recant from their protestant ways and to accept the papacy’s confessional, mass, and all their other abominations. They were masters of torture. The history is clear that many were tortured, and the fact that there were Christian martyrs testifies that some of these people did not recant under torture. Peter tells us that there are fleshly lusts that war against our souls and we need to understand this. As a people, Seventh-day Adventists talk about health reform and even though this is not my subject in this article, I want to emphasize that we need health reform. We need good, proper health reform because it helps our minds to clearly discern truth from error, for this is where the war is being waged.

Jesus Christ Is Our Leader

In every war there are captains, generals, or leaders of each side. In the American Civil War the two most predominant generals were Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. These were the two leaders, at least by the end of the war, of the opposing armies. In World War II, General Dwight Eisenhower was commander of all the Allied forces in Europe, but in our battle today, we have the Captain of the LORD’s host (Judges 5:15), and remember this is Christ. He is Michael, our Prince. Beloved, He has come to reclaim this earth and His people. He is going to declare the truth and set forth before the universe the true ideology about who God is and what He is like.

Christ’s Followers Are His Soldiers

God chose the nation of Israel to be His soldiers. “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” (Deuteronomy 7:6) God had a special people then and I believe He still has a special people now. His great goal for Israel wasn’t just to give them a land that flowed with milk and honey, but He wanted to use this people as a light to the world, to exalt them above all the nations so that the other nations could see what God is truly like. The Bible tells us over and over that God is going to use a group of people in reclaiming this earth. Jesus told Peter that upon the truth that He is the Son of God He was going to establish His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. So far, to the untrained eye it *seems* to have prevailed. For 1,260 long, dark years the truth of God

was primarily obstructed and kept from the view of the people, but God says this work of Satan is not going to prevail. He has a plan and He has a purpose for us.

Daniel 2 gives a prophecy of a metallic image with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, midsection of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay. The Bible says that a stone was cut out without hands, and this stone would be involved in the toppling of this image and all that it stands for. “And in the days of these kings [of the iron and clay] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Daniel 2:44) According to the Bible, what breaks up the other kingdoms? The very kingdom that God sets up is actually the one that breaks up the other kingdoms. Daniel 7:25 speaks about the little horn power that will “speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and *they* shall be given into his hand until a time and times, and the dividing of time.” Now, who are the “they”? The saints that are mentioned in verse 21. The beast makes war with the saints and prevails for a time, times and the dividing of times, but now notice what it says in verse 26. “But the judgment shall sit, and *they* shall take away his dominion.” The “they” here are the same people as before—the saints. God’s people are going to be Christ’s soldiers and they have a very important work to do in destroying the kingdom and ideology of Satan. We each have the responsibility and honor to be part of this group. 1 Peter 2:9 begins with “But ye are a chosen generation...” Peter is speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Is Peter only speaking to the few people who were scattered among Galatia and the surrounding areas whom he first speaks to in chapter 1? No, by the Holy Spirit, he is speaking to all of us. He says, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...” In Deuteronomy 7:6, God said we are a holy nation and a chosen people, right? But, again, why were the Israelites chosen? Why are we today to be a peculiar people? Why have we been set forth in this world like this? He tells us in the rest of the verse. “...that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” God has a unique purpose for us. Isn’t that exciting! It is inspiring, friends, to want to do something special for God. He has called us with a purpose at this momentous time to let people know what He is like. What a wonderful privilege we have!

Notice the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. “Ye are the light of the world...” (Matthew 5:14). This is a wonderful opportunity. Light is used to illuminate and is used as an illustration or a symbol of truth. God says we are to give truth to the world, right? “A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they

may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16) What is the great thing that God wants us to do? To glorify Him, and friends, we can do that by letting our light shine forth and by letting our good works be shown.

I have given some time to the study of warfare and the great battles in some of the various wars. There is probably no general I have more admiration for than Robert E. Lee. Robert Lee fought on the losing side and usually you think of men who fight on the winning side as being the best generals, but Robert Lee’s great skill allowed him to gain many victories with inferior forces. One thing that so impressed me about Robert Lee was the love and devotion his men had for him. Many times as Lee would begin to lead his men into the battle they would actually physically restrain him from doing so, saying that he was too valuable and they couldn’t risk losing him to a rifle shot or to a canon blast. This concern need not be ours, for we know we are not going to lose our General. Satan crucified Him on a cruel cross, but he will never be able to touch Jesus again except through His people. We have the privilege of doing something for Jesus. We have the opportunity of going to war for our beloved Commander whom we love so much.

The prophecies and the words of Christ tell us the gospel is going to be preached. Jesus says, “Go... and teach all nations.” (Matthew 28:19) “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” (Revelation 14:6) The message has to go to all people, tongues and nations, and to different groups, because this ideology of Satan has permeated the whole world. The masthead of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* used to have printed on it, “The World is the Field,” with a picture of a globe beside it. Adventists were very keen in understanding that they needed to send missionaries to every nook, cranny, and corner of the world, and it wasn’t so that they could reclaim the land. There was a saying at one time that the sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire had accumulated territories and lands throughout so many different parts of the world that the sun was always shining on one of those parts at any given time. But, our Christian missionaries were interested in the people within those territories and what was going on in their minds (the ideology) so that they could turn them from the worship of false gods and idols to the worship of the true and the living God. “Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him.” (Revelation 14:7) The great emphasis of the message is to fear God and give glory to Him. Are we doing that?

The gospel is going to be preached. Revelation 18 says that a loud cry is to occur, and even though the Reformation failed and the Advent movement *seems* to have failed, there will be a truth and a movement that goes through. The

Advent movement is not only a continuation of the Protestant Reformation, but it is also the final culmination of what God has desired to do with all of His people through all time. As you read Revelation 14:6-12, you see the answers to all the ideological problems of this world. Some of the so-called great philosophies of today came into being in the nineteenth century. For example, Charles Darwin published his book, *The Origin of the Species* in 1844, but the answer to evolution, atheism, pantheism, nihilism, Gnosticism, humanism, existentialism, Catholicism, apostate Protestantism, communism, Judaism, Freudianism, Mohammedanism, and any other “isms” is found in Revelation chapter 14.

Victory Through The Cross

The cross has assured us victory. In almost every war, there is a decisive battle that tips the scale. In the war between Christ and Satan, the cross of Jesus tipped the scale, and Jesus could say, as recorded in John 19:30, that “It is finished.” What was finished? Obviously the plan of salvation wasn’t finished. Jesus’ resurrection nor His second coming had occurred, but friends, what was finished, finalized, and determined was that Christ was victorious over Satan in this deciding battle.

“And, having made peace *through the blood of his cross*, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.” (Colossians 1:20, 21) Our minds have been estranged from God, but they can be brought back into a fellowship and into a harmony with God. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” (Colossians 1: 12, 13) Friends, we are in this war by default. You and I were born into it. We were all bound, shackled, and brought into this world, but the Bible says that through the cross we have been given the chance to have freedom and total victory.

Colossians 2:15 says, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” He has triumphed over them all. “...The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ...” (Revelation 11: 15) Daniel chapters 2 and 7 tell us that we are God’s soldiers in this war to bring down Satan and his kingdom. Those who are with the Lamb “...are called, and chosen, and faithful.” (Revelation 17:14)

The Prayer of Jabez

1 Chronicles 4 tells of a man from Judah named Jabez. Maybe you have heard of him in the last few years because of a popular book written by Bruce Wilkinson entitled, *The Prayer of Jabez*. The book has a lot of merit and the study of these two verses is tremendous. 1 Chronicles 4 is the only place in the Bible Jabez is spoken of, and much is said in just these two verses. “And Jabez was more honourable than his

brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, [or as the margin says, enlarge my border] and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, and that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.” (1 Chronicles 4:9, 10) Jabez asked that his coast, or his border, might be enlarged. We are not talking about a physical territory in the Christian era. Even in the time of Israel, God wanted them to enlarge their territories to give His Word and to show His glory and His character to the world around them. God had a vision, friends, that the little nation of Israel would eventually encompass the whole world and the world would become His through them. The prayer of Jabez is that God would enlarge his borders or his coasts and he was not only talking about physical territory, but about ideology and the souls of people. Jabez asked the Lord to keep him from evil. The very foundation of that which wars against us, he wanted to be kept from. And why? Not only to give glory to God but, interestingly, so that it might not grieve him. Are you grieved, friends, when you sin? Jabez’s heart was so completely in harmony and in tune with God that he knew that which grieved him would grieve God also. The prayer of Jabez was so heartfelt and God loved it so much that He answered his prayer.

Peter says in Acts 10:34 that God is no respecter of persons. This means God will do for you just what He did for Jabez. Friends, if our hearts are like Jabez’s, God cannot say no and still be honest with Himself. How could He then be no respecter of persons? He has to do for us what He did for Jabez, for He is bound by his own Word. He is able and He is just as willing to answer your prayer as He was to answer Jabez’s prayer, if your heart, friends, is in the battle as much as Jabez’s heart was.

The Restoration of All Things

God is going to create a new heaven and a new earth. (See 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation Chapters 21 and 22.) The territory that was at one time usurped by Satan will be restored to God and His kingdom. The tree of life which was taken out of the Garden of Eden will be restored to God’s people in the end of time, but friends, the most important thing that will be restored is face-to-face communion with God and with Jesus Christ. Do you want to be in a battle that brings this about? Do you want to do something that can hasten the second coming of Jesus? I do.

The Bible says that we are to be soldiers. In 2 Timothy Paul is speaking to his son in the faith. Paul knows that he doesn’t have long to live and he has important things to say to Timothy. “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” (2 Timothy 2:3, 4) Friends, do you

really want to please God? Do you realize that you can have a dramatic impact on this war? You might not think that you can make a difference, but friends, Daniel was one man and he made a tremendous difference in Babylon, a difference that has effected God’s people down through the ages to today. What about Joseph in Egypt? He was one person, just like each of us, but he had an effect on God’s people and upon this world. You might only be one woman, but Esther was just one woman and she was instrumental in bringing about the deliverance of God’s people. Nehemiah was just one man, but because of the work of that one man, great things happened. Jabez was one man. There are only two verses in the whole Bible about him, but his life had an influence. We don’t know how much territory he received, but, friends, his influence was important and still lives today and is still carving out “territory” for God’s kingdom.

Lessons From A Sheep Dog

I have a book written by Phillip Keller, called *Lessons from a Sheep Dog*. This is one of the best books I have ever read. In this book, Keller shares his intimate experiences with a sheep dog and draws spiritual parallels and applies them to his own experience. Phillip Keller was a shepherd who grew up in east Africa tending cattle. He intended to be a cattle rancher, but, later in his life, he moved to Vancouver Island, Canada. Because he couldn’t afford cattle, he began raising sheep.

When Phillip Keller started his ranch on Vancouver Island, he realized he needed a sheep dog to help him care for the sheep, and no dog would better serve him than a border collie. While perusing through a newspaper, he noticed an advertisement for a border collie. The owner of the border collie told him she couldn’t do anything with her dog as the dog constantly wanted to chase bicycles and cars and bite children, so much so that she was willing to give the dog away. When Phillip Keller first saw the dog, she had two chains on her, one around her neck and another tied to one of her legs because she was so unmanageable. As Keller approached the dog, she started to snarl, growl, and show her teeth, but Keller agreed to accept this unfriendly canine on the condition that if he couldn’t do anything with her, the owner would take the dog back.

He called the dog Lass and over several months of rehabilitation, he taught her to be a very loving and obedient sheep dog. He taught her how to bring the sheep in and to do all the necessary things he needed done, and they developed a very close and endearing relationship. It is a beautiful story.

In closing, I want to share with you one of the lessons he learned from this dog. Keller writes:

Some of our land lay in beautiful, open fields with occasional clumps of trees scattered over it like a lovely English park. Other parts were wild and rough, especially along the shoreline. Some of this was rocky with great granite outcroppings.

Among the boulders there were patches of wild roses, thorny blackberry tangles, old stumps, and downed timbers.

The sheep loved to work their way into these spots, searching for stray patches of sweet grass or other dainty herbs they relished. It was no easy thing to find the flock in such difficult cut-over country, but this was an important part of the work entrusted to Lass. I would send her to fetch out every straggling stray ewe and lamb. (*Lessons from a Sheep Dog*, p. 65)

Because of my height, I always could see where the lambs and ewes were in the broken country. Lass could not. I would have to send her into these rough spots to round up and bring out the entire flock. For her, it was virtually going in blind, trusting me implicitly. (*Ibid.*, p. xix)

“Fetch them in, Lass!” I would command her. “Go out and bring them home!” Without hesitating an instant she would be gone, pushing through the undergrowth, running over the rough rocks. It was stimulating to watch her work with such enthusiasm. She flung herself into the task until every sheep was brought out. (*Ibid.*, p. 66)

This is how God feels about us when we obey quickly. “It was stimulating to watch her work with such enthusiasm.” Oh friends, if we would work with such enthusiasm, what pleasure it would bring to our God! Wouldn’t He love that?

There was a cost to the dog in all this. She would become very weary. Her face would be scratched and torn by the thickets. Her coat would be clogged with burrs and debris. Sometimes the pads of her feet would be lacerated with the sharp stones.

Yet she went gladly with happy abandon. She knew I knew what I was doing. And all she desired was to be a dynamic part of the whole project. (*Ibid.*)

Now, remember friends, this is a story about a dog, but it relates to us. The author is saying in effect that the dog is like we are, and he, as the master, is as God to the dog. So as you think about the dog and the way the dog is, friends, relate it to yourself and the way you relate to God.

Not once did she hesitate to hurl herself into the toughest tangle to gather up the flock.

Her selfless abandonment to my wishes made an enormous impact upon me. In quiet moments of reverie I would ask myself the soul-searching questions: “Am I this available to my Master? Am I as willing to fling myself into His work? Am I so devoted to Him? Does the matter of suffering deter me from duty?”

More often than not Lass put me to shame.

Reflecting upon all this I began to see why it is that Christ calls us as, His co-workers, to go into tough places. Being His friend is no cozy guarantee that life will always be either easy or even agreeable. There are simply bound to be some tough assignments, some suffering if we are to fully comply with His commands.

I never sent Lass into hard places to hurt her. But I put her into challenging circumstances to save the sheep. And it was out of all these endeavors together that she gradually matured and developed into a magnificent worker.

All of us as God’s people seem to shrink back from suffering. We are so often reluctant to undertake even the smallest assignment for the Master. We are reluctant to share our strength, time, or talents to touch others in trouble. We draw back from the distasteful situation where we might have to suffer a bit in order that others might be saved.


I saw all of this vividly as I worked with Lass. Her shining spirit and eager abandonment to my wishes combined to form a highly polished mirror in which I clearly saw reflected all the flaws of my own character—the failings of my own conduct toward Christ.

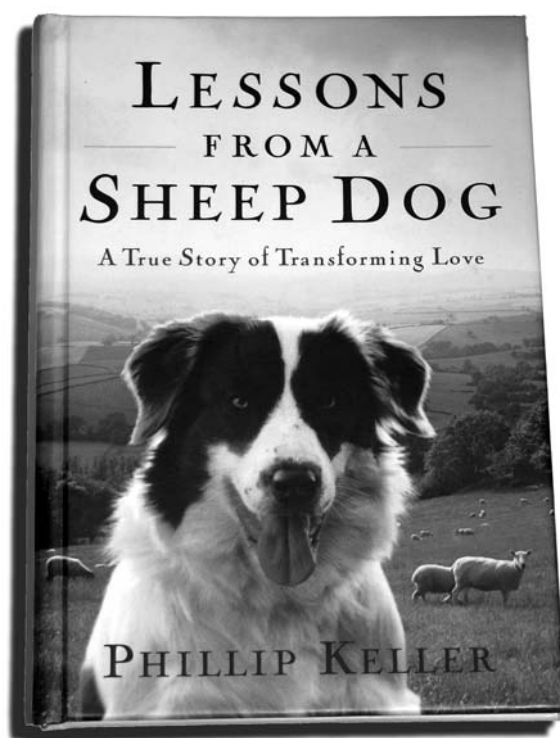
God’s gracious Spirit used the hearty service of that beautiful collicie to break some of my own tough resistance to His will for me. If she could be so instantly available for anything, surely I could do as well for God.

Many of us fail to realize what a noble honor it is to be called the friend of God. We are not often shown what a stirring challenge it is to be called to suffer with Him. We do not seem to see that amid all the varied

vicissitudes of life He really does know what He is doing with us. He can grasp the whole scheme of things and see far beyond our finite view. He is utterly in command and control of every situation.

Then, let us trust Him fully. Let us follow Him fearlessly. Let us fling ourselves with glad abandon into His enterprises. (*Ibid.*, pp. 66-68)

Let us, friends, as soldiers of Christ, work for Him in reclaiming that which Adam lost. May we have a vision of reclaiming a world whose roses have no thorns and the lion and lamb lie down together. But most importantly, may we have a vision, goal, and life dedicated to proclaiming the glory and honor of God that was misrepresented not only in heaven but also in the Garden of Eden. 



A Preview of “Good News” to Come

Our front page article, “The Great World War,” emphasizes the final and total victory God’s people will have over sin and over Satan before the second coming of Jesus Christ. Paul states that when Jesus returns, He will be coming back for a people that are “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Ephesians 5:27) It is imperative to understand that, as in mathematics, “the sum [of the church] is equal to the total of the parts [its members].” For this perfect church to exist all, I repeat, all who are members of *this* church must be found “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;” for they are “holy and without blemish.”

Being holy and without blemish is rarely a reality and instead is usually an ideal or goal professed Christians long to attain. The perfection of God’s people appears attractive on paper, but due to our own sad, repeated failures, it often remains completely out of our reach and is something we can only hope to experience by proxy or we believe it is something that can only happen by Jesus performing a great, mysterious work in us at some future time, a work that we have no input in or involvement with.

But, wait. Can we trust God’s Word and all the wonderful promises that it contains? If we can believe the promises about God’s salvation from the *penalty* of sin (Forgiveness—see John 1:9, Micah 7:18, 19, etc.), and if we can believe the promises of God concerning salvation from the *presence* of sin, (Freedom from sin in heaven and in the universe—see Revelation 21 and 22.), then why can we not believe the promises concerning salvation from the *power* of sin (Freedom from sin’s control in our hearts and minds—see Philippians 4:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Jude 1:24, etc.)? Is it because we view the work of being saved from the penalty and presence of sin as the work of God and we are able to trust God to deal with these matters? Do we exercise disbelief concerning God’s promises to deliver us from the power of sin because we mistakenly believe that the power for this work must come from ourselves instead of coming from God also?

Recently I have been in contact with several brethren from different home church groups in various parts of America and in the world field. There is clearly a deep, renewed interest among God’s people in finding both the total victory over sin and the holy living that God has promised. We rejoice to see God’s people beginning to awaken out of their slumber. Brethren, it is time to trim our lamps and meet the bridegroom. This renewed interest in overcoming all sin is of vital importance, as the door of salvation and mercy is at this very time closing! While there have always been natural disasters and calamities in the past, the increased number of these disasters and the rapidity with which we see them occurring

shows that even the earth is groaning under the weight of sin and surely Jesus must come very soon.

To help instruct, encourage, and empower God’s people to enter into the experience of total victory over sin, we are preparing a series of studies that will explain from the Bible and from the writings of Ellen G. White God’s desire and plan for victorious living in the lives of His people.

The gospel presents a seeming paradox. While its basic tenets are simple enough for a child to understand, the depth and width of the plan of salvation is so deep that we will be able to study it for eternity without exhausting its volume. Planning this series has caused me serious reflection and has renewed my appreciation of the depth of the matter. There are many main points that must be addressed, terms must be defined, and a logical and orderly sequence must be followed as we proceed in this study.

One point that is very clear to me is the need for us to become acquainted with the foundational principles of Christology and Soteriology. Notice that it is the “foundational principles,” not the words, which are important. However, don’t let even these words scare you. They have simple meanings. Many times we hear and use words such as “incarnation,” “millennium, and “theology,” yet because we have a basic understanding of the concepts behind these words, we feel at liberty to use them. Christology is built upon two Greek words, *Christos* (Χριστος) meaning Christ, and *logos* (λογος) meaning a word or the concept behind a word. Therefore, Christology is simply the study of the person of Christ, His divine/human nature and His character. Soteriology is from the Greek words, *soteria* (σωτηρια) meaning deliverance and *logos* (λογος). Soteriology, therefore, is the area of Christian theology that deals with redemption: the deliverance of sin through Christ’s perfect work of salvation. One of the foundational principles of Soteriology is the definition of sin. Our understanding of the plan of salvation will be greatly influenced by our understanding of the nature of Christ and our understanding of sin.

In 1888, God sent a message to His people that was to help prepare them for perfection of Christian character, for the giving of the loud cry, for the time of trouble, and for the coming of Jesus. Ellen White noted:

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to

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The Humble Heart is Mine Part 4

By Onycha Holt

This is the concluding article in the series on *The Humble Heart* and it will focus on our involvement in families as a whole, both in our homes and in our churches, and how it affects the body of believers as we relate to one another and to our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. We have studied so far about men as the leaders and rulers of our homes, about God's design for women to be help meets, and about the duty of children to honor and obey their parents in the Lord, but now I wish to address all of these aspects as it combines into a whole.

The Need for Forgiveness

In order to fulfill our roles in the home and in the church, we must be able to forgive one another. Twenty-five-year-old Conacy Laker lives in Northern Uganda. She finds it hard to look anyone in the eye after losing her nose, ears, and upper lip to rebels in the Lord's Resistance Army more than a decade ago. The International Criminal Court at The Hague has been close to issuing arrest warrants for the rebels, but, as *The New York Times* reported on April 18, 2005, the Acholi people of northern Uganda wanted to give forgiveness one more chance, using an age-old ceremony involving raw eggs. As the Acholi chiefs looked on twenty-eight,

... young men and women who had recently defected from the rebels lined up according to rank on a hilltop overlooking this war-scarred regional capital, with a one-legged lieutenant colonel in the lead and some adolescent privates bringing up the rear. They had killed and maimed together. They had raped and pillaged. One after the other, they stuck their bare right feet in a freshly cracked egg, with the lieutenant colonel, who lost his right leg to a bomb, inserting his right crutch in the egg instead. The egg symbolizes innocent life, according to a local custom, and by dabbing themselves in it the killers are restoring themselves to the way they used to be.

Next, the former fighters brushed against the branch of a pobo tree, which symbolically cleansed them. By stepping over a pole, they were welcomed back into the community by Mr. Acana and the other chiefs.

"I ask your forgiveness," said Charles Otim, 34, the rebel lieutenant colonel, who had been abducted by the rebels himself, at the age of 16, early in the war. "We have wronged you."

The age-old rite is what local residents have used when members of one tribe kill members of another. After being welcomed back into the fold, the offender must sit down with tribal leaders and make amends." Whoever came out of the bush was forgiven.

"I have nothing to say to the person who cut me, she [Conacy Laker] said sternly, staring at the dirt. "But the person needs to be punished like I was punished."

A moment later, though, forgiveness seemed at the fore. "What I'm after is peace," she said. "If the people who did this to me and so many others are sorry for what they did, then we can take them back." (*The New York Times*, April 18, 2005)

Twenty-five-year-old Conacy Laker lives in Northern Uganda. She finds it hard to look anyone in the eye after losing her nose, ears, and upper lip to rebels in the Lord's Resistance Army more than a decade ago.

Biblical Examples of Forgiveness

She was able to forgive those perpetrators who so savagely cut away her nose, ears, and upper lip, and likewise we must be able to forgive members of our own families who have hurt us far less. We need to have the humble heart of Jesus and allow God's Spirit to rule in our lives. We need to be able to say, "I will do it your way, Father. I will let your Spirit live within me and I will speak Your words instead of my own spiteful ones." As Jesus taught, we need to forgive being unjustly treated. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." (Matthew 18: 21, 22) We cannot continually look back at pain and injustice. Lot's wife looked back only once, but it caused her death. We look back many times and continue to dwell on our hurts and continue to harbor painful feelings in our hearts and in our minds *to our own detriment!* We may find it hard to walk away from them, but walk away from them we must. We must start each day as a new day and go forward and not hold onto the painful experiences of our past.

We are familiar with the story of Joseph and his brothers' betrayal of him, and then later of the betrayal by Potiphar's wife, which resulted in his unjust imprisonment and mistreatment. "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron." (Psalm 105:17, 18) Joseph was able to rise above these seemingly unfortunate experiences and be used of God in a mighty way. "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I

pray you... Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither..." (Genesis 45:3-5) Joseph had forgiven his brothers long before he was ever reunited with them because He saw the hand of God working in his life, and God is working in our lives too. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Stephen was able to forgive his murderers, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (Acts 7:60), and thus he followed Jesus' example at the cross of perfect forgiveness. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) Since we most definitely will be faced with difficult situations in the future, we must learn to forgive our family members now, in addition to seeking their forgiveness now, so that we, when the time comes, will find it easier to forgive enemies that may seek to end our lives, even when they believe they are doing God service. (John 16:2) Paul also found himself in difficult circumstances, but was able to say, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." (2 Timothy 4:16)

The Major Battlefield is the Home

Major battles will be won or lost in the home, far more than anywhere else and far more than we realize. This is the bottom line. We can work with disagreeable people in the work place and fellowship with them at church, but from them we can always walk away. We can be nice with those we casually meet as we go through the day, but it is how we treat each other in the home that will decide all for us. If we are unChristlike at work or at church, it means we are already that way at home. You might say, "But, I live alone, so I don't have to worry," but this is not so. The battle is also fought on the home front over diet, over what you read and watch, over how you spend your time and where your thoughts wander, because at home you are most relaxed and at ease. Satan comes in, creeping or with thunder, to capture us either in how we treat the people in our homes or in how we spend our time while alone. He is very successful in our homes, but it does not have to be so! God has promised to give us abundantly of His Spirit. "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." (Ephesians 3:16)

Shepherds of Israel

For those who fulfill the fast of Isaiah 58, the promise is: "And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and *thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water*, whose waters fail not." (Isaiah 58:11) God promises to satisfy the parched soul and to give life so abundantly to dry bones that they become fat. The question is, how does He do this for us? His Spirit gives us life, yes, (Ezekiel 37:5), and He

"gathereth the outcasts of Israel," yes, (Isaiah 56:8), but He also uses people to shepherd His flock. (Jeremiah 23:4) However, Isaiah tells us there are shepherds who are blind and ignorant, who are like dumb dogs that can't bark. These shepherds love to slumber and "cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." (Isaiah 56:10, 11)

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The Lord through Ezekiel warns the unfaithful shepherds saying, "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." (Ezekiel 34:1-4) All of us who are sheep know how sad it is when those who are called to be shepherds are unfaithful to the true Shepherd because, as sheep, we all suffer. We become "scattered because there is no shepherd" and, spiritually speaking, we become "meat to all the beasts of the field. "My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none [I am sorry to say] did search or seek after them." (verses 5 and 6) But God says He will "set up shepherds over them which shall feed them and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 23:4) Men in our homes are like shepherds to our families, it is true, but we also have shepherds (pastors) in our church families that nurture us in the Lord as we gather together to worship God on Sabbath mornings and at prayer meetings and other meetings. We need to honor and respect them because they are "the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" to us. (1 Corinthians 4:1) Yes, we each individually go directly to God and call upon Him, but just as our heavenly Father affords special blessings to the men in our families, He also blesses our pastors in a distinctive way to enable them to be stewards of the mysteries of God to us and we should be very thankful for this blessing. Paul tells us in Hebrews, "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as [and this is the key phrase] he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house." (Hebrews 3:3) As sheep, we are the house and our pastors are building our house from the Word of God for us.

Speaking to the sheep, Paul says, “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the LORD, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13) You probably will not hear a pastor tell you to esteem him very highly in love, but that is what we are counseled to do. We need to honor, respect, and love the pastors who are following the true Shepherd, for we are living in a fearful time. When Paul walked on this earth, there were men and women who helped him and who were his companions in the field. It is possible that most of them did not understand and cherish the great effect Paul was to have through the ages on the hearts of men and women and the great work that he was involved in for the salvation of mankind. They may not have understood all the mighty things he was teaching that would eventually be understood by God’s people at the end of time and thus prepare them for the great and terrible day of our Lord.

Our ministers today have as sobering a task as Paul had, *or an even more fearful one*, for “The power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is ten-fold greater than it was in the days of the apostles,” and “His plans are laid deeper, and are more covered with a religious garment to hide their deformity.” (*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, p. 277) “Thus while the power of the human race to resist temptations is continually decreasing, Satan’s skill and power to tempt are continually increasing.” (*Signs of the Times*, September 29, 1887) Our pastors have a daunting task as Satan is bent on a vengeful attack on God’s people, for he knows that the only way he can now prevent the establishment of God’s kingdom is by preventing the perfection of His people. He was not able to overcome Christ, so he has turned his assault on us, but God will protect His people and “When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69) We are at a time in this earth’s history when the stone is being cut out without hands and God’s people are being perfected; therefore, the responsibility of our ministers is extremely important and we need to esteem them highly “for their work’s sake.” “The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 671) We have the opportunity to bring honor and glory to God and our pastors are working with us toward this goal. We need to be thankful for them and continually lift them up to heavenly places in our prayers, as well as support them in every way possible with their work.

What Will We Be Doing When Jesus Comes?

When Jesus returns, will we all be old? No. There will be young people ready to meet Him who have a yearning desire to do something grand for the Lord, and they are doing something grand by submitting their lives to God’s way and

choosing to do what is right regardless of what their friends choose to do.

There will be young parents ready to meet Him, who have learned to be kind and respectful of each other and of their children’s innocent little ways without yelling and causing discouragement in the home.

There will be people in their physical and mental prime ready to meet Him, who are devoting their talents to God instead of seeking “the good life” and the things of this world. They are already rich with the rubies, diamonds, silver, and gold of a pure and beautiful character.

There will be parents of teenagers and young adults ready to meet Him, who continue to be kind and helpful to their children’s bigger problems instead of just wanting them to be out of the nest so that as parents they can get on with their own lives.

There will be grandparents ready to meet Him, who are planning their next move for God instead of planning their retirement and how to spend time on themselves.

And there will be seniors ready to meet Him, who are serving the Lord in every way possible instead of sitting around bemoaning their declining health and abilities.

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Today we are on the verge of the day and the hour that all the prophets and all the true followers of God looked forward to and longed to see—the second coming of Jesus Christ! Everything else pales in comparison to this stupendous event! In our first study we considered the mighty power of cosmic gamma rays and man’s inability to harness the energy of gamma rays. The combined energy of every past, present, and future gamma ray pales in comparison to the grand and glorious event before us. The end of all sin, the end of seeing only dimly with faith’s eye, the end of our personal struggle with sin and temptation, and the end of physical and mental pain has come!

The great controversy is to be finished and the universe is finally and forever to be made secure because of the matchless love of our heavenly Father and His Son and their work in our willing lives. That work, yes, is painful and our suffering is real. Our dross-filled earthliness is being destroyed. Satan is struggling to gain control of your heart and mind and cause the members of your family to be lost, in part, through you. You must fight back! The territory of your home is not Satan’s! Don’t give it to him. Jesus has promised that He will never leave you nor forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5) He has promised to finish the good work He has started in your life. “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun

a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6) Don’t tread water, thinking it is okay to stand still, for you will end up losing what you have gained. Your soul’s salvation depends on this. If your spouse is selfish, bitter, complaining, and insensitive, don’t let that pull you down. Look heavenward. Your redemption draweth nigh. We cannot, *cannot* give up now. What our parents learned in their lifetime about getting along in the home, we must learn, as it were, overnight! And we *can* learn this—on our knees in submission to God. There is no other way for us as men, women, and children. We have come through the jungle, through the swamp, through the desert, and over the snowy mountains, and here we are, at last, standing on a cliff. We cannot go back and there is nowhere else to go except into the arms of our Saviour when He comes to take us home. We *can* find this victory. God will accomplish this good work in you.

God wishes us to have the mastery over ourselves. But He cannot help us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the powers and faculties given to man. Of ourselves, we are not able to bring the purposes and desires and inclinations into harmony with the will of God; but if we are “willing to be made willing,” the Saviour will accomplish this for us, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5 (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 482)

We cannot, cannot give up now. What our parents learned in their lifetime about getting along in the home, we must learn, as it were, overnight! And we can learn this—on our knees in submission to God.

Please, please, humble yourselves before God and say, “Even though this is against my selfish nature, I will do it. I will give up my thoughts and feelings to Your control.” If you will do this, God’s kingdom can finally be established and your ear will hear that heavenly blessing, “Well done thou good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:21)

Even though we did not ask to be on the cutting edge of history, we are here. We are such a small group in such a big world, but here we are, scattered to and fro through the earth, but God has chosen us. He has a purpose for your life, grand and glorious. God has chosen you for this very time and hour. No matter what the mighty work was that Paul did and continues to do in our lives, along with the rest of the disciples and authors of the Bible, *there is an even mightier work to be done today* because the final stages of God’s trial before the universe is drawing to a close. We have the privilege of vindicating His beautiful character before all.

One of my favorite hymns is “The Humble Heart is Mine.” It is an old hymn from at least the 1800’s and it speaks about the humble heart. This is what all of God’s people have had and will have. The words go like this:

Whence comes this bright celestial light?
What cause produces this?
A heaven opens to my sight,
Bright scenes of joy and bliss.

O Lord, Jehovah, art Thou here?
This light proclaims Thou art.
I am indeed. I’m always near,
Unto the humble heart.

The proud and lofty I despise,
And bless the meek and low.
I hear the humble soul that cries,
And comfort I bestow.

Of all the trees among the wood,
I’ve chose one little vine.
The meek and low are nigh to me.
The humble heart is mine

Of all the kinds that range at large,
I’ve chose one little flock.
And those I make my lovely charge.
Before them I will walk.

Their constant Shepherd I will be,
And all their ways refine.
And they shall serve and reverence Me.
The humble heart is mine.

God has promised to be our constant Shepherd. He has also given us other shepherds to lead and guide us. He has given us men in our churches to provide this direction and for us sisters, men in our homes to provide leadership in the family, and we need to humbly listen and submit to them (as unto the Lord,) as well to each other (Ephesians 5:21), for God is to be sovereign in our hearts and minds. He has graciously given women the privilege of being help meets to these men of God. He has also given both men and women the opportunity of showing God’s love to the children in our midst and to all of us He has given the continued opportunity to honor and respect our parents and the elders among us.

At camp meeting time we assemble from many countries and places. God is gathering His people together. We are His little flock, His little vine. He has chosen us for this very moment and I implore you to spend time with Him in preparation for the great destiny He has for you. This destiny will not be found in continuing the common walks of life or in maintaining the day-to-day-affairs of this world, but it will be found in humility upon our knees before the great and mighty King of the universe and then, upon rising, following Him whithersoever He leads. What a high and holy privilege we have!



Youth's Corner—The Robe of Christ's Righteousness

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." Rev. 3:4.

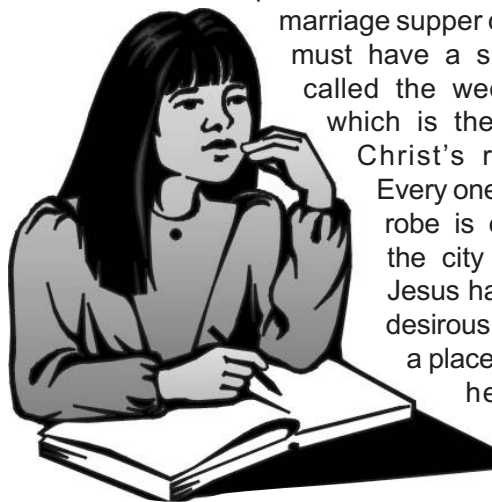
The robe of Christ's righteousness is prepared for all those who will exchange their own sinful, filthy garments for the robe Jesus has prepared for them. This garment was furnished at great cost by the Son of God, and he presents it as a free gift to any one, rich or poor, high or low, wise or ignorant, who will exchange his sin-defiled garments for this robe of matchless purity. And, my youthful readers, is it not a matter of great astonishment that every human being is not willing to make this exchange?

But we see with sorrow many of our youth who wrap themselves in these sin-defiled garments, and will cling to them and refuse the pure garments Jesus has purchased for them at the price of his own life. Can we wonder at the language of Paul, when writing to some in similar circumstances: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Christ hath evidently been set forth, crucified among you?" It is the bewitching power of Satan that blinds the eyes of the understanding so that sin does not appear exceeding sinful.

The clinging to the defiled garments and refusing the pure, spotless robes of Christ's righteousness is the love of sin. Not one can stand before God at his appearing in these garments of sin. Jesus points you to the mansions that he is preparing for you; and he finally shows you that if you are to have this precious home,—a home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,—you must be earnest in building up a character that will fit you for those mansions. He finally states that there entereth into the city nothing that defileth. All must be without spot who enter that haven of bliss.

If you are to sit at Christ's table, and feast on the provisions he has furnished at the marriage supper of the Lamb, you must have a special garment, called the wedding garment, which is the white robe of Christ's righteousness.

Every one who has on this robe is entitled to enter the city of God; and if Jesus had not been very desirous you should have a place in the mansions he has gone to prepare for those who love him, he



would not, at so great an expense to himself, have made all these arrangements that you might be happy and sit at his table and enjoy the home he has gone to prepare for his redeemed family. Your own garments are unclean and your own spirit and habits are earthly and defiled. Jesus proposes that you lay these off, and put on the garments clean and white which he has prepared for you. Will you lay off your self-righteous garments and accept of Jesus Christ as your Saviour? In doing this, you accept the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and despising your own garments of sin and uncleanness, put on the garments of Christ's righteousness.

John saw in holy vision a company round about the throne who had white robes, every one of them; and the question was asked John, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Jesus invites you to come to him just as you are. You cannot have salvation unless you do come. Will you accept the invitation without delay? Come on the side of Christ. Jesus loves you, and has expressed his love by dying upon the cross of Calvary that you might through his merits win eternal life. You cannot advance heavenward while you cling to your sins. Lay them on the Sin-bearer, and accept his righteousness; then you can run in the way of God's commandments.

But very many say they are following Christ, and refuse to keep the commandments of God. They say this is unnecessary. Their disobedience and sin indulged make their work very heavy. Come to Jesus, but come in God's appointed way. Your will must be set aside; God's will must become your will, and God's ways your ways. Jesus lived a life of obedience to all his Father's commandments. He says, "I have kept my Father's commandments." If you follow Christ, you will walk in his footsteps, you will exemplify him in your life; and you will find that in the path of obedience, "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Those who think they can come to Jesus while they are trampling under their feet the law of God are fatally deceived. You cannot disrespect or break God's holy law by which is the knowledge of sin, and still have the favor of God. If you love God, you will be obedient to all his commandments, for his commandments are not grievous. (*Ellen G. White – Youth's Instructor, August 11, 1886*)

The Church of Christ

by A. T. Jones

Of all the subjects in the Bible that are made plain, this subject of the Church of Christ is one. There is no need of any theorizing; there is no room for argument; all that is needed is simple study and acceptance of the plain words of the Bible.

The Greek word that is translated Church is *ekklesia*. In the Scriptures it signifies the company of assembly of the called-out ones of Christ.

This assembly of called-out ones is the Church, and is declared by the Scriptures to be "The body of Christ" in the world, thus: "I, Paul, am made a minister; who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for *his body's sake*, which is *the church*." Col. 1: 18, 23, 24. And God "raised Him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places ... and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to *the Church which is his body*." Eph. 1: 22, 23.

"As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." 1 Cor. 12: 12. And "as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so *we*, being many, *are one body in Christ*, and every one members one of another." Rom. 12:4, 5. "Now *ye are the body of Christ*, and members in particular." 1 Cor. 12: 27. "For we are *members of his body*, of his flesh, and of his bones." Eph. 5:30.

Again, this Church or assembly of Christ's people is said to be God's "house" or "God's building," thus: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly, but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in *the house of God*, which is *the Church of the living God*." 1 Tim. 3: 14, 15. "Christ [was faithful] as a son over his own house; *whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*." Heb. 3: 6. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." 1 Cor. 3: 9. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." 1 Peter 2: 5.

"Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom *all the building* fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom *ye also are builded together* for an *habitation of God* through the Spirit." Eph. 2: 19-22.

From these Scriptures it is perfectly plain that membership in the Church of Christ depends altogether upon our being members of Christ himself; upon our being joined personally to Him in the Spirit and by the Spirit." For by one *Spirit* are we *all* baptized into *one body*." 1 Cor. 12: 13. It is only by

baptism in water and in the Spirit that any one ever becomes a member of the Christian Church which is the body of Christ. Gal. 3: 27; Rom. 6: 3; 7: 1-4.

Since the Church is His house, His building, our being members of His Church depends altogether upon our being "lively stones," from having come to Him, the "living stone," and having been made alive by Him, in the Spirit and through the Spirit, and thus prepared for a place in that "spiritual house." 1 Peter 2:4, 5.

Membership in the Church of Christ, then, comes not by belonging to something that is called a church, in order to belong to Christ. It comes altogether by *belonging to Christ, in order to belong to the Church*. And the difference between these two things is just the difference between the mystery of God and the mystery of iniquity.

The mystery of iniquity exalts the form, the name, of "the church," and then calls, and sweeps, and forces, all the world into that so-called church. The people are the same as before, though they are designated or denominated differently. They conform to different forms than they did before; but in character, in life, they are the same as though they were not members of the church at all.

But the true Church, the Church of Christ, is His body in the world: and is, therefore, Himself manifested in the world, in the flesh. In order to belong to this Church it is essential first of all to belong to Him. Membership in His Church depends altogether upon the person's being first of all a member of Him. Being in this Church and of this Church, depends altogether in our being in Him, and of Him. When people having heard His call, come personally to Him, and come into the Church by coming into Him, and are in the Church by being in Him, that makes a new people. That changes the individual, "into another man." These people, and *only these*, compose the Church of Christ, His called-out ones, the assembly of His chosen.

In these times of such wide-spread perversion of the idea of the Church, it becomes all important for each one to ask himself, "Am I indeed a member of the Church?" Not, "Is my name in the enrollment of some association calling itself a church?" Not to think contentedly that I am a member of the Church, simply because I am a member of some association calling itself a church. None of this; but, Am I a member of the Church because I am a member of Christ? And because I live and move and have my being in Him? Am I a member of the Church because my name is in the Book of Life? And, am I thus in truth a member of "the Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven?"

Such as these are the only members of the Church of Christ that there are on this earth. And though it should be that circumstances prevent their names being in any book on earth,

or themselves from being counted in any collection or association of people on earth; yet when an individual is joined to Him and lives in Him, that person is a member of the Church of Christ, though he be the only Christian on a continent or in the world.

Such is the only true membership of the Church of Christ, and the only way to membership in the Church of Christ. And these compose the Church of Christ wherever they may be found in all the world. And He “knoweth them that are His.”

This truth is practically acknowledged by every denomination in the world. For: –

1. There is not a denomination in the world that will say that every single member of that denomination is a Christian.

2. There is not a denomination in the world that does not allow that there are Christians in all the other denominations.

3. In other words, there is not a denomination in the world that will say that the Christians of that denomination are all the Christians that there are in the world.

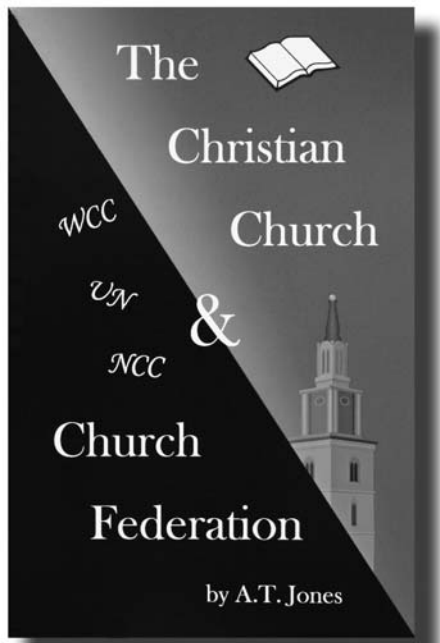
And when these perfectly plain and true things are acknowledged, then the truth of all that is said in this chapter is acknowledged. And it is perfectly proper to acknowledge it all, for it is the simple truth of the Scriptures.



Editor’s Note: This is the first chapter from the book, *The Christian Church and the Church Federation* by A. T. Jones. The book has a total of 15 chapters with over 130 pages of valuable help for the Christian in understanding the Biblical meaning of the church. Seed Sowers Ministry has republished this book and those interested in purchasing a copy may contact them at:

Seed Sowers
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“A Preview of ‘Good News’ to Come” from p. 7

have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure. (*Testimony to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92 –May 30, 1896)

If Ellen White was not familiar with the word, “Christology,” she was certainly knowledgeable of its conceptual need among the people. She strikingly pointed out the condition of God’s people: “Many had lost sight of Jesus.” We needed to have our “eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family.” The true message of righteousness by faith that brings one into “obedience to all the commandments of God” has the very person of Jesus and His character at its foundation.

Ellen White may not have been familiar with the word “Soteriology”, but she was clearly aware of our need to understand the nature of sin. She wrote: “The only definition we find in the Bible for sin is that ‘sin is the transgression of the law’ (1 John 3:4).” (*Signs of the Times*, December 5, 1892)

In the coming months we will be exploring the nature of sin as well as the inspired understanding of righteousness, holiness, and perfection as it relates to the Christian. Some of the other areas that we will be focusing on in these studies are: Faith, faith’s relationship to works, the death of the “old man,” the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, justification, sanctification, and how our victory over all sin brings glory and honor to God! So start your own study now! Don’t wait for the December issue of *Old Paths*. Be a Berean and begin reading and study these themes in the whole Bible, but especially in the teachings of Jesus, in Romans and in Galatians. May God richly bless you, brethren, for the door is closing and our time is almost over!

Allen Stump

“The only safeguard against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. It is because selfishness exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we behold the great love of God, selfishness appears to us in its hideous and repulsive character, and we desire to have it expelled from the soul. As the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, our hearts are softened and subdued, the temptation loses its power, and the grace of Christ transforms the character.” (*Mount of Blessings*, p. 118)

REPORT OF THE WORK IN ROMANIA

By Vlad Ardeias

CAMP MEETING NEWS

Camp meeting started here in Romania on Sunday, August 28. We arrived on the Friday the 26th and spent the Sabbath with Brother Erwin Zoor of Germany, his mother, father, and nephew at Brother's Sorin's place, where the meetings took place. Sabbath was a very blessed time and although the president of the field (Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement) came and tried to disrupt the message, Brother Erwin gave blessed presentations and the people were happy to study the truth about God. During Sabbath and after sunset we had discussions with this president, who at first rejected the truth that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. After sunset, he spent nearly an hour, without success, trying to convince the congregation that Jesus was not the literal Son of God. In fact, the people were openly against him. After a private discussion with Erwin, my wife, Andi, and myself, he finally admitted that Jesus was begotten of the Father "from everlasting."

The next day people started to arrive for camp meeting and we had a wonderful time welcoming each one and arranging the meeting room and the equipment for the meetings. One of our brothers brought a video projector enabling us to display all the Bible texts we used! We also had a video camera and recorded all the presentations. At the end of the day, Brother Sorin gave the welcoming message and introduced the theme. That day 80 people attended. With some coming and some going each day, we still averaged between 80 to 90 people each day of the camp meeting.

This camp meeting was the most blessed one that I have ever attended because God worked on the hearts and minds of the people as I had never before witnessed! I expected to have long discussions on the trinity and on the condition of God's church, but the truth presented was so biblical, simple and clear that the people left totally convinced that they had been wrong in their former trinitarian beliefs.

One of the brothers that came was an ex-treasurer from one of the Romanian fields. Although this brother had seen many abuses committed by the church and knew the character of the leaders very well and of the work they are doing, he was still fighting for the church. At first he didn't want to attend, as he was warned against our meetings, but his wife insisted and he finally agreed. I could see that he clearly did not agree with what was said, but after a few days, he prayed

and thanks to the Lord for the light that broken down the chains of darkness. It was amazing to watch how the Lord changed his mind day by day! At the end of camp meeting, he stood up and asked for a special session of prayer and also for a day of fasting, as he was returning home to meet with the ones that were against the truth! One week ago he invited us to spend Sabbath in his local church, a place where there are usually only five to eight people on a Sabbath morning. Eighty dear people came to hear the truth. We had a blessed time there and many of them invited us to come again!

TRANSLATION OF BOOKS

There is more good news! Gabriela and her sister, Ruxandra, have started translating books into Romanian and French! Gabriela had planned to attend the university this year and Ruxandra had a very good job teaching French, but both of them decided to give up their plans and to work for the Lord. They are now working hard to translate *What Did the Pioneers Believe?* into French, Please support them in your prayers!

FUTURE PLANS

On the last day of camp meeting we asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" We had a few hours of discussion and we observed the necessity of having a place to educate the children! This is one of our objectives in the near future, so please pray for this. We also plan to have another camp meeting at the end of the year.

We have Romanian brothers living in Spain and in Austria and after our meetings we received calls from Italy, Spain and Austria, urging us to visit them as soon as possible. We are praying earnestly about this, for there are hundreds of Romanian families that are in desperate need for the truth. One of the brothers told Sorin, "The church excluded us. We haven't studied the Bible for a long time. We will die.

Our families are down. We don't know what to do! We need guidance. Please visit us as soon as possible."

So, by God's grace we hope to be making these visits by the time you read this! My brothers, please pray for this mission! All the leaders of the church are now on fire, fighting with all their powers against us, so we need the special guidance of the Lord! We need so badly to hear His voice and to receive His plan from His own hand. Please, pray for us! ✍️



Vlad sharing books

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MINISTRY OF HEALING AND RESTORATION NOW OPEN

2006 WEST VIRGINIA CAMP MEETING DATE SET

The Ministry of Healing and Restoration is now open to help you with your health needs. Located on over an acre in the beautiful hills of West Virginia, it is the perfect get-away. Here at the Lifestyle Center we are dedicated to helping people reverse disease and achieve optimal health. Our director, Curtis Kline, has eight years of study in Anatomy and Physiology and is a Biblical health reformer with a thorough knowledge of the human organism, diseases and their causes. We use simple remedies and a healthy diet and lifestyle to assist people on the road to optimal health. If you or someone you know is sick, overweight, or just seeking an overall better condition of health, then please contact us using the information below.

The date for the 2006 West Virginia camp meeting has been set for Tuesday, June 20 through Sabbath, June 24. We have set this date early to help the brethren plan their schedules so as to be able to attend this spiritual highlight of the year. Please begin to plan now to attend and be blessed and a blessing to others. 

Curtis Kline
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