

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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Baptism at Monterey Bay



When Has the Truth Ceased to Matter?

By Allen Stump

At the Golden Globes awards on January 8, 2018, Oprah Winfrey delivered a speech in which she emphasized that “what I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have.”

Oprah Winfrey was making a statement to the effect that truth is fluid or malleable, indicating that truth is not solely determined by objective reality but is often shaped by individual perception and desires. In Winfrey’s view, what one considers as their truth may differ from that of others. This perspective underscores the significance of details, as it aligns with the notion that altering the truth is a tactic used by those with nefarious intentions, particularly the devil, who seeks to distort the truth of God and mislead souls through the redefinition of truth. The present woke society wants to create a community where everyone can define their own truth, but does this woke philosophy realize what it is thinking and saying?

If we were to embrace this philosophy, it would raise the challenging question of how to condemn the actions of Adolf Hitler. In this context, he would be permitted to believe and act upon what he considered to be his truth, even though it involved the genocide of millions of individuals based on their genetics. The gas chambers in concentration camps such as Auschwitz and Birkenau were, under Hitler’s regime, instruments fueled by his version of the truth.

Joseph Stalin was a contemporary of Hitler. Stalin’s beliefs and actions led to the imprisonment of more than eighteen million people in the gulags, where many suffered and perished from overwork and from horrendous living conditions, starkly illustrating the devastating consequences of his version of truth.

The conflict between Israel and Hamas is currently a matter of global concern. Each side maintains and strongly adheres to its own perspective or truth on the situation.

The President of the United States appears to embrace the idea that he is entitled to his own version of the truth. Mr. Biden has made claims, such as being present at Ground Zero on September 12, which are not accurate. He also stated that he was arrested during a civil rights protest, though, in fact, a police officer merely escorted him home after the demonstration. Additionally, he mentioned a visit to the Pittsburgh synagogue where a tragic mass shooting occurred in 2018, including a conversation with a rabbi, despite not actually having visited the synagogue.

Does Satan possess his own version of the truth? Should we align ourselves with his perspective on truth?

What if my *truth* encompasses the belief that I can adulterate your food with poison? Would you then find my perspective on truth acceptable?

Truth is defined as that which is in accordance with fact or that which agrees with reality. Truth is vital, for Jesus, praying to his Father, stated: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). God’s word stands as unchanging truth, serving as the unalterable standard for what is true. Consequently, the ultimate truth remains constant and unwavering.

Peter writes:

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:15–16)

In the course of our lives, we are summoned to embrace holiness, mirroring the character of God who is inherently holy. We are called to partake of the divine nature (2 Peter

1:4), signifying that we do not become divine beings but rather cultivate a character that resembles that of God.

Let us be very clear. God values truth. As we noted, it is by the truth that we are to be sanctified. Jesus also said:

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. (John 17:19)

Christ had to be sanctified by the truth so we could be sanctified by the truth. This should speak to us of the value that God and Christ put on truth.

God puts a great value on truth, for it is part of his very nature. Moses noted:

He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

Jehovah is a God of truth. It is impossible for him to lie (Titus 1:2). All truth comes from God:

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. (Psalm 43:3)

God's light and truth are given to us so that we can be led to his holy hill and to his presence.

Not only is God the Father truth, his only begotten Son is the embodiment of truth.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

Jesus is the way to the Father and is the truth about the Father incarnate. Further, the Spirit of God and Christ is called "the spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6).

The title of this article is "When Has the Truth Ceased to Matter?". Seeing we have a Father, a Son, and the Spirit of truth and seeing we are sanctified by the truth, we can deduce that the truth must always matter to God. In fact, all through the Bible we see that not only does truth matter to God, but we can see how much he values the truth. The word *truth* is used 237 times in 224 verses in the Bible and the concept is in thousands of verses. The word *true* is used 81 times in 77 verses. The Bible, indeed, imparts extensive teachings about the value of truth, and nearly every narrative within it, in one way or another, hinges on this fundamental principle.

Let us look at three biblical stories which reveal that God values truth and also reveal the folly and consequences of accepting our own truth over the truth of God.

Eve accepted Satan's truth

When Satan tempted Eve, did the truth matter? In Genesis, we read:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof *thou shalt surely die*. (Genesis 2:16-17)

Did God really mean this? Of course, he did, and Satan well knew he meant it. Yet, he came along and gave *his truth to Eve!*

And the serpent said unto the woman, *Ye shall not surely die*: (Genesis 3:4)

The Hebrew is literally [ye shall] not die die. But Satan's truth was not *the truth!*

Eve must have thought something like this: God's truth is not so important. *My truth is the powerful tool I have*, and I must use my truth. But God's truth was important! Jesus, the faithful and *true* witness (Revelation 3:14) declared, concerning Satan:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him*. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for *he is a liar*, and the father of it. (John 8:44)

Satan abode not in the truth. He was a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies. Consider this: If everyone could assert their own version of truth, the very concept of a lie would become obsolete. Yet, it is essential to remember that Satan is the source of all falsehood.

Adam and Eve did face death, were expelled from the garden, and lost access to the tree of life because their perception of truth did not override God's ultimate truth. God proclaimed:

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:19)

Beloved, if you wish to believe your truth surpasses God's truth, you will also lose paradise and access to the tree of life.

Is God particular about *his truth*? Adam and Eve lost the garden and the tree of life because God's truth matters!

Nadab and Abihu's truth

The next account we wish to examine pertains to Nadab and Abihu, who were the sons of Aaron and nephews of Moses. In Israel, their positions of trust and responsibility

were second only to those of Moses and Aaron, affording them numerous advantages and privileges. They had the unique experience of hearing the voice of God, of accompanying Moses and Aaron on the mountain of God, and of witnessing the God of Israel. They had been greatly favored; yet, they did not profit by their opportunities.

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. (Leviticus 10:1–2)

We learn in Exodus 30:9 that God had commanded the priests to offer no strange incense. But Nadab and Abihu must have reasoned: *Our truth is that fire is fire, and one fire is as good as another. God's truth is not so important.*

This is the very argument people employ today when contemplating the matter of the Sabbath and Sunday. They endeavor to replace God's holy day with a creation of their own making, a product of their common labor; however, this practice is no more agreeable to God than the act of substituting common fire for the sacred one.

But God's truth was so important that Moses told Aaron and his two remaining sons:

. . . Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. (Leviticus 10:6)

God told Aaron that he was not even to shed a tear over the death of his sons. Psalm 119:142 declares that his "law is *the truth*." Weeping and mourning would make God's law, God's truth, look weak!

I have experienced the loss of two sons, and I can personally attest to the deep anguish of losing not only one but two children. The pain is profound and searing. The natural inclination is to weep, mourn, and grieve; however, Aaron and his remaining two sons were forbidden from expressing their grief because the truth of God held supreme importance.

Saul's truth

The third narrative we would like to explore highlighting the significance of truth to God can be found in the account of Saul's command to annihilate Amalek

Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: *now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.* Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that

which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. (1 Samuel 15:1–2)

In this context, "hearken" carries a deeper meaning than merely perceiving an audible sound. In the Bible, *hearing* or *hearkening* is frequently employed to symbolize the imperative to comply with a given directive. Sometimes a parent might convey important instructions to a child and then inquire, *Did you hear me?*, even when they are aware that the child physically heard the words. What they seek is the child's affirmation of their commitment to follow the instructions provided. Saul was instructed to "hearken," or to obey, the message conveyed by God, which was as follows:

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. (1 Samuel 15:3)

The command to exterminate even the children and animals may appear severe, but it is essential to recognize that God's justice is rooted in his reasons. These people had reached the point of utter wickedness, their cup of iniquity brimming to the top. They had committed the unpardonable sin and were beyond redemption. Even their children had become so corrupt that there was no hope of salvation for them. In this context, the act of destroying them was an act of mercy. Allowing them to live longer would only provide more opportunities for sin, accumulating a greater burden of transgressions for which they would be held accountable in the final judgment. Moreover, their continued existence would pose a detrimental influence on others. Archaeological findings have revealed that some of the animals in these cultures were afflicted with venereal diseases, rendering them entirely unsuitable for consumption or sacrifice.

Saul and his army followed most of God's commands, but they deviated by sparing King Agag and by bringing back what they considered to be the finest animals. This was a direct act of disobedience to God. Saul seemed to believe that his interpretation of truth was on par with God's truth, even equivalent to it.

However, the reception he received from Samuel upon his return was far from what he had anticipated:

And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: *I have performed the commandment of the LORD.* 14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? (1 Samuel 15:13–14)

Saul, at first, claimed to have obeyed God's command, but Samuel asked why the noise of the animals? Then came the sharp rebuke:

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken** than the fat of rams. (1 Samuel 15:22)

Samuel unequivocally stated that God had no interest in the sacrifices that Saul and his men intended to offer, as these sacrifices were primarily meant to prevent the use of their own animals. The principle that obedience is superior to sacrifice holds true. In fact, to obey is better than anything, and it stands as the paramount demonstration of loyalty!

Notice to what God compares supplying Saul's truth for his truth and what the result for Saul was:

For *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft*, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (1 Samuel 15:23)

The kingdom was taken from Saul because God's truth matters!

Uzzah's truth

Have you ever heard of a little boy named Uzzah? I doubt it because God had to destroy Uzzah. The ark of God had been in the house of Abinadab, and David wanted it in Jerusalem. So . . .

And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. (2 Samuel 6:3-5)

What a celebration they seemed to be having! Oh, how they were praising the LORD, or so they thought.

However, a dilemma arose because the ark was not to have been transported in such a manner. It was designated to be carried solely by the sons of Kohath, who were to bear the covered ark on their shoulders with staves passing through rings affixed to it. Now, a critical juncture had been reached:

And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. (2 Samuel 6:6)

Was God pleased with what Uzzah did? Uzzah had opportunity to know how the ark was to be moved, and it was not to be touched by his common hands. Uzzah, however, thought that his truth was better than God's truth on the matter. He tragically must have reasoned, *This is God's sacred ark; I must take care of it*, but, beloved, neither Uzzah's truth or your truth ever supersedes the truth of God, and this was so serious that:

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error [Hebrew: irreverence]; and there he died by the ark of God. (2 Samuel 6:7)

Inspiration tells us that:

Uzzah was angry with the oxen, because they stumbled. He showed a manifest distrust of God, as though he who had brought the ark from the land of the Philistines, could not take care of it. Angels who attended the ark struck down Uzzah for presuming impatiently to put his hand upon the ark of God. (Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4a, p. 111.1)

Uzzah was killed because God's truth matters!

God's truth

The being and life of Jesus was a testimony to the importance of truth. Concerning Jesus, we read:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) *full of grace and truth*. (John 1:14)

The importance of worshiping in truth was clearly delineated by Jesus to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the *true* worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and *in truth*: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and *in truth*. (John 4:23-24)

Jesus did not say that one could choose or not choose to worship God in truth but said that one "must worship...in truth."

Jesus said that we must continue in his word. Remember in John 17:17 it says his word is truth.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31-32)

Persisting in the truth leads to liberation from sin, encompassing not only freedom from the consequences of sin but also emancipation from its hold and ultimately from its very presence.

While standing before Pilate, Jesus affirmed that his mission was to bear witness to the truth.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. (John 18:37)

Pilate asked Jesus what truth was (v. 38) but sadly did not wait to receive an answer.

The life of Jesus was a testimony that God's truth is the only truth and that there is no other truth. His death on Calvary is the seal of God's truth.

If the law could be changed, man might have been saved without the sacrifice of Christ; but the fact that it was necessary for Christ to give His life for the fallen race, proves that the law of God will not release the sinner from its claims upon him. It is demonstrated that the wages of sin is death. When Christ died, the destruction of Satan was made certain. But if the law was abolished at the cross, as many claim, then the agony and death of God's dear Son were endured only to give to Satan just what he asked; then the prince of evil triumphed, his charges against the divine government were sustained. The very fact that Christ bore the penalty of man's transgression is a mighty argument to all created intelligences that the law [God's truth] is changeless; that God is righteous, merciful, and self-denying; and that infinite justice and mercy unite in the administration of His government. (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 70.1)

Truth is not changeable and varying like the changing tides of the ocean or the changing tides of public opinion.

Sir Winston Churchill steered England through World War II. Ironically, as the war in Europe neared its conclusion, he and his party were voted out of office by an ungrateful, changing British electorate, but though the opinion of people change, our God does not change. The apostle James writes:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:17)

God has given us the gift of himself in truth. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and through the Father and Son we receive the Spirit of truth.

I want to encourage you *to believe the truth, cherish the truth, and obey the truth*, and you will be so thankful you have.

Following truth helps to build faith. We are most likely familiar with this great verse on faith:

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

Hearing here means more than just listening to or reading the word of God. That is vital and important, but it is more. It means to come under or into obedience to what you hear. For example, you read:

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD. (Leviticus 27:30)

Your income may seem meager and not sufficient for your needs, but you step out in faith and obey the truth of the word of God by returning an honest tithe and offerings. God will honor his word and bless you, and as you see how God keeps his promises, your faith is increased. Here we see how faith and truth go hand in hand.

I want to follow truth. Do you? Please do not try to have your own truth or substitute your faulty ideas of truth for God's truth.



The prophet Daniel was an illustrious character. He was a bright example of what men may become when united with the God of wisdom. A brief account of the life of this holy man of God is left on record for the encouragement of those who should afterward be called to endure trial and temptation. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, January 25, 1881, par. 2)

Fundamental Principles of the Church Organization

By Jean-Christophe Bolotte

(Pastor Jean-Christophe Bolotte has prepared a book on gospel order and church organization comprised of quotations from the Bible and from the writings of Ellen White. In August we published part of the first chapter. Below is the last part of Chapter 1. Editor)

The Adventist Pioneer Organization

The organization must not have kingdom areas at any level

God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men.

Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p.236. 3, 4)

What is the purpose of Satan's efforts?

It is his [Satan's] studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality; that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts made to establish this are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These deceived souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man's say so. They are amenable to no man. It was and now is Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it is God's order to

strike out for themselves and choose their own order independent of their brethren.—Letter 32, 1892. (Ellen White, *Evangelism*, p. 318.2)

Evil is not the fruit of the organization

Evil does not result because of organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment. When form and machinery take the pre-eminence, and a laborious task is made of carrying on the work that should be done with simplicity, evil will result, and little will be accomplished in proportion to the effort put forth. The object of organization is just the reverse of this; and should we disorganize, it would be like tearing down that which we have built up. (Ellen White, *Christian Education*, p.134.1)

Character flaws are not a valid reason for disorganization

But although these difficulties exist, will it abolish them to put an end to organization? I am sure that the Lord has wrought in the organization that has been perfected, and the fact that there are discouraging features in the work should not be thought a sufficient reason for disorganization. Much light was given to us in reference to the organization of churches, and yet we had a hard battle to fight in perfecting organization; but the victory was gained at last, and now shall the church be disorganized because of indifference, formality, and pride? Shall we go back to disorder because unconsecrated members of the church have placed upon the work the mould of man, and sought to fashion the church to meet a popular standard? (Ibid., p. 135.2)

Unconsecrated influences are not a valid reason for disorganization

But because of these unconsecrated influences, are we going to back down and do away with the methods that have cost us so much effort to establish, and declare this organization a mistake? We dare not do that. There are many things that must be adjusted; some things that are really of little importance are made much of, while others of great importance are neglected and regarded as unessential. Men's minds need literary as well as spiritual education, that they may be harmoniously developed, for without literary education men cannot acceptably occupy various positions of trust. (Ibid., p.136.2)

God began to grant Adventists the truth about the organization since 1852

It is nearly forty years since organization was introduced among us as a people. [This statement was made in 1892.] I was one of the number who had an experi-

ence in establishing it from the first. I know the difficulties that had to be met, the evils which it was designed to correct, and I have watched its influence in connection with the growth of the cause. At an early stage in the work, God gave us special light upon this point, and this light, together with the lessons that experience has taught us, should be carefully considered.

From the first our work was aggressive. Our numbers were few, and mostly from the poorer class. Our views were almost unknown to the world. We had no houses of worship, but few publications, and very limited facilities for carrying forward our work. The sheep were scattered in the highways and byways, in cities, in towns, in forests. The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus was our message. (Ellen White, *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 192.1, 2)

The introduction of church order

Our numbers gradually increased. The seed that was sown was watered of God, and He gave the increase. At first we assembled for worship, and presented the truth to those who would come to hear, in private houses, in large kitchens, in barns, in groves, and in schoolhouses; but it was not long before we were able to build humble houses of worship.

As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable.

Yet there was strong feeling against it among our people. The First-day Adventists were opposed to organization, and most of the Seventh-day Adventists entertained the same ideas. We sought the Lord with earnest prayer that we might understand His will, and light was given by His Spirit, that there must be order and thorough discipline in the church,—that organization was essential. System and order are manifest in all the works of God throughout the universe. Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law of God's people on the earth.

We had a hard struggle in establishing organization. Notwithstanding that the Lord gave testimony after testimony upon this point, the opposition was strong, and it had to be met again and again. But we knew that the Lord God of Israel was leading us, and guiding by His

providence. We engaged in the work of organization, and marked prosperity attended this advance movement. (Ibid., p. 195.1-4).

Organization is the secret of Adventism's prosperity

As the development of the work called upon us to engage in new enterprises, we were prepared to enter upon them. The Lord directed our minds to the importance of the educational work. We saw the need of schools, that our children might receive instruction free from the errors of false philosophy, that their training might be in harmony with the principles of the word of God. The need of a health institution had been urged upon us, both for the help and instruction of our own people and as a means of blessing and enlightenment to others. This enterprise also was carried forward. All this was missionary work of the highest order.

Our work was not sustained by large gifts or legacies; for we have few wealthy men among us. What is the secret of our prosperity? We have moved under the orders of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard seed has grown to a great tree. The system of organization has proved a grand success. Systematic benevolence was entered into according to the Bible plan. The body "has been compacted by that which every joint supplieth." As we have advanced, our system of organization has still proved effectual. (Ibid., p. 197.1, 2)

The Adventist organization established under God's direction

Let none entertain the thought that we can dispense with organization. It has cost us much study and many prayers for wisdom that we know God has answered, to erect this structure. It has been built up by His direction, through much sacrifice and conflict. Let none of our brethren be so deceived as to attempt to tear it down, for you will thus bring in a condition of things that you do not dream of. In the name of the Lord I declare to you that it is to stand, strengthened, established, and settled. At God's command, "Go forward," we advanced when the difficulties to be surmounted made the advance seem impossible. We know how much it has cost to work out God's plans in the past, which have made us as a people what we are. Then let everyone be exceedingly careful not to unsettle minds in regard to those things that God has ordained for our prosperity and success in advancing His cause. (Ibid., p. 197.3)

A guaranteed success

Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with Heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and perfect discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from Heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God, and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality; that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united, and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts made to establish order are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These devoted souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man's say-so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it is God's order for them to strike out for themselves, and choose their own course, independent of their brethren.

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing, and another having faith and views entirely opposite; each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases, without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren?

Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and

are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon His ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit.

It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial.... We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and Heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed. (Ibid., p. 201.1–203.2)

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. (Ibid., p. 204.1)

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The apostle John was distinguished above his brethren as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." While not in the slightest degree cowardly, weak, or vacillating in character, he possessed an amiable disposition, and a warm, loving heart, capable of the deepest and most earnest devotion. He seems to have enjoyed, in a pre-eminent sense, the friendship of Christ, and he received many tokens of the Saviour's confidence and love. He was one of the three permitted to witness Christ's glory upon the mount of transfiguration, and his agony in Gethsemane; and to the care of John our Lord confided his mother in those last hours of anguish upon the cross. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, February 15, 1881, par. 2)

Don't Tempt Satan

By Allen Stump

In an historic address to a Joint Session of Congress, President Franklin Roosevelt delivered the legendary words: "YESTERDAY, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan."

Japan aimed to secure access to the oil and natural resources of Southeast Asia and viewed the United States as the chief impediment to their aspirations. They intentionally lured and incited the United States into a conflict, initially achieving some successes but ultimately encountering devastating repercussions for their empire. As Admiral Yamamoto famously expressed, "We have awakened a sleeping giant." Japan soon discovered that it was ill-prepared to face the United States in a protracted war, and by drawing the United States into the war, they were confronted with the full might of the American military.

Just before Peter's fall, Christ said to him:

... Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. (Luke 22:31, 32)

What was Peter's response? Did he express gratitude, saying, "Thank you, Lord, for exposing this flaw in my character?" Did Peter value this cautionary message? Christ's friendship with Peter was indeed genuine, and his warning bore deep compassion. This well-intentioned warning of love and mercy, however, was met with resistance. In his self-assuredness, Peter boldly declared:

... Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. (Luke 22:33)

Peter believed he would never commit the action Christ had cautioned him against. The inspired writings hold a revealing truth in this regard. Pay close attention to the emphasized sentiment.

His [Peter's] self-confidence proved his ruin. *He tempted Satan to tempt him*, and he fell under the arts of the wily foe. When Christ needed him most, he stood on the side of the enemy, and openly denied his Lord ... (Ellen White, *This Day with God*, p. 259.3; all emphasis supplied in this article unless otherwise noted)

Peter tempted Satan!? He tempted Satan to tempt him. It would be akin to a diminutive person challenging a con-

siderably larger individual to a fight, with the smaller one saying, *Come and face me! I will prove myself!* Such an act appears foolish and tragic.

In our current times, do we face a scenario reminiscent of Peter's predicament when he boldly proclaimed that he would not deny his Lord? Might our overconfidence render us susceptible to the strategies of Satan?

Paul, writing in his second remaining letter to the church at Corinth, stated:

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; (2 Corinthians 3:5)

In his first epistle, Paul had written the basis for this text when he noted:

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12)

Commenting upon this, the Lord, through his servant, has penned:

The apostle adjured the Corinthians, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Should they become boastful and self-confident, neglecting to watch and pray, they would fall into grievous sin, calling down upon themselves the wrath of God. Yet Paul would not have them yield to despondency or discouragement. He gave them the assurance: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 316.1)

When you acknowledge your own vulnerability, you place your faith in the immense power of God. The reassuring message is that by turning to God and placing your trust in him you render Satan powerless against you, but if you trust in self, in your own power, you will be easily defeated. If you trust in yourself, you are tempting Satan to tempt you, and, since you are trusting in yourself, you are sure to lose. So, don't tempt Satan, beloved.

Christ will not save from wounds the one who places himself unbidden on the enemy's ground. He lets the self-sufficient one, who acts as if he knew more than his Lord, go on in his supposed strength. Then comes suffering and a crippled life, or perhaps defeat and death. (White, *This Day with God*, p. 259.4)

In the warfare, the enemy takes advantage of the weakest points in the defence of those he is attacking. Here he makes his fiercest assaults. The Christian should have no weak points in his defence. He should be barricaded by the support that the Scriptures give to the one who is doing God's will. The tempted soul will bear away the victory, if he follows the example of Him who met the tempter with the word, "It is written." He can stand securely in the protection of a "Thus saith the Lord." . . . (Ibid., p. 259.5)

Jesus frequently used parables in his teachings. In fact, we can find in the Scriptures:

But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples. (Mark 4:34)

There are many great parables, like the good Samaritan, the net, the sower, and others, riveted into our memories, but one stands out very importantly to me. Jesus speaks so plainly in it, and Luke gives insight into why it was spoken:

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:9-14)

A Sunday School teacher was teaching on this parable one day to her class of boys, explaining the hard heart of the Pharisee: "What a thing for a man to say: 'I thank thee, that I am not as other men are!'" This surely was no attitude for anyone to take." At the close of the lesson she had the youngsters lead in short prayers, and one boy, without any apparent beating on his own chest, prayed: "We thank thee, God, that we are not like that Pharisee!" Do we sometimes pray like that boy?

Do we resemble more closely the Pharisee or the publican? It is quite simple for us to adopt the Pharisee's mindset. Occasionally, it manifests itself unexpectedly! As an illustration, during the 1895 General Conference Session, A. T. Jones remarked on fashion:

Why, you sometimes see people with clothing upon them that is in no sense becoming to them, but is utterly

incongruous. They may have on a hat or a dress of a color that makes them look as if they were recovering from a fit of the jaundice. But that question is not thought of. All that they think is that such is the fashion now. (A. T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, February 15, 1895, p. 165.3)

In his next message he stated:

I UNDERSTAND there are some that think I did not say enough about dress last night. I think perhaps that is so; because it is altogether likely that those who think I did not say enough about dress, would be glad if I had talked about those who dress neatly, and even nicely, while they themselves think they are all right. (Ibid., p. 171.1)

There are people who, when they see a person dressed neatly and well, take it at once as an evidence of pride. But it is just as much an evidence of pride for a person to be proud of his slovenliness, as it is for another person to be proud of his flashiness. I have seen people who were proud of their slovenliness, *I have seen people who were proud of their lack of pride.* They were thanking God they were not proud. But they were. (Ibid., p. 171.2)

Perhaps for that reason I did not say enough about dress before; and therefore I would add this, that those who are proud of their lack of pride, and so, in this pride think they are all right, when they might and ought to dress better or more neatly than they do, would do well to correct themselves, and come up to a better standard. (Ibid., p. 171.3)

Let us not be spiritually complacent because of self-sufficiency. In another parable, Jesus said:

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? (Luke 12:16-20)

This wealthy man believed that life would continue indefinitely and that he might never have to give an account to God for his deeds; however, suddenly and when least expected, his probation closed. Why do we allow ourselves to teeter on the edge between heaven and hell? Is it because

we think we won't stumble? Do we believe ourselves too clever to fall into one of Satan's snares, pitfalls, or deceptions? Do we presume we are too spiritually advanced to become ensnared in the wicked webs woven by Satan?

Throughout the Scriptures, God endeavors to warn us against complacency and self-sufficiency. We may consider ourselves spiritually wealthy, perhaps as part of the one true God movement or of a specific group; yet, none of these affiliations will save us.

Jesus, the faithful and true witness, reveals that we are lukewarm, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

Jesus tells us to examine ourselves:

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Are we residing on the precipice, hoping that we can indulge in sin while still expecting to reach heaven? Consider the individual who only occasionally consumes a beer or who only occasionally visits a pornographic website, perhaps during times when their spouse is unwell or disinterested in intimacy. They may think that their one time or occasional sin will not bar them from heaven, but they are wrong!

Paul asks the question:

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; (Hebrews 2:3)

The undeniable reality is that if we disregard the salvation offered through Christ, there will be no way to avoid the consequences. True security is found solely in acknowledging our complete dependence on Christ and the continuous necessity of the Holy Spirit's presence within us to deliver us from sin. Jesus said:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: *for without me ye can do nothing.* (John 15:4-5)

The Greek word translated *nothing* is a double negative. It is a way to add emphasis that without Christ there is absolutely nothing we can do, but in Christ, when we acknowledge that we are weak and helpless of ourselves, we can do all things:

I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me. (Philippians 4:13)

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

Our true strength comes from knowing we are weak and then totally depending upon Christ.

During my college years, I coincided with my older brother's enrollment for two years. He earned the nickname "Russell Muscle" due to his impressive size and strength from weightlifting. On the other hand, I was not very imposing; however, I never felt vulnerable around others when he was present because his strength was well known to everyone. Instead of facing potentially weaker opponents, we are engaged in a battle against the prince of darkness. However, it is essential to remember that Christ's power infinitely surpasses even my brother's, and our Savior has never been defeated in any battle.

Paul endured poor eyesight and prayed on three distinct occasions for God to heal him. In his wisdom, however, God permitted Paul to experience this challenge so that he might grasp the profound lesson of placing complete trust in the Savior.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: *for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: *for when I am weak, then am I strong.* (2 Corinthians 12:8-10)

Let us beware of the converse, for when we *think* we are strong, we are really weak. The admonition to "take heed" in 1 Corinthians 10:12 is an imperative and needs to be repeated frequently.

In our fallen nature, it is so easy for humans to become convinced that they are well able to take care of themselves. Spiritual pride is a great deception, one in which it is easy for the tempter to lead the self-confident believer into grievous sin.

David ruled over the most prosperous nation. Everything he could have wanted was available to him, including that which was forbidden. But one evening, as he walked upon the roof of the king's house, he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. The rest is history.

David believed he could sin with impunity, and we ought to be well acquainted with the tale, understanding that God shows no favoritism. Consequently, David's sin haunted him and his household for the remainder of his life.

The admonition to remain ever vigilant against the peril of spiritual pride holds special relevance for individuals living in this era of the world's history. In a time when people are daily confronted with numerous temptations to indulge in the satisfaction of their worldly desires, this caution is especially pertinent. Jesus warns us:

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (Luke 21:34-36)

In reviewing the fall of Peter, we need to understand it was not instantaneous but gradual.

Self-confidence led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master. Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that we are secure against temptation. (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 155.1)

It was through self-sufficiency that Peter fell; and it was through repentance and humiliation that his feet were again established. In the record of his experience every repenting sinner may find encouragement. Though Peter had grievously sinned, he was not forsaken. The words of Christ were written upon his soul, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:32. In his bitter agony of remorse, this prayer, and the memory of Christ's look of love and pity, gave him hope. Christ after His resurrection remembered Peter, and gave the angel the message for the women, "Go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him." Mark 16:7. Peter's repentance was accepted by the sin-pardoning Saviour. (Ibid., p. 155.4)

And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan's special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may

make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?" Isaiah 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. (Ibid., p. 156.1)

As a people we have a knowledge of the message to come out of Babylon, but Babylon is much more than just a false church or even every false and apostate religion. At its roots, Babylon is this world and to come out of Babylon means to be delivered from the world and the sin of the world, all sin, to the very root of self and self-sufficiency.

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John's favorite theme was the infinite love of Christ. No man stood higher before the believers in his day, and before men of all classes, than did John. He believed in God as a child believes in a kind and tender father. He understood the character and work of Jesus; and when he saw his Jewish brethren groping their way without a ray of the Sun of Righteousness to illuminate their path, he longed to present to them Christ, the Light of the world. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, February 22, 1881, par. 5)

1889 HSDA Constituency Meeting

The Annual Council meeting for the 1889 HSDA USA Church is scheduled for November 12 at 11:00 am EST, and it will be conducted via the following Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6132127443?pwd=VGNhRTViOFpEYUs0QmY0R2JzNWINQT09>

We strongly encourage each church to select and prepare their delegates for this important meeting.

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Youth's Corner—On the Trail of the Colporteur Evangelist—A Story of Miracles and Providences

(On the Trail of the Colporteur Evangelist was compiled by the General Conference Publishing Department of Seventh-day Adventists. We share Chapter 2 this month. Editor)

Following the Divine Guide

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.” Ps. 32:8.

“Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.” Isa. 30: 21.

“As they [the colporteurs] plead with the Lord to help them. He will guide them to those who are seeking for the light. Christ will be close beside them, teaching them what to say and do.”—“The Colporteur Evangelist,” by Mrs. E. G. White, p. 40.

THE VOICE THAT SAID “GO BACK”

The Christian colporteur is a pioneer in the gospel service. His work is usually on the frontier line, where the way is being prepared for the harvest of souls that follows the faithful sowing of the seed. But there is joy and strength in knowing that “canvassers who go forth in the spirit of the Master have the companionship of heavenly beings” (“The Colporteur Evangelist,” p. 32); and the special manifestations of the heavenly companionship that are revealed here and there in the service, help us to realize more vividly the reality of the partnership of heavenly beings with human agents in the work of God in the earth.

Here is an experience in gospel colporteur work in which the divine guidance and companionship in service were manifest in a special way:

A colporteur was canvassing in one of the Oregon valleys, in the United States, using a horse and carriage. At a certain house where he called, a maid met him at the door and ushered him into a well-furnished parlor. The lady of the house quickly appeared, and the colporteur began the story of the book that he was introducing. When he was half-way through the canvass, a well-dressed man, with walking stick, came into the room, and looking over the colporteur’s shoulder, listened as he described the book. “Ah,” the man said, “an Adventist book! an Adventist book!” His tone was depreciatory and hostile, and the colporteur saw at once that the lady lost interest in the work.

The man, who proved to be her minister, interrupted several times with comments.

The worker saw that he had lost the order, but he completed the exhibition of the book, and bade the lady good day. As he was being shown out, the maid said, “I am sure Mrs. M. wants that book.” The girl seemed impressed that her mistress should have it. “You take it yourself,” the colporteur urged, as he saw her interest. “No; I don’t want it,” she replied, “but I am sure Mrs. M. wants that book.”

The colporteur went on his way. Half a mile along he took an order for a German copy, and up a branch road took an English order. Coming back, the German man stopped him and ordered a second copy, an English volume, for his son. Rejoicing that he was putting the truth into homes, but regretting the failure to get an order from the lady where he had first called, he turned into the main road to pass on.

Then there came to him a strong impression, through what seemed an audible voice, “Go back and sell Mrs. M. a book!” He looked about, almost startled, the words were so clear; but he could see no one. “I thought,” he said, “that some boys over the hedge must have heard of my failure to sell the book, and were making sport of it, as boys sometimes will.” He drove on a hundred yards, and then a second time he heard the same voice; and as the brother marveled at it, a third time the words came more commandingly clear, “I say go back and sell Mrs. M. a book.” This time his horse almost stood still. “I felt now it was truly of the Lord,” said the colporteur. I said, “Yes, Lord, I will go.” I was scarcely conscious of turning the horse around, but he whirled about, and we were off to return to the first house.

Arrived at the place, the colporteur found Mrs. M. out in the garden. “I beg pardon, Mrs. M.,” I began without preliminaries, “but I know you want the book, and I have called to see which binding I shall order for you.” “I have always been partial to the leather binding,” she replied, “and you may order that for me.” The book proved a blessing indeed in that home, the lady accepting the truths which she found in it.

THE END OF AN APPARENTLY FRUITLESS DAY

It was a discouraged group of men who toiled all the night fishing and took nothing, as stated in reply to the kindly inquiry of the Master in that early morning hour on the

shores of Gennesaret. But how quickly did the clouds of despair fade away and weariness give place to enthusiastic hope and joyful realization, when they obeyed the divine instruction to “launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught,” and “inclosed a great multitude of fishes.” Often since that historic episode in the experience of the early disciples, have the “fishers of men” toiled all day or all night and met with apparent failure. But the same loving Master looks on with tender interest and sympathy, and directs His children into fruitful fields.

A colporteur had canvassed all day without securing an order. On his way home, he passed a store, and was impressed to step inside. When he entered, he found eighteen persons congregated in the store. His waning courage failed completely, and feeling that he was not prepared to canvass such a company, he turned to leave the store. Just then, however, a young man called out to him, “What are you doing down in this part of the country?” At this, the colporteur went back and opened his prospectus; and as he began to talk, he realized that a Power entirely beyond him was speaking to those people. The message of truth for this day and hour, so clearly set forth in the book, gripped the hearts of those eighteen listeners, who had, by some strange coincidence, assembled in that store just at that particular hour, and fifteen of the number placed their order for a copy of “Our Day in the Light of Prophecy.” As the colporteur went on his way, his heart was filled with joy and thanksgiving, and he recalled anew that He for whom he was working will “not fail nor be discouraged,” and that He has promised, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

LED TO THE DILAPIDATED HOUSE

Workers should not lose sight of the definite assurance that “among the Catholics there are many who are most conscientious Christians, and who walk in all the light that shines upon them, and God will work in their behalf.” “Testimonies,” Vol. IX , p. 243. As an illustration of how God does work is the following experience as related by a colporteur:

“While canvassing for ‘Our Day in the Light of Prophecy,’ I felt impressed to stop at a delapidated-looking house and give a canvass. At first I thought it must be a wrong impression, for the house was not in my regular territory. Not being able to throw off the impression, however, I went up to the door and knocked. The lady of the house came to the door, but she did not invite me to enter, so I began to talk to her through the screen door. I had hardly begun my canvass, when she interrupted by saying, ‘But I am a Catholic, and would not want the book.’

“‘If you are a Catholic,’ I said, ‘you will surely be interested in this book, for it has a great deal to say concerning

the part the Catholic Church has had in fulfilling one of the most important prophecies in the Bible.’ I then began referring to the illustrations, — the Vatican, the pope’s crown, the crucifixion, and the picture of Christ as our great High Priest.

“To my surprise, the woman remarked, ‘I don’t believe that the priests in my church have the power to forgive sins.’ I assured her that she was right, and expressed regret that I did not have time to talk to her more fully regarding this subject, but I called her attention to the chapter in the book which would explain, and stated that this chapter alone would be worth the price of the book. She decided to order the book, and when I delivered it, she and her husband became so greatly interested as to call for Bible readings to be held in their home. Some weeks later they attended lectures on the prophecies, and their interest took solid root. The lady united with the church. The book which she had bought was lent to a neighbor, and this neighbor and her grown daughter and son became deeply interested, and later the mother and daughter united with the church. The husband of the lady who bought the book, and the son of the woman to whom the book was lent, are convinced of the truth and plan to take a definite stand.”

Truly the eye of the Lord is upon the children of men, and it pays to follow as the Holy Spirit leads to the homes of the honest in heart.

Another somewhat similar experience is that of a colporteur who, while waiting for a train to take him to his assigned territory, found that he had two hours at his disposal. While considering how he could best fill in those two hours to advantage, he felt impressed to go out into the country a short distance from the little station, and try to sell some books. It was winter, much snow was on the ground, and he knew he must not venture very far from the station. Coming to a junction in the road a little distance from the depot, he stopped to consider which way would be best to take to reach the nearest houses. After a silent prayer to God for guidance, he felt that he should go in a certain direction, and following the road, soon came to a small house, at which he knocked, in the hope of finding some one who would be interested in the book which he had to offer.

The lady living in this house listened to the canvass and manifested more than usual interest. She said she was much interested in the study of the Bible, but had been greatly perplexed because she could not understand it, especially certain portions of it. “Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation” seemed to be just what she needed, and she felt that she must have the book, but owing to her financial situation, decided that the best she could do would be to order the two-volume, paper-bound edition.

In due time the books arrived and were eagerly read. Here was the explanation of many perplexing questions which had been in her mind. Not only were the books read once, but before the end of many weeks she had read them fourteen times. On reading them the third time, the truth concerning the Sabbath became so clear that she at once began its observance. After she had read the books fourteen times, she passed them on to relatives and friends. No sacrifice seemed too great if only she could bring to others the knowledge of the wonderful things she had learned from God's word. God's Spirit led into broader fields of truth and deepened interest and conviction. In due time this woman, with her husband, mother, two brothers, and two sisters, accepted the third angel's message and united with the remnant people of God.

The remarkable phase of this experience is the fact that the home of this woman was entirely outside the territory assigned to the colporteur. But during the brief period of enforced waiting at the point of railroad transfer, the Spirit of the Lord led him straight to the home of an honest seeker after truth. Naturally, the colporteur might have taken another road at the junction of the cross roads, or he might have remained inside the station, where it was warm and comfortable, until the arrival of his train. But He who knows His children by name, and the street on which they live, makes definite appointments and sends His ambassador to speak forth His message. Truly it pays to keep faithfully every appointment which the Spirit of God arranges for.

LOST IN THE HILLS

"One afternoon, while tramping over the hills and hollows of a certain township, I realized that I had lost my way, and it required considerable exertion and determination to find the way out of the bewildering situation. But I was led to see that this deviation from the scheduled plan was in the divine purpose, for it brought me in touch with a man whom I otherwise would not have found. This man had purchased a copy of 'Daniel and the Revelation' from a colporteur years before, and as a result had been keeping the Sabbath for some time. I was the first Seventh-day Adventist to come in touch with him. He did not know that there were any other people in the world who believed in and observed the seventh day as the Sabbath. Truly it was a great privilege to be led to the humble home of this obedient child of the Master, and the mutual joy and encouragement which attended this experience will never be forgotten."

THE ELUSIVE HORSE

"I am made all things for all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." Such is the example set forth by the apostle Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians,

chapter nine, verses twenty-two and twenty-three. And concerning Christ, it is said:

"In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate with them at their tables,— partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands."—"The Desire of Ages," p. 193.

Similar experiences are shared by the colporteur evangelist of this age, as he submits to the control of the Spirit and is guided to the honest seeker for truth.

Out among the foothills of Wyoming, a colporteur found himself in sight of a little shack, eighteen miles from any other lodging place, and he asked if he might stay overnight there. The request was granted, and while supper was being prepared by the housewife, the colporteur endeavored to interest the husband in the book. The effort was without success, however, as the man had been a saloon keeper, and all he wanted to talk about was the saloon, and his experience in connection therewith. The apparent indifference on the part of the man, and the silence on the part of the wife, caused the colporteur to question why he had been led to that house. He remembered that in starting out for the day's work he had prayed to be directed to those to whom he might be a blessing, and he believed that God would answer that prayer, although he did not see how it could be brought about in this case.

Let us take a peep into this isolated home: It is a two-room shack, and everything about the place is unclean and unkempt. There is a bed in the front room. There are also a number of hunting dogs in this room, several of them having taken possession of the bed. It soon develops that this is the guest chamber, to which, at bedtime, the colporteur is made welcome. The dogs courteously take to the floor,— all but one, who steadfastly maintains his position on the foot of the bed. Shaking the covers on the bed in the hope of getting rid of at least some of the small attachés of the animals, the colporteur lies down to rest. But in his mind there is a strong determination to get up and be off early the next morning.

True to this resolve, he awakened very early, and went out to the barn to hitch up his horse and start on. But the horse would not be harnessed. For a time it seemed impossible to catch him. Never before had the animal seemed so elusive, and the colporteur did not succeed in getting him into the harness until the man of the house returned from milking, and then insisted that the stranger remain for breakfast. Courtesy demanded acquiescence, and as the breakfast was not quite ready, there was again opportunity to talk about the book, "Bible Readings for the Home Circle." This time the order was secured.

This was encouraging; but the real secret of God's leading in this matter was further understood when the delivery was made. As he approached the house, the wife came out to meet him, and said, "I am so glad you have come with that book. I have not always lived as you see things now; I have known better things; and I am longing to know more concerning the things to which you referred in that book. The day you were here, I did not dare show any special interest in the book, or my husband would not have bought it; so I kept still; but I have been anxiously waiting for the book to come."

The colporteur then clearly recognized the guiding hand of God in sending him to that lonely home, in answer to the prayer and in fulfillment of the longing desire of one of His isolated children.

Another incident, in which the colporteur's horse seems to have played a significant part, is related as follows:

The colporteur had been permitted to spend the night at a home where he had given a canvass for the book, but failed to receive an order. The next morning, as he prepared to get an early start on his way, he found that his horse was missing, evidently it had gotten loose and strayed off into the country. Seeing that it was going to be some task to go in search of the animal, the man at whose house the colporteur had stayed said that he could take one of his horses for half an hour. The time was soon up, however, and the stray animal still missing. Then a near-by neighbor offered the colporteur his horse to assist in the search, which he gladly accepted, and again started out, earnestly praying that the Lord would guide him in the right direction, so that his work for the day might not be hindered. He had gone but a short distance when he found his own horse standing by the side of the road, apparently waiting for him. This he regarded as an answer to his prayer, and with gratitude of heart turned to lead the borrowed horse back to his owner.

But he was to realize God's guiding hand in his affairs to a still further degree. His prospectus had been left in care of the man who had so kindly offered his horse to help out, and during his absence the man had examined the prospectus, and by the time the colporteur returned he had decided he wanted one of the books and was ready to place his order. This was a pleasant surprise to the colporteur, and having taken care of the order, he returned to the house where he had passed the night and where his buggy was waiting for the horse.

Here he was told that a telephone call had been received a few minutes before, from a woman he had visited the day before, and the message was that she had changed her mind about the book, and now wanted a copy. This message made a favorable impression on the people with whom he had spent the night, and the man and his wife

decided that they also would order the book. Thus it came to pass that the hour and a half spent in search of the roaming horse, which threatened to curtail the work of the day, resulted in the sale of three books—a fair average for the amount of time,—as well as in the satisfaction of placing the truth in the hands of people who otherwise would have been passed by. This experience led the colporteur to grasp a deeper meaning in the Scripture assurance, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

THE HOUSE THAT HAD BEEN PASSED BY

"Diligent, personal effort" is the standard to be met. The honest in heart are to be "searched out as the shepherd searches for his lost sheep." It is often demonstrated that in the house where "there is no one at home" when the colporteur calls, or the house located in an "out-of-the-way" place, there abides a member of the Lord's flock who is starving for the bread of life and the colporteur should ever be alert to heed the voice of the Spirit saying, "Go back to that house which has been passed by."

"One morning I discovered that I had missed a house, and as I had gone about three miles beyond it, and was in a sandy country I was sorely tempted to let it go. But I could not conscientiously do so, and started back toward the house. It was snowing, and there was no direct road leading to the house; but I finally reached the place. I found a small shack, with one window and a dirt floor. I received a cordial invitation to come in, and there I found an old woman smoking a pipe. There were many chickens, turkeys, and cats in the room. The prospect did not seem inviting, but I sent up a silent 'wireless' to the One who cares for and directs His children, and proceeded to make known my mission.

"The old lady produced a Bible which bore the date of publication as 1859. She became much interested in 'Bible Readings for the Home Circle,' and gave me an order for a copy in the best binding. After I left the house and was well on my way, her son, riding on horseback, overtook me and said that his mother had decided she wanted two copies of the book, instead of one. This experience made a deep impression on me, and strengthened my resolve never to pass by any home, no matter how small or isolated it might be, for possibly the inmates would thus be afforded their opportunity to come to a knowledge of the truth of God."

Another colporteur had this experience:

"At one house I called twice, but found no one there either time. Going on my way, I spent the night at a home about a mile away, but on leaving the home in the morning, the Lord seemed to lead my mind back to that house. I was undecided as to just what to do. As I walked along the way, about a hundred yards from where the road turned off to the right, leading to the house, I asked the Lord to indicate

to me before I reached the turn in the road, in some definite manner, just what course I should pursue. The experience of Philip and the eunuch, of Bible times, came forcibly to my mind, and I was wishing that we were as definitely directed in our daily affairs as was Philip, when suddenly I realized that I had passed the turn in the road and was already quite a distance on the way leading to the house. As I had prayed for guidance, I felt that I had been led, unconsciously to take the right road, and so walked on to the house.

“I rapped on the door, but there was no answer, the same as when I had twice called the previous day. The thought occurred to me that surely I was mistaken in regard to the leading of the Lord this time, and was just on the point of turning away, when my attention was attracted to the peculiar actions of the dog in the yard. He would run from the house a short distance, whine and bark, and then come up to me. Very soon a man appeared in sight, who came toward the house to see what occasioned the queer conduct of the dog. Thus I was afforded the opportunity to give the canvass for the book, and the man readily gave his order. As I retraced my steps, I felt sure that God had led in this transaction as truly as He guided in bringing the Ethiopian eunuch in contact with the messenger of divine truth.”

Still another experience in divine leadership:

“No one at home!” echoed back from the rap at the door. But the faithful colporteur believes in trying again, or in “back calls,” as he terms them, and so he went on, with the purpose to return to that particular house in the evening. Duties crowded into the evening hours, and the colporteur did not get started. The impression that he ought to go back to that particular house grew stronger and stronger, however. Nine o’clock came, and concluding it was too late to make the call that night, the colporteur prepared to retire. He went to bed, but he could not sleep; so he suddenly got up and dressed, saying, “I can stand this no longer! I am going to call at that house this very night, and have that task off my mind.”

On knocking at the door, he was readily admitted, for the family were gathered around the lamp, studying the Bible. He soon learned that these people had just been praying that God would send some one to help them understand His word; and one phrase in their petition was that if there was any book printed which would help them, they would be shown how to get it. They had hardly risen from their knees, when the colporteur knocked at the door, and came in to explain his mission, and how he happened to be calling so late at night. This was considered a direct answer to prayer, and late as it was, they had a Bible study, and the book was eagerly purchased. The colporteur returned to his room with a new sense of gratitude to God for guidance.

MAKING CLOSE CONNECTIONS

Dr. A. J. Gordon, in his book “The Twofold Life,” makes a significant statement as follows:

“God never makes half a providence any more than man makes half a pair of shears. If He fits a preacher to declare His word, He fits a hearer to receive that word; if He moves one soul to cry, ‘What must I do?’ He has always moved some other servant of His to direct him what to do.”

Illustrative of the truth of this statement is the unusual experience of a colporteur, which is related thus:

“I was working with the book, ‘Our Day in the Light of Prophecy,’ but in starting out for my day’s work one morning I was impressed to take with me a copy of ‘Bible Footlights’ which I had in my possession. Three times I hesitated about taking this book, saying to myself, Why should I take this? I have not shown this book to anybody, have no order for it, and am not canvassing for it. But the impression was so distinct that I put the book in my satchel.

“On the way to my territory, I had to change cars, and as I stepped off the car, a little girl, about nine years old, came up to me and handed me an envelope, which contained a note, reading as follows:

“This is for “Bible Footlights.” If it is not right, I will pay the rest when you call.”

“The note was properly signed, and was accompanied by a \$2 bill — the correct price of the book.

“I had never seen the child before, and could not understand who she was or where she came from. But as I had to catch my car immediately, I opened my grip, took out ‘Bible Footlights,’ handed it to her, and then hurried on my way.

“But this remarkable transaction could not be forgotten, and as soon as opportunity offered, I returned to that junction point and endeavored to find the person who wrote the note. The effort proved successful, and I found a conscientious woman who had been praying for light on the Scriptures. The woman had felt impressed to send the note and the \$2 by the little girl, as she had done, believing that the child would find the man who had the book entitled ‘Bible Footlights.’ She had seen a copy of this book somewhere, and felt that it would teach her the truth concerning the Scriptures. The child did not know just who she was to meet, but in some unseen way was led to the right person. In whom to deliver the note and receive the book. Surely the Lord does make connections between His servants and those who are searching for truth in this our day as in olden times.”

(To be continued)



Bible Word Search

From Romans 4:1-16

S T H E N I B L V B N D N
S F U T Y R O L G S B J A
E D C U I L B F E B L L D
N E C P A A N E L S E E J
S T D M B E F O L E S U M
U N C I R C U M C I S E D
O U G R A C E P C T E H D
E O G R H F R M I H D V L
T C O O A O U F T H N D E
H N K T M C I E B P E E W
G S H I R E K E K M S I O
I E S I D R I E A L S O R
R E C K O N E D N U O F K
P D K W G N E P E E I F S

ABRAHAM

BELIEVE

CIRCUMCISED

FATHER

GLORY

IMPUTE

ONLY

RIGHTEOUSNESS

UNCIRCUMCISED

ALSO

BLESSED

COUNTED

FLESH

GRACE

JUSTIFIED

PROMISE

SEED

WORKETH

BEING

BLESSEDNESS

FAITH

FOUND

HEIR

MADE

RECKONED

THEN

WORKS

Following Christ

By Ellen G. White

Reprinted from *The Review and Herald*, February 29, 1912

For each one of us there is a live, disordered self to master, or it will master us. Christians who live for self dishonor their Redeemer. They may apparently be very active in the service of the Lord, but they weave self into all that they do. Sowing the seed of selfishness, they must at last reap a harvest of corruption. It can not but be thus. Eternal life can not possibly be the result of their life-work, unless they see their mistake, and surrender all to God.

Service for self takes a variety of forms. Some of these forms seem harmless. Apparent goodness is regarded as genuine goodness. But they bring no glory to God. Christ says, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

The Lord does not accept the service of those who live an inefficient, do-nothing-life. They exert an influence that leads away from Christ. Self-denial and nobility of purpose marked his life. From the beginning to the close of his earthly ministry he went about doing good. In his life no sin appeared. No selfishness marred word or act. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" he asked the Pharisees, knowing that they could find nothing of which to accuse him. And at his trial, Pilate declared emphatically, "I find in him no fault at all."

Christ declares that as he lived, so we are to live. "Whosoever will come after me," he says, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." His footsteps lead along the pathway of sacrifice.

As we pass through life, there come to us many opportunities for service. All around us there are open doors for ministry. By the right use of the talent of speech, we may do much for the Master. Words are a power for good when they are weighted with the tenderness and sympathy of Christ. Money, influence, tact, time, and strength,—all these are gifts entrusted to us to make us more helpful to those around us, and more of an honor to our Creator.

Many feel that it would be a privilege to visit the scenes of Christ's life on earth, to walk where he trod, to look upon the lake where he loved to teach, and the valleys and hills where his eyes so often rested; but we need not go to Palestine in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find his footprints beside the sick-bed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation.

All may find something to do. "The poor always ye have with you," Jesus said, and none need feel that there is no place where they can labor for him. Millions upon millions of souls ready to perish, bound in chains of ignorance and sin, have never so much as heard of Christ's love for them. Were our conditions and theirs reversed, what would we desire them to do for us? All this, as far as lies in our power, we are under the most solemn obligation to do for them. Christ's rule of life, by which every one must stand or fall in the judgment, is, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" In the great judgment-day, those who have not worked for Christ, who have drifted along thinking of themselves, caring for themselves, will be placed by the Judge of the whole earth with those who did evil. They will receive the same condemnation.

To every soul a trust is given. Of every one the Chief Shepherd will demand, "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" And "what wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?"

Family Camp Report

From October 5th to 8th, a family camp took place at Fall Creek Falls State Park in Tennessee. The Cane Creek Campground, which had previously hosted the summer camp, was once again the chosen location for this fall retreat, and it met everyone's expectations and satisfaction.

The camp was a joint effort between the Maranatha Church in Graysville, Tennessee, and the 1889 HSDA Church. Brother and Sister Todd and Rhonda Brown served as the primary event organizers, and with the valuable assistance of Sister Raquel Akens and other contributors, they crafted an outstanding schedule.

The theme of the meetings was Philippians 4:8:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

This verse encompasses six, and according to some, eight character traits. These attributes were the central theme of the camp. The camp officially commenced with a campfire, during which Pastor Allen Stump delivered his first evening talk. Morning devotionals were led by different families each day.

Following Friday morning's breakfast, the camp attendees were organized into separate groups, with each group assigned one of the character traits from Philippians. Their task was to prepare a 10–12 minute presentation on that particular trait to be delivered on Sabbath morning. This resulted in a delightful surprise on Sabbath morning, as some of the groups displayed remarkable creativity. All groups aimed to incorporate relevant biblical verses to enhance their individual segments. These presentations were designed to engage participants of all ages, including the youngest members.

On Friday afternoon, the campers embarked on a trail leading to Cane Creek, where the park provided canoes along with PFDs (life vests) and paddles. After forming small groups and offering prayers, we set out in the canoes on the narrow stream, paddling upstream as far as we could before the creek became too shallow to continue. For some, it was their first experience in a canoe, and everyone appeared to thoroughly enjoy the leisurely journey, taking in the picturesque foliage lining the creek banks.

Upon our return, everyone prepared for Sabbath, and the majority of campers partook of the popcorn and fruit

that had been provided. After this, we gathered for our campfire worship, once more focusing on Philippians 4:8.

Sabbath morning saw a strong turnout, with many visitors joining us for the day. During this time, we held two sessions where various groups presented inspiring insights on their assigned character traits. An intriguing highlight was when one of the adults cleverly used a curling iron to imitate a microphone while "interviewing" one of the youth who was sharing their thoughts on the character trait.

In the afternoon there was a baptism, and then we took a hike to see the main falls for which the park is named. There are four main waterfalls at the park: Fall Creek Falls/Raccoon, Piney Falls, Cane Creek/Rock House Creek, and Cane Creek Cascades.

The primary waterfall stands at a towering height of 256 feet, making it one of the tallest full-drop waterfalls in the eastern United States. Although most people appreciated the hike or drive to the overlook, only a couple of adventurous individuals dared to embark on the hike down to witness the falls up close.

As the evening's weather grew colder, the decision was made to hold the meeting in the main building, where a fireplace provided a warm and cozy atmosphere. Pastor Stump delivered a message on the topic of following in the footsteps of Jesus.

The approaching cold weather prompted some to opt out of the final night and early morning meetings. However, a few courageous individuals chose to remain, enduring a chilly night, and gathered around the fireplace in the meeting building for the last worship session before enjoying their final meal together. Afterward, they joined forces to tidy up and then departed.

The camp brought a genuine sense of blessing to all its participants. A family camp at the same location is already in the works for May 28 to June 2 next year.

Following the cleanup, some of us ventured to explore another campground within the park known as Pine Creek Campground. It features cabins similar to those at Cane Creek Campground but boasts a significantly more spacious kitchen and dining area. Additionally, it has a large meeting facility. Given the tight quarters we experienced in the Cane Creek kitchen and dining area during our camp meeting in May, Pine Creek Campground seemed like a more suitable option. We inquired with the park authorities and discovered that it was already fully booked for most of the upcoming year. However, we managed to secure the dates from August 6 to 10, with the flexibility to cancel if the committee deems it unwise to use that particular campground or timeframe. 卐



Sabbath morning



Fall Creek Falls



Canoe trip — Raquel showing how not to do it



Brother Joel Rivera being baptized



Some of the youth on a hike to the falls



Sunday morning huddled near the fire

California Meeting Report

With the aim of providing support to believers in the western part of the country, meetings were conducted at Marina, California, from October 11 to 14, hosted at the Hampton Inn & Suites.

The theme of the meetings was John 17:17:

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
(John 17:17)

The lineup of speakers included Martin Barlow, Rob Chisum, Daniel Mesa, Bobby Shelton, and Allen Stump. Pastor Mesa initiated the meetings on Wednesday evening, and the subsequent speakers each delivered their addresses once a day for the following three days.

The Wednesday evening and Thursday sessions were highly engaging, although the attendance started off slowly. However, attendance significantly increased during the last two days. People from as far as Loma Linda joined the gatherings, bringing their blessings to the collective experience.



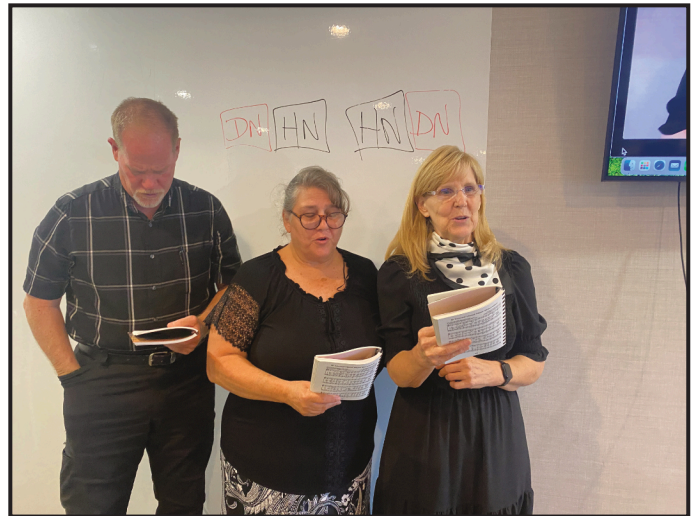
Pastor Martin Barlow sharing on sanctification

One brother from the Loma Linda area expressed a desire for us to return, even if we were to deliver the same sermons, emphasizing how much of a blessing they had been. He believed that a second hearing would provide even greater insights and blessings.

With the motel's close proximity to the beach, it was convenient to take a short stroll and enjoy the view of the beautiful coastline. On Friday afternoon, we ventured a few miles down to Monterey Bay, where we had a delightful picnic. Later, we proceeded to Lover's Point for a heartwarming baptism ceremony.

Despite the logistical challenges of conducting these meetings in a motel, the local sisters graciously organized a meal for attendees each day after the afternoon break. A heartfelt expression of gratitude goes out to Sisters Naomi Hilton and Nancy Castáneda for their invaluable assistance in helping to set up the meetings and provide food!

Sabbath was an exceptionally meaningful day. In the morning, Pastor Stump delivered a sermon on the doctrine of sin. This was followed by one of the standout moments of the meetings: Pastor Martin Barlow's enlightening dis-



Martin and Kay Barlow and Sheri Yohe singing

course on sanctification, accompanied by his explanation of imputed righteousness and imparted righteousness. In the afternoon, numerous testimonies were shared, and during the last two evening meetings, Brother Rob Chisum provided insights into his personal journey of understand-



The beach at Marina just one half mile from the motel



Group at Baptism

ing the truth about God, supported by numerous relevant scriptural verses. The meetings came to a close with Brother Bobby Shelton delivering a message on the Twenty-third Psalm.

What a blessing it was to have fellowship with such dear believers. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133:1)!

We anticipate organizing additional gatherings in the California area in the near future, so please stay tuned for updates. 卍



Rocky shoreline at Monterey Bay



Picnic at Monterey Bay

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Editor Allen Stump—editor@smyrna.org
 Associate Editor Onycha Holt—onycha@smyrna.org