

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 shew them his covenant.
Psalm 25:14

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Straight and Narrow

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Brother Ron Toel explains God's use of symbiosis at West Virginia 2022 Camp Meeting.



Cutting the Work Short

By Allen Stump

(This is an edited version of a message given at the 2022 West Virginia Camp Meeting Editor)

The theme of our camp meeting is “Pressing Together To Finish the Work.” Before we get started in our message, we should have a one-question quiz. (Please note this message was given on June 8.) The question is what happened seventy-eight years and two days ago? Do you know without checking it out? Some of the older brothers and sisters may remember. This is the date for the Normandy Invasion, also known as Operation Overlord or D-Day, which took place on June 6, 1944. Operation Neptune was the naval part of the assault that brought so many men to the beaches of Europe. It was the largest seaborne invasion in history, and it began the liberation of France and later the rest of western Europe. It laid the foundation for the Allied victory in Europe. The soldiers were primarily from the United States and Great Britain, but Canadian, French, Australia, Polish, and Greek forces, and at least five other countries joined in. They pressed together, we might say, and they crossed the English Channel and landed at Pointe du Hoc and on the Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword beaches to fight for a bigger cause than they were as individuals.

It is hard for us to imagine what the fighting was like that day. Veterans who were there have said that the movie “Saving Private Ryan” was the closest to what it was like. If you have seen it, you know the battle scenes were terrible. The amphibious troop carriers would come as close as they could to land and lower their ramps down. German machine guns were firing at the doors before they even opened and as soon as the door was let down, all thirty-something men inside would be just cut down in a moment.

At Pointe du Hoc, two hundred twenty-five Army Rangers had the task of scaling a ninety-eight foot cliff,

with grappling hooks, ropes, and ladders, to destroy the coastal gun battery located at the top. I quote from President Reagan’s famous Normandy speech because I cannot say it better:

The Rangers looked up and saw the enemy soldiers—the edge of the cliffs shooting down at them with machine guns and throwing grenades. And the American Rangers began to climb. They shot rope ladders over the face of these cliffs and began to pull themselves up. When one Ranger fell, another would take his place. When one rope was cut, a Ranger would grab another and begin his climb again. They climbed, shot back, and held their footing. Soon, one by one, the Rangers pulled themselves over the top, and in seizing the firm land at the top of these cliffs, they began to seize back the continent of Europe. Two hundred and twenty-five came here. After 2 days of fighting, only 90 could still bear arms. (President Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a Ceremony Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Normandy Invasion, D-Day,” <https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/ronald-reagan-normandy-speech-point-du-hoc/>)

These rangers, with the men of eleven other armies, pressed together to save Europe from Hitler. They had a job to do, and they pressed forward to finish it. The fighting at Omaha Beach was terrible, with over two thousand Allied casualties, while some of the other beaches were taken with hardly any casualties. All had different jobs and responsibilities, some in more danger than others, but all willing to do whatever they had to do to finish their work. They were all needed, and they all needed to work together with the batteries from the naval ships, the air support, and the paratroopers, who were dropped in ahead of them. Working together for a common cause, they finished the work of

clearing a path for other troops to come and finally free Europe.

We too have a job to finish. In Adventism we have our own unique vernacular that is not well understood by other people. We speak about the cause, an effort, the work, and the finishing of the work. We are here at this camp to learn about finishing the work.

I want to direct our attention to the book of Romans, where we read about a finishing of the work:

Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. (Romans 9:24–26)

Paul is speaking about the Jews and the Gentiles here, and God says he will call the Gentiles *my people*, which had not been his people. He will call this people *his beloved*, which were not his beloved. Things are changing!

I am glad for that, and maybe you should be, too. I do not have any Jewish blood. I am just a Stump from Germany, a Gentile, but one who is now a part of the family of the living God! Paul continues:

Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. (Romans 9:27–28)

Paul is making reference to Isaiah 10:22–23, and we will look at that verse soon. It says that though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. Further, he says that God will cut the work short in righteousness.

It should be noted that Paul here, like virtually all of the quotations in the New Testament, is quoting from the Septuagint (LXX). The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew. The Brenton LXX translation of Isaiah 10:22–23 reads:

And though the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them shall be saved. He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because the Lord will make a short work in all the world. (Isaiah 10:22–23 Brenton LXX English)

The text of Isaiah 10:22–23 in the LXX is very similar to the text in Romans. It is very clear that Paul is quoting the LXX and not the Masoretic text.

But there is something very interesting about the Greek of the LXX and the Textus Receptus of the New Testament in these verses. The Greek word most often translated *work* in the New Testament is ἔργον (*ergon*). It forms the basis of the English word *energy*, but *ergon* is not used in Romans 9:28 or in Isaiah 10:23 LXX. Instead the Greek word is a form of λόγος (*logos*).

Logos is the Greek word translated *word* in John 1:1:

In the beginning was the Word (λόγος), and the Word (λόγος) was with God, and the Word (λόγος) was God. (John 1:1)

Logos is used three hundred twenty-nine times in the New Testament, and the great majority of times, two hundred twenty-five to be exact, it is translated as *word*, *word's*, or *words*. However, *logos* is rich in meaning and has been translated in over thirty other different ways in the KJV. Notice the following commentary note:

The work: Gr. *logos*, generally translated “word.” However, *logos* is used in the NT with a great variety of meanings. For example, it is translated “matter” (Mark 1:45), “question” (Mark 11:29), “thing” (Luke 20:3), “account” (Heb. 13:17). *Logos* occurs than 300 times in the NT, but is translated “work” only here. However, the idea is approached in the translation “matter” and in *dabar*, the Hebrew equivalent of *logos*. Several meanings are possible in this particular context. One is suggested by the KJV translation of *logos* in Rom. 14:12, “So then every one of us shall give account [*logos*] of himself to God.” Such a meaning is behind the following translation of the passage under consideration: “For the Lord will execute his sentence upon the earth with rigor and dispatch” (RSV). Another interpretation makes *logos* refer to the promises of God concerning Israel which were fulfilled in only a limited degree in the remnant. Or the “cutting short” may refer to Israel itself whose numbers would be greatly reduced in the selection of the remnant. (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 591, for Romans 9:28)

Why is *logos* translated *work* here and nowhere else? Because there is a work that God is going to do which his word has already decreed. That work is that he is going to save a remnant; there will be a final gathering in of God's people.

The commentary reference above quoted from the RSV that “the Lord will execute his sentence upon the earth with rigor and dispatch.” The NRSV states it this way:

for the Lord will execute his sentence on the earth quickly and decisively. (Romans 9:28)

It is very clear here that the RSV translators were not necessarily depending upon different words in a manuscript, but they were depending more heavily upon the Masoretic text, while the KJV relies more upon the LXX of Isaiah. Isaiah tells us here that there is a sentence, or a decree, that God is going to fulfill quickly and decisively. To understand this better, we now will look at the text in Isaiah as translated from the Masoretic text. You will quickly notice that it does not sound like Paul's quote in Romans 9.

For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the *consumption* decreed shall overflow with righteousness. 23 For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land. (Isaiah 10:22, 23)

The Hebrew word that we translate *consumption* here means *like a destruction*. In fact, these verses from the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, state:

Even if your people, O Israel, Should be as the sands of the sea, Only a remnant of it shall return. *Destruction* is decreed; Retribution comes like a flood! 23 For my Lord God of Hosts is carrying out A decree of destruction upon all the land. (Isaiah 10:22–23 Tanakh)

Here we have *destruction* in the place of *consumption*, but they mean the same.

The text says there is a work that God is going to do. The text is talking about *destruction* and somehow involved in this *destruction* is a remnant that shall be saved.

In Romans 9:24–26 Paul speaks about the Gentiles being brought into the fold of God. Then he quotes from Isaiah and says that God has a work, and that work, or decree, is the consumption, or a destruction, upon the land. This work is going to be done quickly, and it is sure to happen. And there is another point—God has a limit.

Romans 9:28 says he will cut the work *short*. The Greek word translated *cut it short* is συντέμνω (*suntemnō*), and it means *to cut into pieces* or *to put a limit upon something*. It is used in Daniel 5:27 LXX, where Belshazzar's kingdom was *weighed in the balances and found wanting*. In the LXX it says *He has been cut short*.

There is a limit to what God can and will forebear, and the Spirit of Prophecy brings out this principle. Notice:

With unerring accuracy, the Infinite One keeps an account with all nations. While his mercy is tendered with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; *but when a certain limit* which God has fixed is reached, the ministry of his wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more plead-

ing for mercy in their behalf. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, January 11, 1887, par. 5)

It is true that God in his foreknowledge knows everything before it happens, but it is also true that what he knows will be based upon events that have happened. In other words, it is not like the old-time belief that a lot of people in West Virginia have for the scripture that says your very hairs are numbered (Matthew 10:30). They interpret it to mean that the days a person has to live have been predetermined by God and when your time to die comes, no matter what you are doing, you are going to die. It does not matter how you have lived, whether good or bad. No matter how well you have taken care of yourself, when the time comes, you are going to die. Of course, there is no biblical basis for this. It is true that God, knowing the future, knows when you will die, based upon how you have lived and on the many factors that he can see. God knows the events that are going to happen, but he also knows what we are going to do and what we are not going to do. All this has been said in order to read this text:

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (2 Peter 3:12)

If you know anything about the writings of Ellen White or the teachings of our pioneers, you know this was a very important text to them! That is because this text gave them courage to believe that they had something special to do that would affect the timing of the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

They believed that they could hasten the day of the coming of Christ, but you must realize there is a terrible implication in this. It also means that we can delay that special day.

The English word *hasting* is from the Greek word σπεύδω (*speudō*) which is defined as:

To cause someth. to happen or come into being by exercising special effort, hasten (Walter Bauer and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., p. 938)

This Greek word means to cause something to happen or come into being by exercising special effort. We as a people have been giving a special effort, have we not? We are supposed to be giving a special effort. Why have Adventist people for over the last one hundred fifty plus years sent out missionaries? Why have we sent out evangelists? Why have we had efforts and causes? We have sent colporteurs and Bible workers to lands far and near to reach the

people with the gospel but also to hasten the coming of Jesus Christ.

Why are there so many shootings today?

Why has the United States become a place of infanticide?

Why have we had to endure race riots and the terrible unnecessary conflict between different groups of people?

Why have sexual perversions become so open and prevalent today? Why are our kids so messed up today?

Why was there WWI and WWII, Korea, the Gulf War and now Ukraine?

It is because we as a people have failed to do our work! We must face the fact that as Adventists we have been at God's work for almost one hundred seventy-eight years. The work need not to have gone this long after the termination of the 2,300 day year prophecy of Daniel 8:14. Because we have not done our work, this world is still here and all of these messes that we have just noted could have been avoided and need never have happened. Think about that!

It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in "because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19). Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them. (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 68.3)

Think back to 1888. Did we not have murmurings, rebellion, and even hatred then? What about the year 2022? Do we have murmurings, rebellions, and even hatreds? There are several branches or groups of this one true God movement. Most believe almost the same thing, yet there are some differences, and those differences need to be, and must be, resolved, but the differences should not be insurmountable.

This has been going on too long, and God is not going to allow it to continue forever. It will come to an end sooner rather than later because God has a limit. There is a time coming soon when Jesus is going to step away from the sacred ark in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, and the decree is going to go forth:

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (Revelation 22:11)

In connection to this, we read:

As Jesus moved out of the Most Holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon his garment, and as he left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then no mediator between guilty man, and an offended God. While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when Jesus stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed, and Satan had the control of man. It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the Sanctuary; but as his work there is finished, as his intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God [the consumption], and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner, who has slighted salvation, and hated reproof. The saints in that fearful time, after the close of Jesus' mediation, were living in the sight of a holy God, without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered. (Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, page 198.1)

I have some memories that are faint in my mind, but there is one memory that is indelibly planted. It happened in the chapel at the seminary in Andrews University. A very well-known theologian, whose name you would recognize, was standing in the pulpit and said *I'm so glad Jesus will be mediating right to the time that he comes.*

Beloved, Jesus is going to finish his work, and he is going to finish it in us, for God's work of wrath is to come.

God's work of wrath is to come, but it can not come until the people of God are sealed and secure, and for that work, God has no hands but our hands, no feet but our feet, and no lips and tongues but ours.

We are talking about pressing together to finish the work. We certainly know that there is a need for God's people to come together, and they will, but maybe not all who think they are God's people, maybe not all who claim to be God's people, are God's people.

Be sure of this: God is going to finally cut the work short. He is going to finish his work with or without us. God will have a people who will press together to see that the message of Revelation 14:6-12 is given, with Revelation 18:1-4. It will happen with or without you. My fear is that if it happens without you, you will be without. Did you get that? If the work of the three angels' messages goes without you, you will be without the New Jerusalem when the great white throne judgment occurs. Why should we not join hands and press together for the greatest work ever?

If I may quote, adapt, and paraphrase Reagan again:

Continued on page 17, column 2

He Cometh To Judge the Earth

By Onycha Holt

Our opening text is from a beautiful song of David recorded in 1 Chronicles 16, written when the ark was brought to Jerusalem, where it stayed until it was moved to the temple of Solomon.

Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth. (1 Chronicles 16:33)

And after the LORD has judged the earth, God will dwell with men:

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. . . . He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (Revelation 21:3, 7)

And the Father will make all things new:

Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. (Revelation 21:5, 6)

The terrible art of war

These words are spoken because the war that had begun in heaven and that had continued on earth was now over. From Eden this war had spread through the earth until God repented that he had made man. Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD, I am glad to say, but after the flood, the battle between good and evil continued through Noah's offspring, and soon the world again became evil, but this time the world was united as one in evil, working together to build a tower unto heaven. "And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Genesis 11:6). Because they were united, nothing they imagined to do would have been impossible to them, so God intervened and confused their language. Prior to the flood, evil was described individually—every man's heart was evil and every man's way was corrupted before God, so that the earth was filled with violence, but after the flood the people united together in their wickedness, and God, acknowledging the strength there is in unity, stated nothing would now be restrained, or be impossible, to them.

The next big jump in Scripture concerning unity involves outright war. The people were now separated into groups of like language, and these groups grew in number and eventually began to fight one another. Territory, resources, and possessions were coveted, and war became es-

tablished on earth, even among God's people. The first recorded war is in Genesis 14 and involved Abram. Saul was a warrior, as was David, and war ran as a major thread through the history of the Israelites. Bible prophecy is portrayed through the eyes of war. Babylon, Medopersia, Rome, the ten kingdoms—all have been or will be overcome through the conquest of war. One of the first Dead Sea Scrolls discovered at Qumran is entitled the "War Scroll." Jesus, however, said to be not alarmed. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet" (Matthew 24:6).

And today nations train leaders in the terrible art of war. The United States has five war colleges. In Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., is the National Defense University, which includes the National War College, the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security, the Information Resources Management College, the Institute for National Strategic Studies, the War Gaming and Simulation Center, and the National Defense University Press. The Inter-American Defense College is also on campus.

Other nations work on the same principles—China, Russia, France, Canada, Mexico, etc.—and this training now includes a new type of warfare, a dark, subversive war for our minds, using social engineering, misinformation, cyberattacks, artificial intelligence, and autonomous systems. It is a war of information and perception and of weaponizable neuroscience and technology. Havana Syndrome is real and has occurred in different parts of the world. This type of warfare seeks to literally affect the brain and thus control the actions and thoughts.

From an article published by the National Defense University Press in 2020, we read:

. . . the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been actively exploring a range of new theories, capabilities, and technologies that are believed to be critical to future operational advantage. . . . Chinese innovation is poised to pursue synergies among brain science, artificial intelligence (AI), and biotechnology that may have far-reaching implications for its future military power and aggregate national competitiveness. . . . including cyber warfare, electronic warfare, and psychological warfare.

According to Lt. Gen. Liu Guozhi, Director of the Central Military Commission Science and Technology Commission, "AI will accelerate the process of military

transformation, ultimately leading to a profound Revolution in Military Affairs . . . The combination of artificial intelligence and human intelligence can achieve the optimum, and human-machine hybrid intelligence will be the highest form of future intelligence.” This striking statement highlights the PLA’s interest at the highest levels in the notion of “hybrid intelligence,” a concept that implies a blending of human and machine intelligence, including through leveraging insights from brain science and such techniques as the use of brain-computer interfaces. This concept is not merely abstract but is starting to be realized through new programs, including projects intended to promote human performance enhancement. Future intelligentized operations are expected to involve prominent employment of intelligent autonomy in weapons systems under conditions of multi-domain integration with command exercised through brain-machine integration, enabled by cloud infrastructure. Chinese military scientists and strategists expect that this revolution in warfare will also demand transformation of the human element of warfare, which may require seeking command of the brain and biological sciences. (Elsa B. Kania, “Minds at War China’s Pursuit of Military Advantage through Cognitive Science and Biotechnology,” *Prism*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 83, 84; January 2020)

I hope you understand the significance of what Kania is saying. Continuing, “The sphere of operations will be expanded from the physical domain and the information domain to the domain of consciousness; the human brain will become a new combat space” (Major General He Fuchu, *Ibid.*). Success on the future battlefield will require achieving not only “biological dominance” but also “mental/cognitive dominance” and “intelligence dominance.” (*Ibid.*), and achieving this dominance “includes projects on military brain science, advanced biomimetic materials, and human enhancement” (*Ibid.*), and it appears China has “launched a military brain science project that is exploring the potential of advances in neuroscience for military applications” (*Ibid.*).

Our camp meeting theme this year is “Pressing Together To Finish the Work,” and Satan and his angels are closely pressed together and are deeply united in their work of war—physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and philosophical, and mental—and we need to be prepared. Current war tactics are beyond the comprehension of evil Ellen White and John the Revelator had. We are living in times that would have been incomprehensible to the faithful before us, except those who are now viewing them from heaven. We have been told that the last days will be more difficult than we can imagine, and we could never have

imagined this a few years ago, but here we are, and brothers and sisters, there isn’t time for more despicable and deadly warfare to be imagined. There just isn’t time. And the question is, how will we maintain our faith when our brains are under attack? When things like Havana Syndrome reach out invisibly through the air we breathe? What is a person to do?

Of course, the first answer is to trust God, but what promises can we claim for protection against weaponized invasion of our brains—please note, not of our minds. Our minds can be fortified:

None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 593.2)

But what about the brains themselves—the anatomy, the physiology, the chemical and electrical transmissions? What protection is available to them?

These verses in Psalms are especially beautiful:

But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, because they trust in him. (Psalm 37:39–40)

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; Nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, And ten thousand at thy right hand; But it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold And see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, Even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee . . . (Psalm 91:5–10)

One promise you may not think of is Genesis 3:15:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Usually this verse is understood as the first promise of salvation, and it is. It is a prophecy about the destruction of Satan and gives hope to all of the future end of evil. These words were spoken by God himself and promise enmity between us and the evil one. Whatever the evil one can bring to us, God can put a barrier up against it. This first promise is significant to us in these last days. The Hebrew word for *enmity* is *’ēbâ*, and it means *enmity* or *hatred*, and

it comes from the root *ʾāyab*, which means *to be an enemy*. We see it so used here:

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. . . . But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. (Exodus 23:20, 22)

This enmity can provide physical and spiritual protection:

. . . the Lord will interpose when matters have come to such a pass that none but a divine power can counteract the satanic agencies at work. When his people shall be in the greatest danger, seemingly unable to stand against the power of Satan, God will work in their behalf. **Man's extremity is God's opportunity.** (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 7, Ms 48, 1891, par. 36; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted)

May we remember these promises when we are faced with designed disinformation, electronic and psychological warfare, and the evil use of brain science. God will be an enemy to our enemies, and he will put a barrier of enmity between us and wickedness. Our brains, as well as our minds, will be delivered from the control of evil, if we are faithful and true, if we fortify our minds with truth, and if we call upon God in our time of need. His promise is to show us great and mighty things:

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. (Jeremiah 33:3)

Books of a different order

We also need to study to show ourselves approved unto God, but we must choose carefully what we study. Books of a different order have been written and published for a long time. Recently an Adventist textbook on the sanctuary was released under the auspices of the Biblical Research Institute and authored by Richard Davidson. Most of us are students on the sanctuary, and some of us might welcome a comprehensive textbook on the topic. While the book is comprehensive, there is a problem in the beginning, but first I wish to state that Davidson has and has had much to offer of value. He published a strong position against abortion long before the denomination made an official statement:

Although I wish to emphasize the power of divine grace, in view of the widespread disregard of the biblical evidence on the status of the unborn fetus in the church and society today, I am constrained to end this chapter

not on a note of grace but with a biblical warning cry of alarm. God's voice on this issue is clear: *abortion is feticide, a violation of the sixth commandment*, "You shall not murder." Who among the followers of God will hear the cry of the unnumbered unborn humans whose voices are silenced in death before they even have a chance to speak? The same God who brought the people of ancient Israel to judgment for murdering their little children by passing them through the fire to pagan gods will bring before his judgment bar the current generation who turns a deaf ear to his cry and the cry of his unborn precious ones. (Richard Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*, p. 501; published 2007; SDA statement on abortion published 2019)

He has also shared much about ancient Egyptian history and the Old Testament and has taught sanctuary classes at the seminary for decades, but in *A Song for the Sanctuary* is seriously flawed information about the Father and the Son, above and beyond that which is normally taught in the Trinitarian doctrine. He states:

The language of birth in Proverbs 8:22–25 used with reference to Wisdom does not indicate that Christ was literally born and thus there was a time before which Christ did not exist. Rather, allusions to birth, when coupled with the Hebrew verb *nasak* III, "install" (Prov 8:23), *constitute technical Old Testament language for installation (and "formal adoption") of Christ into a new office. . . .*

What was this new office into which Christ was installed according to Proverbs 8:22–31? . . . In a counsel alluded to in Zechariah 6:13 (cf. Eph 1:11), which may have taken place at this time, the members of the Godhead decided that Christ was to be "Mediator of the Covenant"—the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world [*kosmos*]" (Rev 13:8).

. . . In Scripture and in the inspired writings of Ellen G. White there is tantalizing *evidence* suggesting that Christ, as the Word from the beginning, was this "go-between"—yes, "Mediator"—between the infinite God and finite creatures. Here we need to expand our horizons. . . . Is it possible that at the dawn of creation, Christ assumed the office of "Mediator" in the sense not only as agent of creation, but also as the *communication link or bridge* between Creator and creature, between the Infinite One and finite beings, perhaps by taking the form (not the nature) of an angel? . . .

. . . It appears very possible that far, far back in the mist-veiled ages of eternity, before the Godhead had

2022 West Virginia Camp Meeting Report

created any of the finite intelligences of the universe, the persons whom we call the Father and Son (along with the Holy Spirit) met in counsel (Zech 6:13; Eph 1:11) and decided together that the Father would continue to dwell ‘in unapproachable light’ in all the holy glory of the Godhead (1 Tim 6:16), while the Son would appear in the form of Michael the archangel (“chief angel”).

Based upon the weight of evidence in the available inspired data, I have come to the plausible *conclusion* that the person we know as the Son, even before His incarnation, at a point of time before the creation of the universe, may have condescended in what we might call a divine *kenosis* (“emptying”), coming down especially close to His inhabited universe, taking the form (not nature) of an angel, mediating between infinity and finitude, demonstrating from the dawn of creation the “Immanuel” principle, “God [is] with us”! (Richard Davidson, *A Song For the Sanctuary: Experiencing God’s Presence in Shadow and Reality*, Biblical Research Institute, Kindle ed., pp. 46–52; brackets in original)

Is there any harm in believing and teaching this? Davidson is not denying that Jesus is our mediator but is simply saying that Jesus is also the mediator for all the sinless created beings in the universe and became so before any of them were created. To this I say: Objection. This is speculation and without foundation, although he does try to lay a foundation. I cannot go into all the details of this because it is too time-consuming for our morning hour, but I have done so. Let’s go on.

Davidson couches some of his statements under the umbrella of maybes or possibilities but finally states his **conclusion**, which is that the Son, before the universe was created, emptied himself to mediate between the Father and all created beings, becoming the communication bridge between them and the Father.

To say that Jesus *is* the communication bridge, or link, is to say that communication must go through him. He is the bridge. Such an idea might endear us to the Son more closely because it would mean that Jesus had chosen to empty himself before the universe was created and to stay emptied, but the Bible portrays his emptying in the context of the incarnation. This new concept portrays the Father as choosing not to come close to his sinless created beings but to send his communication through the Son. We know that after Adam and Eve sinned, this is what happened. All communication from the Father to sinful man has occurred and continues to occur through the Son:

Continued on page 12, column 1

The theme of the 2022 West Virginia camp meeting was “Pressing Together To Finish the Work.” It was a unique experience of pressing together, exemplified in the way that so many people pulled together to help with the camp. Everyone who was asked to help in anyway was willing and with joy to do a part to bless others. From Sisters Raquel and Brooke, with the food preparation classes, to the ministers, and to all those who worked behind the scenes to keep things going, like Brothers Michael Woodward and Zachery Corklin. All pitched together to help.

There were some excellent messages given at the camp. The keynote was given by Brother Robert Motsinger, entitled “Loyalty in Treason.” Pastor Daniel Mesa gave a clear presentation on the divinity of Christ and on how important that is to finishing the work. Brother Ron Toel gave two talks, sharing a window into the workings of creation and talking about symbiotic relationships that God has designed.

The food preparation classes were very interesting and the samples were even better. The recipes will be posted in *Old Paths* next month but are online in the video descriptions. In fact, all of the recorded meetings have been posted and are available at our YouTube channel under the playlist, “2022 West Virginia Camp Meeting.” You can scan this code to open the list:



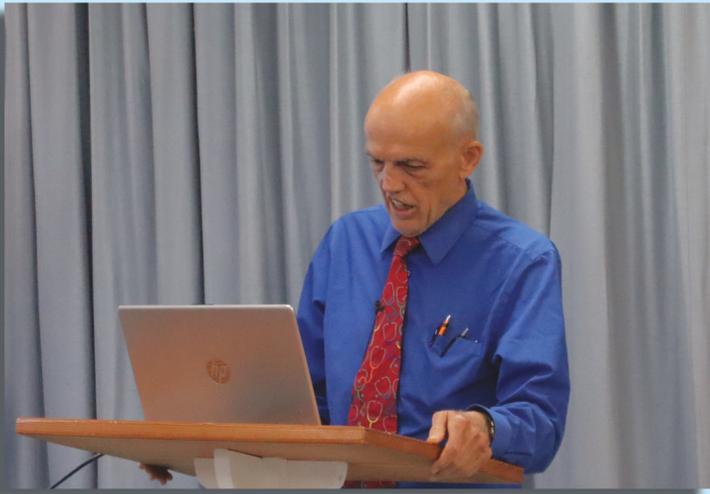
Due to health issues, Pastor Martin Barlow and his wife, Kay, were not able to be with us, but they gathered with other members of the Cedar Lane Chapel at their home to watch the camp meeting, and we appreciated their support a lot.

While the virtual listeners could hear the presentations, the one thing about camp meeting that they sadly could not experience was the close fellowship that was experienced. There seemed to be a closeness and a bond that many felt had never been present at that level before. Maybe it was from having new folks, like the majority of a new church in Arkansas, visiting. Maybe it was the deeper realization that we are so much closer to the coming of Christ than we’ve ever realized. Whatever it was, we were blessed and hope that if we are still here next year that you will not miss that blessing next time.

We have a picture montage for you on the next two pages, and they, with others, will be posted on our gallery page at [smyrna.org](http://www.smyrna.org).



2022 Cam



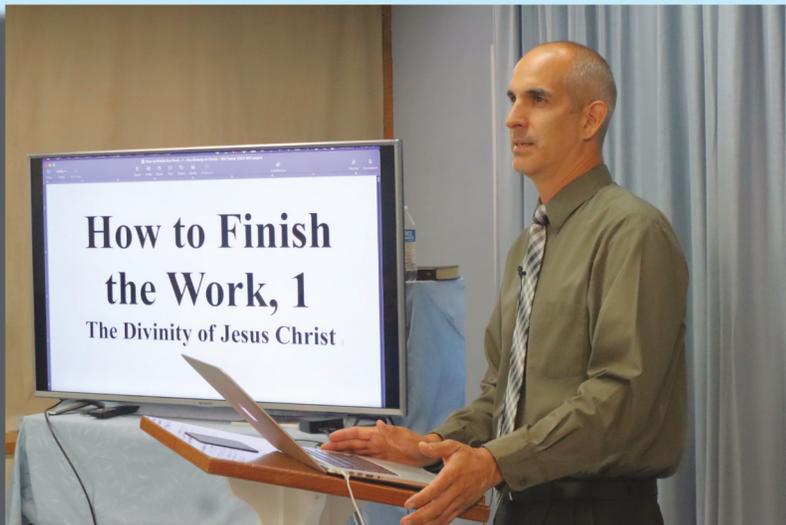
Dr. Glenn Waite sharing



Choir singing "Watch Ye Saints"



Pressing



Pastor Daniel Mesa

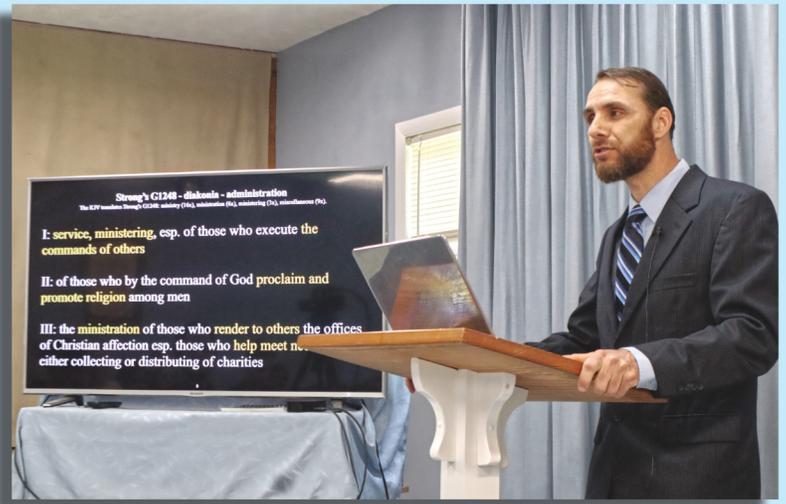


Brooke Motsinger

Meeting



together



Robert Motsinger on opening night



Baptism



& Raquel Akens



Rhonda Brown with the smallest campers

“He Cometh To Judge the Earth” continued from page 9

After the transgression of Adam, the Lord spoke no longer directly with man; the human race was given into the hands of Christ, and all communication came through him to the world. (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, November 28, 1893, par. 4)

But prior to sin, the Father himself walked and talked with man. In Genesis, we read:

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8)

Ellen White states:

In His interest for His children, our heavenly Father **personally** directed their education. Often they were visited by His messengers, the holy angels, and from them received counsel and instruction. Often as they walked in the garden in the cool of the day they heard the voice of God, and **face to face held communion with the Eternal**. (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 21.1)

And after sin is destroyed, he will do so again:

Restored to His presence, man will again, as at the beginning, be taught of God: “My people shall know my name . . . they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.” Isaiah 52:6. (Ibid., p. 302.4)

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8)

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. (Revelation 22:4)

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his *Father's* name written in their foreheads. (Revelation 14:1)

Yet in my flesh shall I see God: (Job 19:26)

He [Job] could look forward to the time when he would be resurrected and made immortal and stand before the Judge of both quick and dead. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 1, Lt 6, 1866, par. 13)

Not only will the Father walk and talk with us, but we will to go to him, as well:

These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song **before the throne**, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand . . . (Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 591.2)

Brothers and sisters, the concept of Jesus being the bridge for communication between all created beings, sinless and sinful, is of great importance because it does injustice to the character of our Father and is dishonoring and discrediting to him. It also contradicts scripture and the inspired writings of Ellen White. The Father does not create and then stand back and not communicate personally with his creation. We can say this from how he related to Adam and Eve before sin. This new concept gives the impression that the Father is too elevated to communicate with his sinless creation and that the Son only does so because he first *condescended* and *emptied* himself. *Condescended* and *emptying* are Davidson's terms. This concept goes against what the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy teach about what a human father should be and what our heavenly Father is. He is our Father, and what loving father unnecessarily uses a go-between, or mediator, to communicate? Without question sinful man needs a mediator. No one is denying this. Without question the death and resurrection of Christ made the universe secure—the government was upon his shoulders. No one is denying this, either, and without question the Bible does not teach that Jesus is the communication link between all sinless created beings and the Father. Our heavenly Father loves and cares for all his creation and desires a close relationship with all. Only sin separates us now from him, but one day this separating wall will be removed, and we will see him and joyfully communicate with him face to face.

It is when the word of God is repeated over and over and over again that we are strengthened and not when speculative theories are presented:

The Captain of our salvation strengthens His followers, not with scientific falsehoods, but with *genuine faith in the word of a personal God*. This word is repeated over and over and over again with deeper affirmative power. (Ellen White, *In Heavenly Places*, p. 297.2)

We have God's word. Let us read it over and over and over again, and its truths will strengthen us.

Principles of a different order

In addition to books of a different order, we should discuss principles of a different order.

In 1872 the fundamental principle on God's word was:

That the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of his will to man, and are *the only infallible rule of faith and practice*.

In 1889 the fundamental principle on God's word was the same:

That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of his will to man, and are *the only infallible rule of faith and practice*.

In 1931 the fundamental belief on God's word was nearly the same, with a few words changed:

That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, contain an all-sufficient revelation of His will to men, and are the only unerring rule of faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3:15–17. (1931 *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination*, p. 377)

In 1981 the fundamental belief on God's word was printed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* as:

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration . . . The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history.

And today we have:

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. . . . The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (<https://www.adventistarchives.org/sdafundamentalbeliefs>)

The "only infallible rule of faith and practice" in 1872 has become "the standard of character" but not the *only* standard, "the test of experience" but not the *only* test of experience, etc. Why this change? It can only be because it says exactly what the denomination wants. Other so-called sacred writings can now be standards of character, tests of experience, definitive revealers of doctrine, etc. because the Bible is not the *only* one. The Bible is also the infallible revelation of God's will but not the *only* infallible revelation of his will, allowing other documents to also be considered as infallible revelations of God's will. To believe that the Ko-

ran is an infallible revelation of God's will is not precluded by this statement of fundamental belief.

I bring this up because a resolution on the Holy Bible was voted upon by the General Conference in session on June 9, 2022, with 88.8% approval. I realize this is a resolution and is not on the same level as a fundamental belief, and I realize it is not meant to be comprehensive, as General Vice President Artur Stele brought out:

Please keep in mind that the goal of the statement is not to say everything we know or want to say about the Bible, because we do it every Session, but every Session we pick one or two aspects that we want to emphasize. (Artur Stele, Eleventh Business Meeting, June 9, 2022)

Keeping this in mind, we need to realize that resolutions do reveal a level of esteem for the written word of God. Regardless of the individual aspects of the Bible a resolution or a fundamental belief elucidates, an overriding sense of esteem and reverence is always present, yea or nay. In this resolution, the overriding sense is one of reliability, credibility, and relevance, but other spiritual documents can also be viewed as reliable, credible, and relevant. The phrase *only infallible* sets the Bible apart from them all. Infallibility means it is not capable of being wrong; so, when the only infallible Bible says our heavenly Father is "the only true God" (John 17:3), no other being is so, and infallibility is never mentioned in this resolution or in the current fundamental belief, for that matter. Instead, in the resolution, we read:

. . . the Bible is the *inspired* and revealed Word of God. . . . The Bible is *reliable* in what it affirms. . . . *trustworthy* reports of God's acts in history . . . a *unique* witness to divine truth *unlike* any other religious book . . . It speaks *credibly* and *relevantly* today as it has in the past and will continue to speak as long as time shall last. . . . the Bible stands as the *norm* for all religious experience . . .

It is inspired, reliable, trustworthy, unique, credible, relevant, the norm, and will speak as long as time shall last, however long that may be in the eyes of the denomination. Please remember that God's word will never cease to speak to us, even when time on this earth is over. God's people will study it through the ceaseless ages of eternity:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which *liveth and abideth for ever*. . . . But the word of the Lord *endureth for ever*. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Peter 1:23, 25)

The counsel of the Lord *standeth for ever* . . . (Psalm 33:11)

The love of Christ in the heart will do more to convert sinners than all the sermons you can preach. What we need is to get the love of Christ, that we may study the Bible and know what saith the Scriptures. *The Word will be unfolded through the ceaseless ages of eternity.* (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 5, Ms 26, 1888)

This 2022 resolution avoids the concept of *onlyness*. The upholders of it may say that since the resolution uses the definite article *the*, it supports *onlyness*—the Bible is *the* inspired word of God, but the article *the* does not always proclaim exclusiveness, although it often does. I could say this is the way home, but that does not mean it is the only way home. Another route could be taken. I would have to say this is the *only* way home to be exclusive. I am glad the 1889 Historic Seventh-day Adventist organization cherishes the fundamental principle that the word of God is *the only infallible rule of faith and practice*, for it means there is no other. Only our God reigns, and only his word is sacred and infallible and lives forever.

The Millerite movement

Now let us consider the year 1831. Andrew Jackson was two years into his presidency. William Lloyd Garrison began publishing *The Liberator*, a weekly abolitionist newspaper. Ethiopia, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, and Bosnia were all engaged in separate wars. Barbados experienced a great hurricane, claiming the lives of at least 1,500 people. Nat Turner led the largest slave uprising in the United States. Mendelssohn composed Piano Concerto No. 1, Charles Darwin sailed for South America, Michael Faraday presented his first paper on electromagnetic induction to the Royal Society, and William Miller started preaching “unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14).

Many people came to Miller’s lectures. Most were normally educated people of the day and did not understand Greek or Hebrew (neither did Miller), but Nathaniel Whiting was a Greek and Hebrew scholar who had translated the New Testament into English, Henry Ward was a graduate of Harvard, and Jonathan Weethee had obtained his Master’s degree, and they all were Millerites. Other students and graduates also accepted Miller’s teachings.

Miller’s success was coupled with strong opposition, however. Churches closed their doors to him, one clergyman saying it was as great a sin to go to Miller’s lectures as to go to the theater. Pamphlets called him a false prophet and his biblical interpretation reprehensible. Attacks proliferated. One student was even denied aid by the American Education Society because of his Millerite beliefs, which the society characterized as one of the radicalisms of the day. So, a conference was called. Sixteen people signed on

for it, Joseph Bates among them, and a total of two hundred people attended.

The purpose of the conference was not to create a new organization of believers but to organize the spread of the gospel so that people could speedily prepare for the Lord’s coming.

The conference “lasted for two days and accomplished a unifying purpose, closing with a communion service of the Lord’s supper. . . . Ten thousand copies of the 175-page report of the meetings were distributed, far and wide, going to theological schools and to ministers and interested laymen at home and abroad” (Godfrey T. Anderson, “The Great Second Advent Awakening to 1844,” *The Advent Hope in Scripture and History*, p. 159, V. Norskov Olsen, ed.).

Sixteen meetings and numerous local conferences were held over the next four years, and the work was unified and strengthened, though not everyone agreed on all the details of the message.

Camp meetings were arranged, and other associations were planned to strengthen and comfort believers in the truth. Second advent libraries were established in towns and villages, stocked with tracts, books, charts, broadsides, and hymnals. Reading and study halls were started. Papers were placed on ships headed for distant ports, and lighthouses were supplied with reading material. Theological centers were supplied with materials, and materials were sent to mission stations in foreign lands. Seals with a Bible verse or thought about the second coming were printed to fasten folded letters. A big tent was obtained for meetings, seating about six thousand, which became a curiosity that drew people to the meetings. In Boston a large Millerite tabernacle was erected, and three thousand five hundred people attended its dedication.

To prepare for the momentous event of October 22, 1844, God’s people organized to share the news of the second coming of Christ. They were standing in the gap of their day. Christ was coming soon, and most people were not aware. Believers were compelled to stand up and make a difference. And we are in 2022, and Christ is coming very soon! Most Seventh-day Adventists say these words freely, but are they aware of the evil that is afoot in the religious world? Are they aware of the perfection of character that is needed in order to see God face to face? Are they aware of the terrible, invisible war for their souls? We need to repair this breach and the breaches in God’s law, especially that in the fourth commandment.

After the flood, men and women united in an evil undertaking. Can we unite in a righteous one? Most of the signs have been fulfilled about our soon-coming Lord—

the stars have fallen, the dark day has occurred, and nearly all of the signs of Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are history. We are only awaiting the Sunday law and the death decree, the sweeping away of the Adventist church structure as predicted by Ellen White, and the powers of heaven to be shaken at the voice of God.

Sunday law

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Revelation 13:15–17)

History repeats itself. The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is now at work to gain control of the falling churches, that through them he may condemn and put to death all who will not worship the idol sabbath. We have not to battle with men, as it may appear. We war not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places. But if the people of God will put their trust in Him, and by faith rely upon His power, the devices of Satan will be defeated in our time as signally as in the days of Mordecai. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 14, Ms 51, 1899, par. 26)

Some people today consider Seventh-day Adventists conspiracists for believing this, but be faithful brothers and sisters. We are not putting our trust in man's words but in the words of the living God and of his chosen messenger, Ellen White. The Bible is the book of our beliefs, yes, but if that is all it is, then any book of beliefs might suffice. It is more than this, and may we never forget it because Satan is always striving to instill doubt in our minds. It is also a book of facts. Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9 should stand strong and tall in our minds, and only upon the truthfulness of God's word can we safely base our beliefs. Remember,

Between the worldly man and the one who is faithfully serving God, there is a great gulf fixed. Upon the most momentous subjects—God and truth and eternity—their thoughts and sympathies and feelings are not in harmony. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 9, Ms 53, 1894, par. 20)

Storm and tempest

Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is

better than vice; but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 18, Lt 242, 1903, par. 13)

Powers of heaven

Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. (Luke 21:26)

*I saw that the powers of heaven are the sun, moon and stars. They rule in the heavens. I saw that the powers of earth are those who bear rule on earth. I saw that the powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not fall or pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 1, Lt 2, 1848, par. 2)*

Standing in the gap

While we wait for these remaining prophecies to be fulfilled, we have a gap of time in which to prepare ourselves and others for the last great battle:

God has thrust his people into the gap, to make up the hedge, to raise up the foundation of many generations. The heavenly intelligences, angels that excel in strength, are waiting, obedient to his command, to unite with human agencies; and the Lord will interpose when matters have come to such a pass that none but a divine power can counteract the satanic agencies at work. When his people shall be in the greatest danger, seemingly unable to stand against the power of Satan, God will work in their behalf. *Man's extremity is God's opportunity.* (White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 7, Ms 48, 1891, par. 36)

Are we up to the challenge? Each one of us is in the gap simply because we are alive at this time and because we have the knowledge we have, but are we doing our part to repair the gap? We are members of an army, each with a different job to do but each working together, shoulder to shoulder. We do not want any gaps between us as we work. We want to work together to patch the breach wherever it be that we stand, working like the repairers of the wall in Nehemiah's time. We are repairing the breach in God's law. We are repairing the breach in the pillars of truth given the advent people so long ago. We are undoing the designed disinformation circulating on spiritual matters, health matters, civic matters as they pertain to the kingdom of God, denominational matters, and so on. Our work will never stop until Jesus returns. Workers may fall asleep in

Jesus, but new ones need to quickly fill the vacancies. Workers may even fall into the deceptions they have been fighting against, but strong and spiritually healthy believers must step into their places. The Bible has many examples of groups of people, small and large, working together to accomplish God's purpose on this earth.

Long ago a small group of people learned a wonderful truth and hurried to their spiritual leaders to tell them, but they weren't believed and were even looked upon as bearers of tales, except for a couple of people who began to wonder if it were true.

Long ago another group of people gathered behind bolted doors for fear of their lives, but then Jesus joined them, literally. They had a hard time believing their eyes, but eventually they and others began to understand the great truth for their time and through the power of their Lord and Saviour, they began a work that reached round the world and down to our day.

The first group? Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and a few other women. Two angels spoke these words to them at the tomb of Jesus:

Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. . . . And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. (Luke 24:5-9, 11)

But Peter and John sprang into action and ran to the sepulchre and found the words of the women to be true. The Bible says Peter departed from the tomb. He didn't run back as he had come but left more slowly, contemplating on what all this could mean, but John didn't have to think about it. He believed, and gradually the understanding of all in the group was enlightened. A small group of two men from Emmaus brought their report back to the disciples. Jesus showed himself to the disciples and apostles, and the message of the risen Lord began to be believed. Nothing Satan could do could stop the spread of truth. Life came into the dry, despondent bones of the fearful believers meeting behind closed doors.

The early Christians banded together to proclaim a risen Lord. As we stand in the gap, cannot we band together to proclaim the returning Lord and to encourage and strengthen one another in preparation? We have no time to lose:

We have no time to lose. The end is near. The passage from places to spread the truth will soon be hedged with dangers on the right hand and on the left. Everything will be placed to obstruct our way so we shall not be able to do that which is possible to be done now. We must look our work fairly in the face, and advance as fast as possible in aggressive warfare. I know from the light given me of God that the powers of darkness are working with intense energy from beneath, and with stealthy tread he (Satan) is advancing to take those who are asleep now, as a thief taking his prey. We have warnings now which we may give, a work now which we may do; but soon it will be more difficult than we can imagine. God help us to keep in the channel of light, to work with our eyes fastened on Jesus our Leader, and patiently, perseveringly press on to gain the victory! (Ellen White, *The Home Missionary* February 1, 1897, par. 1)

Satan is organized

Five different, increasingly sophisticated levels of warfare have been proposed to explain the progression of secular war, from the days of sword, shield, and spears to cyberattacks and brain science, and the work of Satan also has gone through increasingly sophisticated levels of advancement.

He first attacked man when there was no written word of God to dissemble, but he gained control of them through the senses, as we see with Eve and with the sons of God when they saw the daughters of men, and, of course, this continues today. Then, as God's written word became available, Satan's attack expanded. Copies of the Bible were few and not many people could read, so religious leaders were able to control interpretation and to introduce traditions. Thus started orthodoxy. As schooling and higher education became more commonplace, so did books of study, lexicons, concordances, and biblical dictionaries. Knowledge increased, and seminary programs began, and with it the teaching of orthodoxy and the control of curriculum. Future generations of leaders were often placed under the control of Satan, and when Satan walked the halls of academia, ambiguous information, misinformation, disinformation, and theologies of a new order followed. This is why I spent so much time on Davidson. It is a designed tactic, whether he understands it or not, to take our minds off of true information and place it in the murky halls of speculative information, and it works because it sounds so good. Jesus is so wonderful to step down forever that we can't help but love him more. Who wouldn't go for it? But it pulls down the Father at the same time.

Brothers and sisters, in the face of all of this, we need to be faithful, truly knowledgeable, and ready. The stage is set, and we are only waiting the final events, which will be

rapid ones. May God help us to be strong in his might and to be united as we stand, for Satan and his followers certainly are united and strong. No gap exists between them, and they are quickly and stealthily advancing against us. Let us not break ranks or dissolve into disunity but remember to be men and women who stand in the gap and so standing, stand for the right though the heavens fall.

Here are our marching orders:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:10–18)

May God bless us now and forevermore is my prayer, and may we all be able to rejoice in the presence of the LORD after he judges the earth.

(Presented at 2022 West Virginia Camp Meeting) 卐

“Cutting the Work Short” continued from page 5

Seventy-eight summers have passed since the Battle of Normandy. Those soldiers were young the day they took those cliffs. Some of them were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before them. Yet, they risked everything there. Why? Why did they do it? What impelled them to put aside the instinct for self-preservation and risk their lives to take those cliffs? What inspired all the men of the armies that met there? It was faith and belief; it was loyalty and love.

The men of Normandy had faith that what they were doing was right, faith that they fought for all humanity, faith that a just God would grant them mercy on those beachheads for a cause greater than themselves.

Those men knew that there were some things worth dying for. They died to make men and women free and to bring liberty. We are striving for the same thing. People are slaves of sin. We are bringing them Jesus, and if the Son makes you free, you are free indeed.

One’s faith is worth dying for, and it is worth living for and worth drawing together in service.

Are you were willing to fight evil, apostasy, and error?

Will you scale the cliffs of Satanic power and take the beaches of demonic possession?

God wants us to be bound together with love, truth, and loyalties. We are bound by reality. Let us draw together and finish the work. 卐

1889 HSDA Church News

We wish to share a few news notes with you concerning issues in the United States and in the world church.

Brother Joe Buhia, who was the chairperson of the church in the Philippines, had been quite sick recently, and we received the sad news that he is now sleeping. Please pray for Brother Joe’s family and for the work in the Philippines.

The USA 1889 HSDA has established a bank account and can receive funds for deposit. While the official office is located at Smyrna for the time being, the church treasurer, Sister Catherine Mesa, lives in Georgia, and the bank account has been established with a branch of Wells Fargo,

which has branches across the country. We are getting a post office box address for Sister Mesa so funds can be sent directly to her. We are also looking at how funds can be deposited directly from other banks.

Brother Daniel Mesa has been asked to construct a website for the church, as his schedule allows, and we hope to have something to share on that later.

We wanted to have a general conference meeting from various parts of the world field in July but that has been postponed for a short time. We will update you on when a date has been determined. Please pray for the peace of Israel. 卐

A Special Testimony on the Sacredness of Life

By Rhonda Brown

The journey I am going to share began while I was a senior in academy. One day a young man who worked in the business office stopped in front of my desk holding several fines for chewing gum with my name on them. He proceeded to tear them up and throw them away. That was the beginning of a friendship that would grow into a relationship.

About this time someone shared a collection of Spirit of Prophecy quotes relating to relationships. I was excited and shared it with the young man who was by now my boyfriend. He was told by his boss, the dean of men, that if he followed that counsel, he would never get married. The counsel was laid aside.

Young people, let no man despise thy youth! If you are convicted about something, do not let anyone change your mind.

One thing led to another, and sometime later I found myself sitting in a crisis pregnancy center. The beautiful young lady sitting on the other side of the desk told me that the test was positive. With no source of income, I decided on adoption, but then abortion was suggested. I was shocked, but I was desperate.

I accepted the twisted reasoning that it was early in the pregnancy, and so it wasn't so bad. Within hours I was sitting in the clinic. I found that that supposed solution became unbearable torture. God says, "Can a woman forget her sucking child?" He put it in a mother to protect and nurture her child. It creates a conflict and sense of guilt that is beyond expression to hurt or destroy that child. I wrote the following poem two months later. It sheds some light on the turmoil. Please keep in mind I was not a poet, just a desperate teenager.

As I sit here tonight alone,
I think back to the times I've known.

The path is covered with roses and thorns,
heartache and pain memories' hall adorns.

It's not been easy from the start,
but now there's a deeper pain in my heart.

I sought to fill an inner gap,
little I knew of the hidden trap.

Lonely as a child and on in my teens,
love was all in the Hollywood scenes.

Friendship and laughter seemed far away,
in my lonely world I seemed doomed to stay.

Then into my life came prince charming,
with his friendship and love he began disarming.

Little by little as he grew close to my heart,
caution and care seemed to be far apart.

Oh I didn't want sex, he knew that well,
just where I was weak only God can tell.

But somehow prince charming could reach in me,
something that others and I couldn't see.

At first he began with a little guilt,
as if his love I were trying to jilt.

A little I gave which is often the case,
what we'll give to remain in a warm embrace.

I wanted to wait for the Lord's better way,
but I so longed for love that I let Satan sway.

Just two weeks before I would turn eighteen,
my life quickly changed, what would it all mean?

To the prince it was heaven, to me a fall,
of him it took nothing, of me it took all.

How it must hurt our Father in heaven above,
to see what we go through in our search for love.

The days that followed brought more to fear,
signs of consequence soon would appear.

I felt condemned by the world and God,
but it was the pain in my heart that was hard to trod.
Slowly it dawned there was more left to come,
of course, how could I have been so dumb?
I wasn't the only one who would pay,
but a new creation as was formed of clay.
God please help me I often cried,
but I seldom felt he was by my side.
This is for people, well you know those kind,
but reality kept gnawing at the back of my mind.
As I waited the results of the test to be known,
it hit me that others would reap what I'd sown.
Positive came the reply over the phone,
that quick was gone the dreams I'd known.
Pain, shock, and also the grief
were feelings, from which I found little relief.
A child was now to be born of my womb,
and I had nothing to offer but doom.
The baby now growing inside of me,
was soon to be part of reality.
I couldn't tell mother, I'd break her heart.
I know she had plans for a better start.
I watched mother's face as the news was told,
tears welled up and down they rolled.
I would have given anything to soften that blow,
why through my valley did she have to go?
So down to the clinic I made myself go,
all the while inside I was pleading no.
Believe it or not this baby is dear,
oh please let me keep it here.
Time after time I got up to leave,
but I felt that others I'd have to relieve.
Then I turned and slowly walked down the hall,
the voice of duty seemed to call.
In the last moments I spent with my little one,
I thought what a second had caused and done.
Placing my hand close to my little child,
I spoke in a voice soft and mild.

I love you little baby of mine,
my words are meant as a little sign.
I'm really sorry for putting you through this,
your little life we're going to miss.
In that silent room I seemed to hear,
my baby speak in a voice so near.
Mommy I love you, mommy I do,
I don't understand what you're going to do.
This little message cut through my heart,
the two of us we didn't want to part.
Sobs then shook me as I gave into tears,
this pain would follow me through the years.
As the doctor began to do his job,
they thought it was pain that brought my sobs.
Oh be that far from true,
I heard my child say, adieu.
Since that time we were torn from each other by force,
my life still continues to take its course.
But often I cry at my empty breast,
and think of my darling now at rest.
Often I hear that soft, sweet cry,
Mommy I love you, Mommy goodbye.
Matthew 2:18 says, "In Rama was there a voice heard,
lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel
weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, be-
cause they are not."
I cannot even put in words the torture that I experienced
continually. Several years later the abortion clinic that I
had gone to was purchased by the pro-life group in our
area and made into a memorial to the unborn and a place
of help and education for women in crisis pregnancies. I
went to the dedication, and after the ceremony they offered
a Bible study for post-abortion healing. I signed up.
After attending this study, I wrote a letter. Of course, I
know the dead are sleeping, but this is just what I would say
if I could. It is part of the journey of healing, and again it's
written as if it were written to the child.
*It's springtime again sweet one, new evidence of life is
bursting forth everywhere—trees cautiously budding,
flowers boldly displaying their splendor, while birds
beautifully warble God's praise. How I'd love to take
your hand and together turn this into memories, but in-*

stead of these memories, I cherish a hope. It's true we can't share the thrill of the changing seasons now, but even for us winter is not forever. Seven years ago I carried you for such a short time, but you were there, just under my heart, warm, secure, growing. I didn't realize it was you. I believed Satan's lie, the one about you being just tissue or possibly an uncomfortable condition to cover up. Out of fear and selfishness, I had an abortion, such a big, ugly word, I know. I didn't understand what it meant seven years ago, either. I thought I just wouldn't be pregnant anymore. Now I know it means killing a child. It hurts so much to know you had to die, so tiny, so innocent, so dependent. I'm very sorry tiny one that I didn't take care of you, that I made the choice to hurt you.

I wish more than anything that I could go back and make the choice to let you live and grow and laugh. I know it hurt God when I hurt you because he made you. He loved you more than a mother could. God's eyes did see your substance, yet being unperfect. In His book are all your members written. That verse is very special to me because it means that even though I abandoned you, God knew you. He knew you were a tiny person, and he recognizes you in his book. God has allowed me to recognize you in a beautiful way. Within the walls where your life ended there is now a wall of names, names of precious children like you who before only God recognized. Where once the streams of blood flowed, now there's a pool of tears—tears of healing and hope. Your name, Sarah Navit, means a pleasant princess, a child of earth and of the God of creation. I want you to be recognized, so I put your name, the day you died, and the words "Never Held, Always Loved" on a memorial plaque on the wall. Sometimes I see you so beautifully in the eyes of my heart, big brown eyes, soft curls, and a slight dimple on one side. There are others who miss you too little Sarah. Your daddy didn't want me to make the choice to hurt you. If I get the chance I'll show him your name. Mema misses you too. One time she brought me some beautiful flowers so we could think of you. You were her first grandchild. Losing you has taught me the value of each child. Your short life helped me care. I miss you so much, princess. I want to hold you, protect you, see you. I know the day will come soon when God will swallow up death in victory and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces. So, on the anniversary of the day you died, I mourn. On the day you would have been born, I remember. And in the spring, I pick a big bouquet of daffodils and love.

It was very difficult for me to believe that God could forgive me. I knew better, and I just couldn't accept that there could be any forgiveness. During this Bible study, one of the characters referred to was David. My faith grasped hold of the hope that if God could forgive David for cold-blooded murder, then there was a chance he could also forgive me. Jesus said of himself in Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3)

Why do I share all this? There are two primary reasons. First, it is my prayer that the young people will hear this and make the decision now to wait for marriage before getting involved physically. Don't steal your own thunder. If you find yourself in this type of situation, there are many options. The sin isn't the child. Please don't consider taking the life of a child as an option.

Second, I have made myself vulnerable so that if there are other people who have been affected by abortion, I want you to feel free to reach out. Keeping that secret in your heart is devastating. There is forgiveness and healing. I am here for you.

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