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FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

Until heaven and earth disappear

Colleen Moore Tinker

Recently I met with a young woman who was trying to understand what the Bible said about the Sabbath. I had an overwhelming sense of empathy; I remembered having the same doubts, questions, and dawning hope she articulated to me as we turned to Scripture and examined texts.

Her leading question that day was one of the most common questions Adventists pose to us

“Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law,”

who have found Jesus to be the fulfillment of all ten commandments: “What about Romans 3:31?”

As we read the words together, “Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law,” I remembered struggling with a related text: Matthew 5:18, about seven years before.

I had begun to understand that the New Covenant had fulfilled and replaced the Sinai covenant. I was coming to terms with the fact that Jesus replaced the law as my authority and standard. But I still couldn’t see how to integrate this new reality with these words: “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” I could understand that everything related to salvation had been

accomplished at the cross, but what about the law lasting until heaven and earth disappeared?

Luke also quoted Jesus addressing this issue of the permanence of the law: “It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.” (Luke 16:17)

As I read Romans 3:31 with my new friend that day, I realized how much God has revealed the consistency of his word since I first began seeking answers to my Adventist questions. Today I praise him for the constancy of Scripture those three once troublesome texts proclaim.

Nailed To the Cross

Early in my search Colossians 2:14 was a great help to me. It clearly said that God forgave all my sins and took away “the written code” that was against me. In fact, it says that He nailed that code to the cross. Further, Colossians 2:16-17 said the written code, defined by food laws and regulations for holy days including Sabbath, was merely “a shadow of the things that were to come.” Jesus, Paul says, is the reality that the written code foreshadowed. These texts, however, did not explain how the law could be both nailed to the cross and simultaneously more permanent than heaven and earth.

Another insight for me was Dale Ratzlaff’s interpretation of the transfiguration in his book

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

CONTENTS

3

Entering God’s rest: Another look at Hebrews 4:9–11

7

Death: Oblivion or graduation

13

Vegetarianism: Is it Christian?

Back page

The memoirs of Elder Henry Brown

Life Assurance Ministries (LAM), Inc

MISSION: To proclaim the good news of the new covenant gospel of grace in Christ and to combat the errors of legalism and false religion.

MOTTO: Truth needs no other foundation than honest investigation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a willingness to follow truth when it is revealed.

MESSAGE: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, that no one should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

Tax Deductible Donations to LAM, Inc. from Canada?—Yes!

Canadian readers of *Proclamation!* will be happy to learn that we now have in place a way you can receive Canadian tax deductions for donations to the ministry of LAM, Inc. Please call or email for details before you send donations.

Why harp on the Sabbath and the State of the Dead?

Many of the readers of *Proclamation!* have reached conclusions regarding the Sabbath and man's condition in death. However, I still receive many calls from people with questions on these topics. For formers the Sabbath and the state of the dead loom very large in importance and they want to read good, biblical studies on these subjects. We trust the articles in this issue will be helpful.

Uganda Mission

Two of the pastors we support, as you may recall, were expelled from the SDA Bugema University because of their association with LAM. One pastor only had about another semester to complete his degree. To make things worse, the credits from Bugema University are not accepted in other Christian schools in Uganda, so they were put in a difficult position relative to their education. Recently, as we understand it, Professor Mugerwa, who is said to be one of the best biblical scholars the SDA church has in Uganda, tendered his resignation. We understand that he was sympathetic to those who were expelled and had some theological questions about SDA doctrines as well. It is our understanding that administrators from the General Conference came to Bugema and persuaded Professor Mugerwa to return. He did this on the condition that the school would allow the expelled students to return to complete their studies. This was accepted. We are thankful for this development and we commend the General Conference for their willingness to let these men finish their degrees. Valentine Okello lost his tuition support and is in need of financial backing. We are happy to report that one of our readers sent \$600 to help one of the other students clear a back debt so he could return to school. Please pray that funds will come in for Valentine to complete his degree. We know that many books have been given to students at Bugema and many are asking and finding answers to their questions. Let us pray that truth will triumph.

Still need a Car

Nsubuga Daniel and others are continuing the ministry while Israel and Valentine finish their schooling. Daniel and associates continue to be hampered by not having transportation. You have given about \$2,500 toward the \$5,000 needed. Pray that the rest of

these funds will come in so we can put them on a good set of wheels.

E-Book News

We are happy to announce that Fred Mazzaferri's e-book, *As In A Mirror*, is now available on the web. Dr. Mazzaferri's book is an answer to the huge, seven volume, DARCOM series that is supposed to provide biblical support for the SDA 1844 investigative judgment doctrine. Many, including the late Dr. Raymond Cottrell, felt this series was designed to obscure the truth (error) of this doctrine and did not present honest scholarship. Those who still believe the investigative judgment is a biblical doctrine will want to purchase *As In A Mirror*.

Many of our readers will also be interested in reading *A Biblical Study of the Lord's Day* by Rodney Nelson, also available on the web as an e-book.

We are receiving many positive comments on Dr. Verle Streifling's e-book, *Bible Answers to Sabbath Questions*.

Find all of these at

<http://www.ratzlaf.com/Qstore/Qstore.cgi> under "E-books"

Thank you! Pray for us! Keep the articles coming!

We thank those of you who are so faithfully, often sacrificially, supporting LAM. We pray that God will supply your needs and that many readers will come to a more vibrant faith in the simple gospel—the good news that "It is done!"—in Christ! This ministry continues to be a ministry of faith. Thanks for your prayers.

We continue to receive dozens of letters, some of which are printed in *Proclamation!* Keep the letters coming. Please let us know if it is O.K. to use your name.

Thanks to those who so generously help with LAM. As you know, we do not pay those who write for *Proclamation!* Nor do we pay Richard Tinker for his excellent work of formatting each issue. Verle Streifling has graciously helped me answer many of the many emails we receive. Thanks, Richard, Verle and all those who write!

If you are a pastor, scholar or Bible student who has written an article that would be helpful to our readers, please send it to us. We may be able to use it.

Feel free to send us the names and addresses of your friends who would like to read *Proclamation!*

I have been asked by the Worldwide Church of God to speak on the topic of the Sabbath at their conference in New York on September 27. The theme of the conference is, "Living and Sharing the Son." I will also participate in a Q & A session Saturday afternoon. Pray that God will help me make the truth of Scripture clear and present Jesus as the True Rest for the soul. My message will be entitled, "The Sabbath: from Ritual to Reality!"

Proclamation!

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Entering God's Rest

Another Look at Hebrews 4:9-11

Rodney Nelson

Context and Focus

The epistle to the Hebrews is supremely eschatological (Barton 6). However, Hebrews is focused on eschatology at three levels (past, present, future), that is if one defines eschatology as the total work of Christ. "No NT writing preserves a better balance than Hebrews between the past, present, and future aspects of God's work in Christ" (Ellingworth 77). The context of this study will be the realized aspect of eschatology in the present work of Christ in the book of Hebrews. Of course, this must of necessity tie in with the past and the future (since it is a dynamic whole), but the crucifixion-resurrection event singularly carries eschatological significance.

With the context set, the focus of this study will be upon the realized (present) eschatological benefit of "rest" as described in Hebrews 4:9-11. Examination of other interpretations will be evaluated. Exegetical examination of the context and meaning of 4:9-11 will occur, with the objective to demonstrate that the "Sabbath-rest" (v. 9) applies to a present reality, not just a future hope.

Focus of Debate

The center of debate prompting this study is not merely an academic one over whether Hebrews 4:9-11 deals with a present or future reality. Though this is an interesting issue in itself, the real point of debate is how this issue relates to the continuing debate over the seventh-day Sabbath (Jewish Sabbath). In the course of this examination reference will be made to this overarching topic. Since the context of Hebrews 4 is regarding the "seventh day," "rest," and "Sabbath-rest," the objective will be to address the interpretation of this topic in view of the debate over the Jewish Sabbath for contemporary Christians.

The Timing Issue

That the book of Hebrews discusses the present aspect of eschatology is beyond dispute (Heb. 1:1-2; 9:26,28a). The final eschaton had arrived in Jesus Christ (ho eschatos/ho telos, Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13), and was typified as a last day event of revelation (Heb. 1:1-2) and judgment (Heb. 9:26,28; cf. Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 1:7-10; Col. 2:13-15). The exaltation of the Lord in 1:2b-13 is set in the context of the Lord's revelation in the "last days" (v. 1). That the crucifixion-resurrection of Jesus is seen as inaugurating the last days is testified to in other New Testament passages (Acts 2:16-17; Rom. 13:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:29; 10:11; Heb. 10:25; James 5:8-9; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 John 2:18; Rev. 1:1,3;

22:10,12,20). Thus, the issue really is not whether Hebrews discusses present or realized eschatology. It regards whether Heb. 4:9-11 should be understood as a present eschatological reality.

The Context

Before determining whether it is a present reality or future hope, quotation of the relevant verses would be advised.

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. (4:9-11; New International Version)

Hebrews 4:1-11 is actually the second half of a larger discourse begun in 3:1, and is fueled by 3:7-11 which quotes from Ps. 95:7-11. Hebrews 3:1-6 discusses Jesus as one greater than Moses (v. 3). God built the spiritual house (v. 4) in which Moses was a faithful servant (v. 5). However, Jesus is faithful "as son over God's house" (v. 6). The contrast is noteworthy because whereas Moses was a faithful servant in God's house, Jesus was a faithful son over God's house. By implication that house is God's people (i.e., those who believe in Jesus). The church as an "eschatological community" enjoys free access to God Himself through the sonship of Jesus (Lane 79).

Pertinent to the later discussion of 4:9-11 are the themes of faith and contrast. Faith pertains to fixing our attention on Jesus and his faithfulness (vs. 1-2). The result of his faithfulness was not merely status among God's people, but supremacy and Lordship over them, whereas Moses' faithfulness to God resulted in prominence among God's people (vs. 5-6). Especially for our purposes, the contrast is drawn between Moses as a testifier to "what would be said in the future" (v. 6), whereas Jesus was the fulfillment of those future predictions, which is stated by implication. The tension throughout vs. 1-6 is the superiority of Jesus over Moses, and most significantly, the superiority of what Jesus represents over that of Moses (v. 3).

The linkage of faith and contrast occurs between Moses and Jesus. Moses is said to have been faithful, but as a servant in God's house (v. 5), which could only be a forerunner of the faith of Christ as son over God's house (v. 6). "The writer initiates the comparison between Jesus and Moses out of necessity, as a point of argument intended to affirm the ultimacy of Jesus" (Lane 80). This theme carries over into the later discussion of rest. Significant in this context is the fact that Moses could only point to the future, which by implica-

tion means that final fulfillment did not occur during his time. Hebrews 1:1-2 supports this theme because the prophets only prophesied to the final glory revealed in Jesus, God's final word - final because He is from God Himself (v. 3).

The author quotes Ps. 95:7-11 (vs. 7-11) to demonstrate three points: (1) Israel had a sinful, unbelieving heart rather than a faithful, believing heart (vs. 10, 19); (2) The urgency to change from a state of unbelief to belief (vs. 7-8, 15); and (3) The inability of Israel to enter the rest which God had prepared for them in Canaan due to unbelief (vs. 11).

The author then applies these lessons to the situation of his readers (vs. 12-19). First, he admonishes them to avoid an unbelieving heart that "turns away from the living God" (v. 12). Second, he urges them to guarantee that they will not acquire an unbelieving heart by encouraging one another to "hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first" (vs. 13-15; cf. 10:25). Third, he introduces the rest application by negatively affirming that the Israelites did not enter God's rest in Canaan due to unbelief (v. 18-19). Afterward, the author pursues the theme of rest as the centerpiece and culmination of his presentation (4:1-11). Furthermore, the concepts of unbelief, urgency, and entrance into rest come together in 4:1-11.

Interpretation of 4:14

Verse 1 confidently declares that the "promise of entering his rest still stands." It remains because Israel failed to enter or acquire it (3:19). Now that the opportunity to enter God's rest remains, the author exhorts his readers to make sure they have not fallen short of it. Then he makes a most extraordinary transition in v. 2: "For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did. The author links the gospel of the New Testament with the experience of the Israelites in the Old Testament.

One may agree that 'the content' of this good news 'was probably the gospel as far as it could be apprehended before the incarnation,' and that 'the message was the message of Christ' (A.T. Hanson, 1965:94, 168; quoted in Ellingworth 241; cf. 1 Cor, 10:1-4).

From a Christian perspective, faith encompasses the finished work of Christ in its anticipation and completion. From the Old Testament perspective on things, "Faith brings into the present the reality of that which is future, unseen, or heavenly" (Lane 99). Faith in the New Testament brings into present reality the finished work of Christ on the cross. Therefore, the assertion by the author of Hebrews that Israelites of his ancestry had heard the gospel preached to them as much as present day Israelites was a reality. The difference was simply that the ancient Israelites had rejected the gospel in their era due to lack of appropriating faith, hence it was of no value to them. The gospel preached to present day Israelites was believed, but the author feared that his Hebrew readers might turn away from God as their ancestors had done (3:12-14; 4:11; 6:4-6, 11-12; 10:23-25, 26-28).

Again, we see the twin themes of contrast and faith as noted earlier. Having believed (faith), the Hebrew believers in Jesus now "enter that rest" (v. 3). What their ancestors had failed to do under Joshua now has been done in Christ—entering God's rest. "The failure of the

Exodus generation to enter the promised rest does not abrogate the reality and presence of that rest" (Lane 99).

At this point the issue of whether entering God's rest is a present reality or future hope comes to the fore. Commentators are divided on whether v. 3 is future or present tense. However, the argument that will be presented in this study understands the theme of entering God's rest in Heb. 4 as referring primarily to a present reality without eliminating a future hope. However, the author wishes to communicate that entering God's rest for Hebrew Christians in the first century is present blessing and reality.

The present tense of the verb is to be regarded as a true present and not simply viewed as future in reference. God's promise is predicated upon reality, and believers are already to enjoy the rest referred to in the quotation of Ps. 95:11. (Lane 99; contra Ellingworth 246)

Kistemaker asserts the present reality when he states,

He (the author) does not use the future tense ('we will enter'). He says, 'We who have believed enter,' and thus affirms that God's promise has become reality according to his divine plan and purpose. At the moment - in principle but not yet in full realization - we are entering that rest (107).

Finally, Samuele Bacchiocchi correctly observes,

Without denying the presence of the pilgrimage motif in Hebrews, it must be pointed out that (rest)... is presented primarily not as a future but a present experience into which those 'who have believed are entering' (Divine Rest... 166).

A further contextual consideration supports a present reality in v. 3. Immediately after it is declared that believers enter God's rest, the author re-quotes Ps. 95:11, "They shall never enter my rest." Why does the author quote a passage that directly contradicts his previous statement that believers do enter rest? The answer is because he inserts another thought into the argument:

"And yet his (God's) work has been *finished* since the creation of the world." The additional thought reflects back to the creation rest of God (v. 4 quotes Gen. 2:2). The addition of the creation rest, along with the quotation from Ps, 95:11, illustrates that *no one since the creation of the world had yet entered into God's rest*. Verse 5 again quotes Ps. 95:11 relative to Gen. 2:2 (v. 4). The author is stating that God's rest at creation had not yet been entered into due to unbelief, just as the rest of Canaan had not been entered into due to unbelief. This is demonstrated by the statement that "It *still remains* that some will enter that rest..." (v. 6a). Why? Because "those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their unbelief" (v. 6b).

The implied sequence of thought is: God made a promise that his people would one day have access to his own place of rest. The place of rest has been available since the seventh day of creation. The promise cannot be repealed; but it was not fulfilled at the time of the exodus (as v. 8 will confirm); it therefore remains open for some. (Ellingworth 250)

Likewise, Lane comments: "The announcement (in Ps. 95: 7b-8a) implied that until the time of the psalmist no one had entered God's complete rest" (101).

Further proof is given in v. 8 where the time of entrance into

**THE ASSERTION BY THE AUTHOR OF
HEBREWS THAT ISRAELITES OF HIS
ANCESTRY HAD HEARD THE GOSPEL
PREACHED TO THEM AS MUCH AS
PRESENT DAY ISRAELITES WAS A REALITY.**

God's rest occurs: Today. This declaration is an eschatological call to fulfillment of God's intention for his creation rest.

The admonition in Ps. 95:7b-8a is both an urgent call to the people of God and an announcement of the eschatological time of salvation. That time has come. It is the final period of redemptive history, which has begun with the speaking of God through his Son (1:1 -2a). It is the present time of salvation for the Christian community, for whom the issue of entrance into God's rest remains alive. (Lane 101)

A.T. Lincoln concludes,

The time for entry into rest is 'today,' not after death or at the parousia. On this new day the rest has become a reality for those who believe but remains a promise that some may fail to achieve through disobedience, so that all are exhorted to strive to enter it. (212)

The Israelites had failed to enter both the creation rest of God and the rest of Canaan resulting from their deliverance from Egypt. Psalm 95:11 stands out because it focuses on God's rest ("they shall never enter *my* rest"), not Israel's rest (Enns 279). The author of Hebrews focuses on the failure of Israel to enter God's rest rather than God's promised rest for them in Canaan. The reason is quite basic: *The true meaning of God's rest was not realized in the history of Israel.* It was still to be realized in the history of God's people through faith in Jesus Christ.

In v. 8, the author states that had the essence of God's rest been fulfilled by Joshua, then the declaration in Ps. 95:7,8 would not have been necessary. Furthermore, if Israel had found rest with Joshua, then a present rest for Jewish Christians (Gentiles as well) would not have been possible or necessary.

Interpretation of 4:9-11

Since no one had ever entered God's rest in the history of Israel, the opportunity to enter it remains. Just as some will enter that rest (v. 6), those who enter are identified as the "people of God." However, the rest which God's people were to enter is not just a "rest" (katakata-pausin, 3:11,18; 4:1,3,5,10,11), but a "Sabbath-rest" (sabbatismos, lit., "an observance of the Sabbath"). Up to this point the rest spoken of was merely referred to as entering God's rest associated with cre-

ation and Canaan. However, a new emphasis has been given.

At this point is where another aspect to the author's discussion arises. By use of the Sabbath-rest terminology, the author may in fact be drawing attention to the typology of God's rest at creation and rest in the Exodus. The type/antitype analogy would focus on rest in the land of Canaan as "an antitype of a more original type, the state of rest which God himself entered at the completion of the week of creation" (Attridge 284). This typological distinction between creation and Exodus is believed to be expressed in the usage of *sabbatismos* in v. 9.

The contrast between the type and antitype pervades Hebrews. There is no reason to conclude it does not apply to 4:9-11 as well. The significance of *sabbatismos* is to point out that whoever "has entered the consummation-rest will experience the completion of his work, as did God after the creation (vv 3c-4), and will enjoy the rest that is necessary for the festivity and praise of a Sabbath celebration" (Lane 102).

A key factor which should not be overlooked is that the focus in Hebrews 4 is upon the creation rest of Genesis (2:2-3), not the Israelite rest of Exodus (20:8-11). Though the first is recognized, the connection of it with the Exodus rest is not mentioned. The absence of a reference to the Exodus Sabbath of the Decalogue in 3:7-4:8 speaks volumes to the unique usage of *sabbatismos* in 4:9. The absence is quite basic, the focus was not Israel's observance of the literal Sabbath day commanded in Ex. 20, but upon God's rest on the seventh day in Gen. 2.

The distinction here is important. First, the Sabbath commandment in Ex. 20 is itself based upon God's rest on the seventh day in Genesis. Second, the transition from God's rest on the seventh day to Israel's rest on the Sabbath day (Note that "Sabbath" is inserted for "seventh" day in Ex. 20:11b; cf. Gen. 2:3b), demonstrates that all realities of rest are based upon God's rest at creation. Third, Israel's Sabbath rest was limited to Israel alone as a sign between her and God (Ex. 31:12,16-17; Ezek. 20:12,20). Fourth, the Sabbath rest of Israel was merely a "shadow" (copy) of the reality which is Christ (Col. 2:17). Finally, since Christ is the essence of Sabbath-rest (cf. Mart. 11:28-30), entrance into God's creation rest is only through the gospel of Christ (Heb. 4:2-3).

These considerations point to a special "twist" on the usage of *sabbatismos* in 4:9. It is meant as a contrast between God's rest in Gen. 2:2-3 and Israel's observance of the Sabbath rest commanded in Ex. 20:8-11, which itself was based on God's rest in Genesis. The contrast is demonstrated clearly in 4:10 when the author declares, "For anyone who enters God's rest (Gen. 2:2-3), also rests from his own work (Ex. 20:8-11)." The usage of *sabbatismos* ("an observance of the Sabbath") transitions to the natural conclusion the author is wishing to make: since Israel has never entered God's rest since the time of the Exodus, and could only do so through belief, then Jewish observance of the Sabbath day also does not mean participation in God's creation rest. The Sabbath commandment was itself a copy, shadow, and imitation of God's creation rest. "The analogy is made in terms of man's imitation of God's resting from work" (Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday* 67; see his *Divine Rest* 169). Participation in God's rest could only be attained through faith, not the law.

FOR THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS, SHARING THE SABBATH-REST WITH GOD IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH FAITH, NOT OBSERVANCE OF THE COMMANDMENT.

"Therefore the New Covenant people of God discharge their duty of Sabbath observance, according to the writer, by exercising faith" (Lincoln 213).

While some argue that the phrase "also rests from his own work" does not have a "physical reference" (Lincoln 213), the context certainly pictures a parallel between God's rest at creation and man's rest on the Sabbath, because "the comparison is made between the divine and the human cessation from 'works'- erga" (Bacchiocchi 169). The author qualifies his statement regarding "rests from his own work" by comparing it to God's rest at creation (which is literal in the context of Genesis) - "just as God did from his."

It is often put forth that the human resting from work(s) in v. 10 is to be understood as resting from "sinful works" or "attempts to merit salvation" (legalism). Thus, the author is seeking to squelch any soteriological misunderstanding of true rest in the Lord. However, the author's intent is eminently more practical. He is providing a fuller understanding of the Sabbath rest. The real rest which Hebrew believers in Jesus should seek to enter is God's creation rest, not merely their observance of the weekly Sabbath.

Furthermore, their observance and acquaintance with the weekly Sabbath is fulfilled by their entrance into the creation rest of God. In other words, if one has entered the creation rest by faith in Christ, they have observed the Sabbath of Exodus as well. If one has entered God's rest at creation by faith, Sabbath observance is now understood as accomplished by faith in Jesus, not observance of the commandment. This does not eliminate the observance of the commandment, but it means that faith in Jesus suffices for observance of the commandment. Why? Because the commandment was only a type of the real rest, the rest of Genesis.

The author put the unique term *sabbatismos* into the mix in order to convey the thought that true observance of the Sabbath occurs through faith in Christ which enters one into the present reality, and future hope, of the divine rest in Genesis. This is supported by the commandment itself insofar as it was given to be observed by Israel because of God's rest in Genesis. The commandment was temporary to draw Israel's attention to the true rest of God which they failed to enter due to unbelief. Observance of the command-

ment did not enter one into God's redemptive rest, but only imitated it as a reminder and type. Now that Christ has come, true entrance into *sabbatismos* is possible through faith in Jesus.

The imperative to enter the *sabbatismos* is given in v. ii. The author hastily adds that believers should "make every effort to enter that rest." Bacchiocchi argues that,

The Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God (4:9) is for the author of Hebrews not a mere day of idleness, but rather an opportunity renewed every week to enter God's rest, that is, to make oneself free from the cares of work in order to experience freely by faith God's creation and redemption-rest. (Divine Rest 169)

Bacchiocchi sees the *sabbatismos* as referring to the weekly Sabbath imbued with a renewed

opportunity to celebrate God's rest and redemption. Such a rationale is noteworthy and proper, but it comes far short of what the author of Hebrews is conveying. Delitzsch comments on the meaning of erga ("works") by saying it denotes in the one place the special task or business assigned to Himself by God, in the other the vocation or mission assigned by God to man... Man's daily work in this world, with all its labours, conflicts, and sorrows, corresponds to the six days' work of God... To share in this his Sabbath-rest with God, is the hope set before the church from the very beginning. (201)

For the author of Hebrews, sharing the Sabbath-rest with God is accomplished through faith, not observance of the commandment.

Furthermore, participation in the *sabbatismos* is not limited to one day per week, unlike the Sabbath. Rather, participation in God's rest is a *continual reality, not limited by time or confined to it*. This is implied by the fact that at the end of creation week, Genesis does not refer to the seventh day as ending as with the other days. There is no "evening and morning, the seventh day" to provide closure to the rest which God enjoyed at the end of creation week. While the day itself did have closure, as confirmed in Ex. 20:8-11, *the rest did not end*. Therefore, believers have entrance into God's redemptive/creative rest through faith as a *continual reality* for which the weekly Sabbath could only act as a reminder. !

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What did Jesus mean when He said, ...and whoever
lives and believes in me will never die? John 3:25

DEATH

Oblivion or Graduation

Samuel Pestes

The subject of what happens when a person dies has been a matter of speculation among theologians even before the days of the Sadducees who did not believe in a resurrection of the dead.

Foundations.

Before we can understand what happens when a person comes apart, or dies, we need to find out how he was put together in the first place.

God created the animals before He created Adam. Genesis chapter 1. Then, did God use the same pattern, or template, He used in creating the animals when he made the first man? Did God create Adam in the likeness of the animals with only a body and soul (mind and emotions), or in the likeness of God? What was the difference?

The formula God used in creating the first human being is spelled out in Genesis, the book of foundations.

God said, Let us [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] make mankind in our image, *after our likeness*... So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him: male and female He created them. Genesis 1:26,27 (Amp).

Did God say He created the animals in His image? No! So, there was a distinct difference between the basic structure of animals and the template He used for humans. God said, "Let us (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) make mankind in our image." What did this mean?

And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through... and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved sound and complete [and found] blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. 5:23.

The Bible does not say that animals were created in God's image, with a spirit, in addition to a body and soul. Did God ever promise eternal life to any in the animal kingdom? Did Jesus ever say that He died that they might be resurrected? The difference between an animal and a human being is that man, who was created in the image of the triune God, has a three-fold nature. The triune God-head is reflected in the triune make-up of the human being. He is body, soul and spirit. That makes humans unique in God's creation.

Why did God create humans with a spirit?

God is a Spirit (a spiritual Being) and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (reality). John 4:24.

God created man in His own image, with a spirit, so that man could worship and have a personal link with his Creator. Animals do not worship because they do not possess a spirit. The Bible indicates that animals were created with only a body and a soul.

Example: Revelation 16:3

We read that,

The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being. Genesis 2:7.

Some contend that this verse contains the formula for man's creation.

Dust + air = a living human being.

Death they say, is the reverse process:

Living being – air = dust. Period!

But, doesn't human life consist of more than just dust plus air? What does the following text indicate?

But rather, you have approached unto Mount Zion, even to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless multitudes of angels in festal gathering,

And to the church (assembly) of the *First-born who are registered* [as citizens] in heaven, and to the Judge who is God of all, and to the *spirits of the righteous* [the redeemed in heaven] who have been made perfect... Hebrews 12:22,23 (Amp).

A clue to what the above means is revealed in the conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus in John chapter three. Jesus said that what is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. The two products are not related. Does that indi-

Even though a body dies, the spirit of the saint never dies because its life did not originate from a mortal seed but, as Jesus told Nicodemus, it is born of the Holy Spirit.

cate that in the new birth something is born of the Spirit of God that is of a different origin, and nature, than the flesh that is subject to death? How can a person get born all over again? was Nicodemus' question. It seems that Jesus was referring to a spiritual mystery that produced a new and supernatural creation, not a re-modeling of the old creature. For more details on the meaning of the new birth, consult book #1, *Abraham – Messenger to the 21st Century* chapters 17 and 18.

In John chapter eleven we have the story of the raising of Lazarus. When Jesus heard that Lazarus had died, He corrected His friends by saying that,

Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.

Then in verse twenty-five Jesus made this interesting statement;

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

What do these words of Jesus tell us? Even though a body dies, the spirit of the saint never dies because its life did not originate from a mortal seed but, as Jesus told Nicodemus, it is born of the Holy Spirit. What is born of the flesh remains flesh, and what is born of the Holy Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Jesus' words to Martha that "whoever lives and believes in me will never die," carry an even deeper meaning. In that statement He did not say merely that He could grant eternal life to the believer, but that He personally was the very essence of life and

eternity. Any believer who committed his/her life to Him possesses that eternal life now, in this present world. In the body? No! In the spirit? That is what He said! What He was really telling her was that because He was the resurrection and the life, our spirits have already been endowed with eternal life. Then He re-enforced that message upon her conscience by asking her, Martha, "Do you believe this?" In Martha's reply "You are the Christ," she fully surrendered to his life-giving message.

Rather than strain our brains trying to figure out what Jesus meant by those last words, "whoever lives and believes in me will never die," why don't we see if the Scriptures may give us a hint of what He was talking about? That statement makes about as much sense to the carnal mind as Jesus' challenge to Nicodemus that he had to get born all over again if he would have a place in the kingdom of God.

After being mentored by Jesus for over three years, in 1 Peter 1:23 we see how Peter understood this mystery. Notice that the word "sperm" in the Amplified Bible is more specific to the Greek language than the generic word "seed".

You have been regenerated – born again – not from a mortal origin (seed, sperm) but from one that is immortal by the ever living and lasting Word of God.

The apostle John also compared the born again experience as the result of what he called "the divine sperm" impregnating and creating a new life within the individual.

No one born (begotten) of God [deliberately and knowingly] habitually practices sin, for God's nature abides in him – His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him – and he cannot practice sinning because he is born (begotten) of God. 1 John 3:9 (Amp).

Can it be that when a person is born again, something happens akin to what happened at the conception of Jesus? Something was created inside Mary's womb that was not initiated by a human sperm. It was the product of a divine miracle. Life sprang up within her as a result of the Holy Spirit implanting a divine seed within her womb. What was placed inside her was not of human origin, but a seed (sperm, the Bible calls it) of divine origin. That is the life that shall never die. That is the real "born again" creation that Jesus said cannot die but lives forever. Scripture teaches that after experiencing the new birth, the natural person takes on a new identity. The body is only the temple, or the "tent" that temporarily houses the true self. Paul and Peter both believed that.

Read 2 Corinthians 5: 1-9. Especially notice verses 8:

[Yes] we have confident and hopeful courage, and are well-pleased rather to be *away from home out of the body and be at home with the Lord.*

If one does not have a spirit identity that can exist apart from the human body, how could Paul expect to leave his body behind and go to be with the Lord? It seems that Peter understood the reality of salvation (the new birth) in the same way.

I think it right, *as long as I am in this tabernacle* (tent, body), to stir you up by way of remembrance; Since I know that *laying aside of this body* of mine will come speedily,... 2 Peter 1:13,14 (emphasis supplied).

Peter wrote as though he and his body were not the same thing. He indicated that the real Peter was simply living inside a human body (tent) that would be discarded when he answered the call to go home to be with the Lord.

Further light regarding the immortality of something that is created at the new birth is found in Jesus' own statement in John 3:15 (Amp).

...everyone who believes in Him – who cleaves to Him, trusts Him and relies in Him – may not perish, but *have eternal life and [actually] live forever!*

Neither Jesus, nor the Apostles, ever hinted at an interim period of non-existence between the death of the body and our spirits (our real selves) going to be with the Lord. That teaching is a residual virus left over from pagans who did not know the power of the new birth.

When dying on the cross, Jesus cried,
Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit (Luke 23:46).

What was He committing into the Father's hands, His breath, a copy of His earthly record (as some teach), or His immortal Spirit? Since our new birth is also brought about by action of the same Holy Spirit, can you understand why the saints who were martyred were able to sing even when their bodies were being burned at the stake? They knew they were going home! To them, release from the body was graduation time! How did they know that they would be with the Lord even though their bodies were burned? They committed their spirits into the hands of the same Jesus who conquered death.

The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are the children of God. Romans 8:16 (Amp).

I have read Romans 8:11 many times without really grasping what Paul was saying.

And if the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, [then] He who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also restore to life your mortal (short-lived, perishable) bodies through His Spirit *Who dwells in you.* (Amp).

Paul is contrasting the quality of the body that is mortal, or subject to death, with our spirits that are alive because they are linked to the Holy Spirit who is not subject to death. Then he emphasizes that the proof that our mortal bodies will also be raised in the resurrection lies in the fact that just as God gave immortality to our redeemed spirits, so also He can, and will, raise our mortal bodies to a new life. Here Paul exposes the fallacy of the soul-sleep doctrine.

According to Ephesians 2:1 and Colossians 2:13, when we are born into this world we are born dead in trespasses and sins. Our bodies were not born dead. Our minds were not born dead. What, then, was born dead? Our spirits, which had not yet been touched and enlivened, or quickened, by action of the Holy Spirit! True conversion links our spirits to the Holy Spirit.

According to Romans 8:9,10 we are plainly told that if the Holy Spirit has not linked with our spirits, and if He is not at home with our spirits now, then we do not even belong to Christ. And if we belong to Christ, then our spirits presently share to same (eternal) life that His Spirit has. That is the guarantee and

proof, *God's seal*, that our mortal bodies will also be given immortality in the resurrection. Permanent life to our spirits now, is,

The pledge and foretaste, the down payment on our heritage – in anticipation of its *full redemption* and our acquiring [complete possession of it, to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:13,14.

That "*full redemption*" will take place when our mortal bodies are also immortalized.

May I share an experience that helped settle my own concerns about this subject?

Paul and Peter longed to be away from their earthly tents, and to be at home with Jesus. To them death was not oblivion, but graduation day!

We were attending the funeral of a sixteen year old Christian girl who was struck by a car and killed. My mind was dwelling on the seeming tragedy when the thought crossed my mind: What could be the purpose of a future resurrection if her spirit (her true self) was already in the presence of the Lord? Wouldn't that be a rather backward step? I wondered.

Suddenly, the theme of Ephesians 2:19 came to mind, where we are called citizens of God's household. We are, by faith, citizens of the heavenly kingdom, even now! We belong to God's household. Paul and Peter expected to go there directly at the death of the body. They believed Jesus' promise that because they believed in Him, and their souls were anchored in Him, they would be "at home" with the Lord. Through His death and resurrection Jesus taught that physical death is not the end. Our spirits that were impregnated with the Holy Spirit and became the "new man," cannot die, Jesus said. Paul and Peter longed to be away from their earthly tents, and to be at home with Jesus. To them death was not oblivion, but graduation day!

So what is the purpose of the resurrection? It is to grant to us our *dual citizenship*. We are already citizens of heaven. We are only strangers and pilgrims in this world where Satan is still the "prince of the air". Ephesians 2:2. To function in the physical realm once again, we will need bodies similar to Jesus' body after His resurrection. When we receive our new bodies in the resurrection, we will again be able to function in the physical realm just as Jesus did. That will be equivalent to receiving a dual citizenship, and like Jesus, our "Elder Brother", we will have inherited all things and will reign together with Him both in heaven and on earth.

The Bible is clear that the spirits of the departed are limited to the spiritual realms and cannot function in this physical world. Any supposed visitation by departed loved ones is therefore only a delusion of the enemy. The dead do not communicate with the living! Jesus indicated there is a great gap that is fixed between the physical and heavenly realms at this time. Luke 16:26.

Just as our present physical bodies are not equipped to function in heaven, so also our spirits cannot function independently of a suitable body in the physical world. At the resurrection we receive new bodies, similar to the body of Jesus. His resurrected body was not limited to the physical laws we are presently subject to. He could appear and disappear. He could enter a room when all entrances were closed and could exit just as easily. He could leave this physical world and appear before the Father with no difficulty. That is the kind of glorious, physical bodies we will be granted when Christ returns.

The book of Ecclesiastes is sometimes looked to for hints as to what happens at death. Chapter 9 verse 5 is often quoted in support of a theory commonly known as "soul sleep".

For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom. Verse 10.

...and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Chapter 12:7.

Verse 5 simply tells what happens to the physical body when a person dies. The brain is dead and the body goes to dust. This makes no reference to the spirit of man.

Verse 10 says the same thing. All physical and mental activity ceases at death. Again, no reference is made regarding the spiritual nature of a person.

Chapter 12:7 is a bit more specific. It does indicate that a person has a spirit that "returns to God who gave it." It does not say anything about a person's breathing. It is true that the same Hebrew word was sometimes used for "breath" and for the "spirit." When Jesus talked to Nicodemus He compared the unseen Spirit of God by which the New Birth occurs to the wind that blows, but no one would argue that the wind and the Holy Spirit are the same thing. They may be the same in that you cannot see either, but that hardly means that the Holy Spirit is nothing but air. Yet that is the conclusion some people draw from these statements.

John 3:16 is very clear that Jesus promised us eternal life. We already read in John 11:25 the words of Jesus:

Whoever lives and believes in me *will never die*.

Jesus said nothing about a time span either of non-existence, or soul sleep, between death of the body and the resurrection. The theory of soul sleep was adopted in the early 1800's in the New England states to counter the rise of modern spiritualism that had its beginning in the same area, at about the same time. It is unfortunate that one error was devised to counter another error.

One other statement attributed to Christ may help clarify this mystery. In Matthew 10:28 we read the words of Jesus:

And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul, but rather be afraid of Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna).

The Greek language often seemed to use the words for soul and spirit interchangeably. It is very difficult to read this passage and not see that the body and soul, or spirit, may exist apart from each other. This clearly indicates that the spirit, or soul, can live independent of a physical body, and that only God can destroy it. Let us be specific. What does the Bible say?

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who

A new Light was dawning and they would soon pass into history, as their center stage. "Listen to Him" was the

fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe *that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him....* 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

Question: How can Jesus bring back with him "*those who have fallen asleep in him*" if they were non-existent? Their bodies are dead and returned to dust. What will He bring back with Him?

Let us look at that familiar text in John 3:14-16 through the eyes of Jesus.

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that *whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life*.

Jesus was very clear that eternal life begins when you receive and believe that He has conquered death on your behalf. The Christ-centered life is not limited to a futuristic pie-in-the-sky hope. It is a present reality to those who accept Jesus' promise that we presently *have* eternal life! The body dies, but your spirit, birthed by the touch of the Holy Spirit, cannot die because it contains the life of the Spirit. That is,

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27,

Let us take a brief look at the Mount of transfiguration experience that Peter, James and John had with Jesus as recorded in Matthew chapter 17.

When the apostles looked, they saw Moses and Elijah with Jesus. Peter, the initiator, immediately sought to capture the messages represented by the trio and preserve them by erecting

a booth, or monument, for each. Jesus, Moses and Elijah would be given permanent and somewhat equal status. Then, three things happened.

1. Moses and Elijah disappeared from sight.
2. A voice from heaven spoke: *This is my Son...listen to Him.*
3. Jesus warned them to tell no one what they experienced until He would be raised from the dead. What did these three experiences mean?

The disciples had not yet understood that Moses' teaching pertaining to the Sinai Covenant had reached its pre-determined conclusion. They were still anchored in the Old Covenant. See 2 Corinthians 3:14,15. Moses' Old Covenant teaching was about

ere to follow Him. Moses and Elijah Creator and Redeemer would take new watchword.

to be fulfilled. His mission was over. Now, they were to listen to Christ who was leading them into the New Covenant of faith. Elijah prophesied the coming of the Messiah. Jesus, the Messiah was now here. Moses' and Elijah's ministries were both about to be fulfilled. A new Light was dawning and they were to follow Him. Moses and Elijah would soon pass into history, as their Creator and Redeemer would take center stage. "Listen to Him" was the new watchword. As Jesus said earlier,

For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.
Matthew 11:13.

But why the third point? Why did Jesus counsel them not to tell anyone what they saw and heard until after His crucifixion and resurrection? It was because they had not yet fully appropriated and experienced the reality and power of Christ's ministry. Not having experienced the new life fully, they might be able to preach the record, or the theory of what they saw, but would lack its life-giving force. That is also why they were told not to attempt to witness the Gospel truth to others until they were first empowered by the Holy Spirit power. See Luke 24:49. That was later fully realized at Pentecost.

Mark chapter 9:9,10 throws further light on what happened that day. Not only were Peter, James and John eye witnesses, overwhelmed by the miraculous splendor, but mark 9:10 tells us that they asked searching questions about something people still question today. Jesus instructed them not to share the experience, or tell what they has seen, until after "the Son of man (Jesus) was raised from the dead." Matthew 17:9. Why? There was another reason for this caution.

What about life after death? Jesus answered that question for all time with a demonstration of the death of His human body

and the eternal nature of His own life-giving Spirit. He did this by bringing Moses and Elijah onto the scene. Why?

We know that Elijah was translated into heaven without experiencing physical death. 2 Kings 2:11. Likewise, we read of a similar account of Enoch. Genesis 5:24. If Christ had not through His own death, overcome death and the grave, what would have happened to those two saints? On what grounds could they remain in heaven? Would God have taken such a risk? God settled that with the promise He gave to Abraham:

I am you Shield, your exceeding great reward. Genesis 15:1.

This guarantee encompasses not only this life, but more important, our eternal life! Elijah on the mountain represented all who would be translated without experiencing physical death. Moses represented those who would die a natural death. That includes all humanity from the beginning of time. Moses died and was buried. Deuteronomy 34:5,6. Since he died and was buried, how could he appear with Jesus and Elijah on the mount? If he did not have a spirit that transcended his physical death, where did he come from?

Question: Why did Satan contend regarding the *body* of Moses, but not his spirit?

Jude 9. That was because Moses' spirit had already gone home to be with the Lord who brought it to life in the first place. Satan tried to thwart the future resurrection of Moses' body. But Jesus' victory secured and guaranteed not only the salvation of the spirit, but also the resurrection of the body, by which Moses could eventually again participate with God's saints in ruling over the New Earth. His dual citizenship was guaranteed by God's promise to Abraham and to his spiritual posterity that, "I will be your shield, your very great reward." On this authority Michael, the archangel, could dismiss Satan with a plain "the Lord rebuke you," or in other words, "Get lost"!

Enoch, Elijah and Moses are among the forerunners of the "great cloud of witnesses" mentioned in Hebrews 12:1. This verse refers, as the context shows, to the witnesses mentioned in the previous chapter. These are those who will return with Christ when He returns. These are described in Hebrews 12:23 as gathered unto,

The church (assembly) of the First-born who are registered [as citizens] in heaven, and to the Judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of the righteous [the redeemed in heaven] who have been made perfect. See also Jude 14 (Amp).

Those who by faith are anchored in the Lord Jesus Christ have only a glorious eternity to look forward to. In reality, we are living in that eternity now because of Jesus, who, because He conquered death and the grave, says;

I am the First and the Last, and the Ever-living One – I am living in the eternity of eternities. I died, but see, I am alive forever more; and I possess the keys of Death and Hades [the realm of the dead]. Revelation 1:18,19 (Amp).

Because Jesus has given us the victory, we can confidently sing, O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? 1 Corinthians 15: 55. (NIV).

The memoirs of Elder Henry Brown CONTINUED FROM BACK

"Gentleman, either you change this book and make this straight with the Bible, or I walk no more with you." It was an astounding statement, because he was one of the leaders, the second in charge of our General Conference. Of course they changed the book, and the new book doesn't say that at all.

There in that school, those four years, I met most of the leaders of the denomination—men who are looked upon today as the beginners, the "pioneers," of our church. I met every one, with the exception of two or three of the older ones who had passed away before I came upon the scene of action.

There was Elder S. N. Haskell; there was John Loughborough, and all those wonderful men. It was my opportunity to learn from their understanding of Biblical truth and converse with them about it. I was in complete darkness. It was only occasionally that I would find a problem that I wanted them to elucidate to me.

As I would talk with these men, great light was lit into my poor darkened little soul. For instance, Elder Loughborough had been holding a series of lectures to us on the terrible cost of salvation for man. It meant that very God had to yield himself as a ransom. I think this is the belief by all Protestants today. He tells the story that the angels went to the Father to plead that they might die for the human race rather than Jesus die, and that God had said to them, "No, if we would save man, God must die in his stead." And that is a Biblical truth.

But there appeared in one of the Adventist magazines at the time a statement by Mrs. White in which she said, "When Christ was crucified it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die, that would have been impossible." (Letter #250, 1904. Review and Herald 1882 article, "The Upward Look.")

I took this down to Elder Loughborough. I didn't know at the time that he was in an uncertain state—he could not accept Mrs. White as a prophetess, which we will bring in later. I said, "Elder, you say that God was to be sacrificed. But here Mrs. White says a human body was all that was required. Is it true that all the world was saved through the death of a human body? Or was it a God that died?"

I could see the sadness on the face of the elder man in which he shook his head sadly and said, "Henry, that should never have been printed. They printed it a long time ago, and I insisted that it not be printed again. Now I see they have done it again."

Again, there was the opportunity of speaking to others while I was selling magazines on the streets of Washington. At the time it was very cold in the winter. Well, there was a little restaurant, and I used to go there and for a dime I could get a dish of baked beans and get warmed up.

In one of these meals I saw one of Mrs. E. G. White's sons, Edson, and another man from Southern Publishing Association. Of course they didn't know me, but I knew them for I had seen them in meet-

ings. I went up to them and told them, "Gentlemen, while you are enjoying your lunch, would you care to have one of these wonderful magazines to look over?" They had a dish of pork and beans and were drinking coffee. Vegetarianism at that time was one of the doctrines that Adventists held to very closely, and they looked up at me utterly unashamed and endeavored to get me to sell their magazine published in the Southern Publishing Association and not the magazine that I was selling, which was published by the Review & Herald and edited by W. W. Prescott.

Then, again, I was in a bookstore with Elder Maxwell, a very wonderful man I greatly appreciated. He was considerably older than I, and we were looking over some books in a second-hand bookstore. He pulled down from the shelf a book entitled *Night Scenes of the Bible*, by Daniel March. He says, "This is a book from which Mrs. White secured many of her most beautiful pages." I was amazed and stunned. I didn't dare buy that in front of him to let him know I was reading it, but later on I purchased it. Later on, Walter Rea found quite a number of quotations that Mrs. White had copied from that book.

There was another time when an amazing thing happened to me. I was traveling with Elder J. J.

Nethery, then vice-president of the General Conference. We were talking about these things, and about the difficulties in understanding Mrs. White and applying these statements to our own life. And he said, "Henry, the greatest blessing that could happen to this Seventh-day Adventist Church would be to have a fire in the vaults of Mrs. E. G. White and burn all that material up." Again, I was amazed that one of the leaders who was supposed to sustain and speak out on Mrs. White and her work was speaking in this manner!

At a camp meeting about that time — I was now a worker in the Southwestern Union Conference, and was attending a camp meeting in New Mexico — W. H. Branson was president of the Adventist work in North America, and he was giving a series of sermons at this camp meeting. In one of them he was telling the same thing that Elder Prescott had been talking on—that it required the death of a Deity to save man. At the close of his sermon I went up to him and said, "Elder Branson, I see you don't believe in the Spirit of Prophecy."

He was a man that wasn't accustomed to be crossed at all and he looked at me and said, "What do you meant by that?"

I said, "Well, Sister White said"—and I had the statement in my hands—that Deity did not die at all, but it was His human body that died. I said, "You have been telling just the opposite."

He said, "Do you believe that?"

I said, "No, I don't believe that."

"Well," he said, "neither do I." He says, "Forget it."

"Gentleman, either you change this book and make this straight with the Bible, or I walk no more with you."

(Continued in the next issue of Proclamation!)



Vegetarianism: Is it Christian?

Verle Streifling

Our May edition of the *British Columbia Christian News (BCCN)* ran an article "Toward a Vegetarian Christendom." The story was based on a vegetarian foods store operated by an Adventist in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, Canada.

This health-foods store also promotes vegetarian cooking classes and other health related training. The story cited the philosophy that vegetarianism was God's original plan for humanity, and that this kind of diet is better for the body because the body is the temple of God.

However, somewhere in the article, the order of words became changed from "vegetarian Christians" to "Christian vegetarians." As a result, in June, there were a number of letters to the editor taking exception to the connection of vegetarianism with being Christian, and the article's implication that a Christian should be a vegetarian.

In the July paper of the BCCN an Adventist responded to counter those that wrote the letters published in June, extolling 'Christian Vegetarianism' as Biblical:

"I was disappointed that most of the responses to 'Toward a Vegetarian Christendom' (May) were long in opinion and short on Biblical backing. This is consistent with the weak theology concerning animals that evangelicals have had.

"In Genesis 1:29-30, on the sixth day of creation, God gives to man and the animals only plants for food. In Genesis 9:2-3, immediately after the flood and its probable destruction of an earthly paradise, God gives man permission to eat animals. This is a concession, not God's original plan.

"In Romans 8:19-22, Paul says that all of creation—not just humanity—has been suffering from the after-effects of sin. This

would include the suffering of animals caused by carnivores—animal and human.

"I conclude that vegetarianism is noble—but not morally necessary." K.A.

"KA's" letter was unbiblical, illogical and somewhat offensive. In Genesis 9, God's giving meat for food was not 'a concession' for the text is not optative. It says "Every living thing that moves shall be food for you," but not 'IF you wish... may be food for you.' Classifying humans (who generally eat all things) with carnivorous animals is illogical and demeaning. Most humans are humane in how they kill animals for food. Carnivores may begin tearing victims apart and devouring them, while yet alive.

While Genesis speaks of the animals in Eden as herbivorous, yet the fossil records of those destroyed by the flood elsewhere, show there were carnivores as Saber-toothed tigers, or T-Rex dinosaurs. Much of the marine life in the food chain was carnivorous, eating other smaller sea-creatures. God telling Noah the post-flood animals would fear him, spoke of land animals (Greek '*epi tes ges*' (on the land) LXX), indicating the most voracious animals from before the flood had all perished.

Yet it's worse to imply one eating meat lives below God's original plan, while vegetarians are noble, for Jesus who was God personified, ate meat, butter and eggs etc, even after His resurrection (Lk 24:41-43).

A Christian is one who follows Jesus' life and teaching, as in the New Testament. He practiced and taught eating all things, as Mark 7:14-19 saying "nothing that enters into a man can defile him... thus purifying All foods"; or Luke 16:23 "kill the fatted calf... let us eat it and make merry"; or John 21:19-23 preparing fish for his disciples "Come and dine".

In Mark 7 He ended the law's distinctions of clean and unclean, upholding God's covenant with Noah, of Genesis 9. The Apostles also upheld it in the Jerusalem council of Acts 15. Thrice the Holy Spirit told Peter in Acts 10 "Don't call what God has sanctified 'common or unclean'" to verify these distinctions ended. So Paul said in Romans 14 "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself... for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but love, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit" and in 1 Timothy 4 "...every creature of God is good and nothing is to be refused... for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer."

When Jehovah visited Abraham in Genesis 18, He ate the veal, cheese and milk that Abraham prepared, just as Jesus ate the broiled fish after His resurrection. If eating meat were below God's original plan, He also erred. Yet Isaiah 25:6-8 says that when God ends death forever (after the White Throne judgment) He'll give a feast of choice meats and wines.

In Romans 14:1-2 Paul states that he who is weak in faith eats only vegetables and meat does not commend us to God; whether we eat it or abstain, we are none the better. Seeing all these Scriptures contend against vegetarianism, which Adventists so strongly promote today, we should revisit their entry into this philosophy, as it was introduced by Ellen G. White, noting how her counsels went contrary to the Scriptures, almost every step of the way.

At the Adventists San Diego Forum, Feb 14, 1982, Dr. Walter Rea told that James White had written several "wonderful articles" in favor of eating pork. In 1855, Ellen wrote "The Lord showed me... that the use of swine's flesh was no test... if it is your husband's wish to use swine's flesh, you should be perfectly clear to use it." (Claim to Inspiration, Garver, p.28) And in 1858, "I saw that your views concerning swine's flesh would prove no injury to you, if you have them to yourselves... If God requires people to abstain from swine's flesh he will convict them on the matter." (1Test 204-209)

Yet by 1865 she would say "The eating of pork has produced scrofula, leprosy and cancerous humors... still causing the most intense suffering to the human race." And "God never designed the swine to be eaten under any circumstances... it is not the physical health alone which is injured by pork eating. The mind is affected." (CDF 393; SM II, 417+418). For two years she had already been using her visions to promote vegetarianism. "But since the Lord presented before me in June 1863 the subject of meat eating in relation to health, I have left off the use of meat." (CDF 482) Herein, Ellen has made God contradict Himself within ten years time, and begins repeatedly speaking contrary to God's Word.

"The light... on health reform is for our salvation and... the world" (CDF 461) contradicts "There is no salvation in any other... no other name... whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)

"Those who have received instruction regarding the evils of the use of flesh foods... God demands that the appetite be cleansed." (CDF 36) denies "some will depart from the faith... commanding to abstain from meats that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth." (1Tim 4:1-3)

Paul emphasized "If we or an angel... preach any other gospel... let him be accursed" (Gal 1:6-9). Ellen's gospel was "The

gospel of health is to be... linked to the ministry of the Word... health reform is to be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message." (CDF 75)

Again Paul said "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused" (1Tim 4:4) and God said "You may kill and eat flesh... according to the blessing of the Lord... which He has given you" (Deut 12:15). But Ellen contradicts God "God did not provide for the flesh of dead animals to compose the diet of man..." (CDF 410) and "Shall human beings live on the flesh of dead animals? The answer from the light God has given us is, NO, decidedly No..." (CDF 388).

While Jesus said "I am the light of the World" (Jn 8:12) and "I am come a light into the world" (12:46) and John adds "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another" (1 Jn 1:5-7), Ellen changed the Light from being Jesus, to vegetarianism! "God has permitted the light on health reform... that by walking in the light we may escape..." "More than forty years ago the Lord gave us special light on health reform, but how are we walking in the light?" (CDF 22, 404)

Her 'light' wrote off use of butter, eggs, meat, cheese etc as objectionable, wholly unfit for food "Butter and meat stimulate... sensitive nerves of the brain have been benumbed... so that eternal things have not been discerned." (CDF 235 +6). Yet Jesus called fish and eggs "good gifts" (Lk 11:11-13) He ate butter and honey "that he may know how to refuse evil and choose good" (Isa 7:14+15) As did Jehovah at Abraham's tent in Genesis 18 (above).

My response to "KA's" letter in the BC Christian News, concluded that touting vegetarianism as Christian is unbiblical, and gives cause for judging others as "KA" in deriding Evangelicals for "weak theology." Ellen White's "but how are we walking in the Light?" (above) also rings of this. In Col 2:16 Paul wrote "Let no one judge you in meat or drink..." and he asks "Who are you to judge another...?" in Romans 14. Yet for Ellen White, judging others on her health reform gospel is almost a non-negotiable:

"... 'Is my diet such... where I can accomplish the greatest amount of good?' If we cannot answer... in the affirmative, we stand condemned before God" (CDF 20) "You place on your tables butter, eggs and meat, and your children partake of them... How high do your prayers go?" (ibid 366)

Such harsh judgments against others fly in the face of Paul's "There is therefore now NO Condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus..." (Rom 8:1) and Jesus' eating butter and honey that He may know how to refuse evil and choose good (Isa 7:14+15) and His prayers reached to heaven, for as he agonized for us in Gethsemane, God responded, sending an angel to minister to Him.

Mrs. White was adamant "No man should be set apart as a teacher of the people while his own teachings and example contradict the testimony God has given his servants to bear in regard to diet... This disregard of health reform unfits him to stand as the Lord's messenger" (6 T 378). Such sweeping condemnation makes our own Savior unfit to stand as the Lord's messenger, though God said of Him "Behold My Messenger, whom I have chosen" Since Jesus was God, either He knew and required the Health Reform as Ellen



claimed she was shown, and was thus UNFIT to be our Savior, or else He did not require her 'other gospel' that Paul calls 'accursed' (Gal 1:6-10).

Ellen's message was contrary to the Bible—especially the New Testament and Jesus—our basis for Christian faith and practice. Paul said "God who in various times and ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son" (Heb 1:1+2) and God had said "This is My beloved Son, hear ye HIM!" To neutralize these witnesses against her message, Ellen stated "In ancient times God spoke through the mouths of the prophets and apostles. In these days, he speaks to them by the testimonies of his Spirit" (4T, 148) meaning her writings. She eliminates any past revelation coming from Jesus, and states her writings supersede Him and the NT.

Ellen's linking her health message with the gospel (CDF 75) made it one of SDA's "waymarks which have made us what we are" which she said "are to be preserved as God has signified...through the testimony of His Holy Spirit" (Ms 44, 1905) She put these above Biblical scrutiny saying, "When the Power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever...and while the Scriptures are God's word and to be respected, the application of them if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, it is a great mistake" (*White Truth* "Pillars Of Our Faith" (SM 3, 31+32).

Yet, she neither always lived up to her health message, even while claiming that she did, as in 1863 above. In 1894 she wrote "Since the camp meeting at Brighton (January 1894) I have absolutely banished meat from my table." (CDF 88) This was 30 years after her previous statement, yet it admits she had still been eating meat until 1894. Again that year "But when the selfishness of taking lives of animals to gratify a perverted appetite was presented to me by a Catholic woman, kneeling at my feet, I felt ashamed and distressed...I said 'I will no longer patronize the butcher, I will not have the flesh of corpses on my table.' (Spalding-Magan unpublished ms; (Test p.38)

Her words confirm the above observation that she had been buying meet from the butcher for her use.

Still 13 years later she writes, "I said to Sara, 'take chickens from my place and prepare them some broth.'" (CDF 466). But the next

...it's gross error to link vegetarianism with Christianity, so that if one is not a vegetarian, he's judged by others as not being the quality of person or Christian that God wants. And that those who teach vegetarianism as Christian are apostates, teaching contrary to the Gospel.

year she wrote, "It is reported by some that I have not lived up to the principles of health reform as I have advocated them with my pen. But I can say that so far as my knowledge goes, I have not departed from these principles" (ibid 492). Had she forgotten 1913, 1894, and writing to Willie's wife "Mary, if you can get me a box of herrings, fresh ones, please do...if you can get a few cans of good oysters, get them." (May 31, 1882, letter 16)

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount he said, "Judge not, that you be not judged, for with the same judgment as you judge others, you will be judged." Certainly Ellen's judging non-vegetarians would stand as an indictment against her. She herself claimed that her testimonies were either all of God, or of Satan. In 1 Tim 4:1-3 Paul leaves no doubt which it is, "The Spirit expressly says, that in the latter days some will depart (Gk *apostesontai*—apostatize themselves) from the faith, listening to deceiving spirits and doctrines of devils, commanding... to abstain from meats, which God hath made to be received with thanksgiving, by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer." Here, his counsel to the Galatians is most fitting "Stand fast therefore in the liberty

wherewith Christ has set you free, and do not be ensnared again into the yoke of bondage."

Does this mean it's wrong to be a vegetarian? Certainly not! Is vegetarianism contrary to Christianity? No, not at all. It only means it's gross error to link vegetarianism with Christianity, so that if one is not a vegetarian, he's judged by others as not being the quality of person or Christian that God wants. And that those who teach vegetarianism as Christian are apostates, teaching contrary to the Gospel.

Perhaps the best words over this whole issue were brought out by a sister Cherryl who also wrote in to the *BC Christian News* in response to "KA's" letter: "Mindful of the admonition of Titus 3:9 to avoid foolish disputes, it must be stated that neither the person who eats only vegetables, nor the person who eats all things is more noble or morally superior to the other... And God has provided a sacrificial Lamb, so that we do not fall back into the bondage of pharisaism and legalism."

Wouldn't we all want to say a hearty "AMEN!" to her observations?

Until heaven and earth disappear CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Sabbath in Crisis (now enlarged and reprinted under the name *Sabbath in Christ*). The story of the transfiguration appears in all three synoptic gospels: Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:1-9, Luke 9:25-36. The three-fold repetition of the event convinced me that it was significant in a way I had never yet understood. Dale explained that to the Jews, Moses represented the law, and Elijah represented the prophets. The Law and the prophets comprised all of God's special revelation to Israel until the birth of Jesus, and they were Israel's standard for living.

When a thick cloud hid Moses, Elijah, and Jesus from Peter, James, and John, they heard the Father say, "This is my Son; listen to Him." After the cloud disappeared, Jesus came to the three and told them to stand up. Jesus alone stood before them. The Law and the Prophets were gone.

As if to emphasize the significance of "losing" the law and the prophets and exalting Jesus as the One to whom they should listen, Jesus told the three not to tell anyone what they had seen and heard until after he had risen from death. In other words, the new covenant would not replace the old covenant until after Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection. Until then, Israel was still obligated to live under the old covenant and to honor the law and the prophets as their official revelation of God's will. After his resurrection, however, the disciples would spread the news: Jesus has replaced the law and the prophets as the spiritual authority in the lives of God's people.

The day I understood the significance of the transfiguration was the day I knew I would one day leave the Adventist church. I wasn't ready to leave at that moment, but I knew I could never look at the law the same way again. Even so, the transfiguration did not explain to me how the law and the prophets could "disappear" but still remain unchanged until heaven and earth passed away.

Greater Than the Temple

Three years after my epiphany of the transfiguration, I had an insight that brought me a giant step closer to tying together the remaining loose ends I still had about the role and permanence of the law now that I was living in the new covenant. It was the week before Easter break at the school where I teach, and I was showing The Visual Bible's *Matthew* videos to my classes. Since I

had five classes, five times I heard "Jesus" say his words to the Pharisees in Matthew 12:5-6, "Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? I tell you that one greater than the temple is here."

This bold declaration followed the Pharisees' accusing Jesus of allowing his disciples to break the Sabbath by eating grain as they walked through a grain field. Jesus had responded by reminding them that David had broken the law by entering the temple and eating the showbread—an act strictly forbidden to all but the priests.

I had always wondered why Jesus hadn't taken that opportunity to say, "One greater than the Sabbath is here." As I heard those words in my five consecutive classes, however, I began to sense there was something powerful hidden there. I made some notes and looked up the text after school. Here's what I realized.

First, by reminding the priests about David breaking the law by eating the showbread, Jesus was saying two things. One message was that the law was never meant to prevent "doing good" or preserving life. Both Jesus and David served the needs of their men by technically breaking the law to allow them to eat. The second, and for me the most powerful, message was that God's anointing trumps the law. David foreshadowed Jesus, who has been identified as the Son of David for millennia. David was a king, and as king he took on the responsibility of establishing Israel's religious home in Jerusalem. Further, he took on other responsibilities which normally fell in the job description of the Levites or priests: he designed songs and ceremonies for Israel's worship in the tabernacle and later the temple. In these ways, David was the type of Jesus, our king and priest forever.

As a foreshadow of Jesus, David, who was already God's anointed king of Israel, broke the law with no permission from the priest and both ate the showbread and gave it to his men. In a similar way, Jesus broke the Sabbath to allow his men to pick and eat grain on the holy day. In fact, Jesus said of himself during this incident, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Even though in both cases the priests were not aware of God's anointing, both David and Jesus had an appointment from God that trumped the law. They had the divine authority to break the written law to accomplish a greater purpose.

The day I understood the significance of the transfiguration was the day I knew I would one day leave the Adventist church. I wasn't ready to leave at that moment, but I knew I could never look at the law the same way again.

Further, when Jesus told the Pharisees that he was greater than the temple, he no doubt shocked them with what must have sounded like blasphemy. To the Jews, the temple was the most holy place in the nation. That was the place where God had historically placed his cloud of presence signifying his residence with his people. Further, the temple was the official home of the law including the 10 Commandments carved by God on stone tablets. By saying he was greater than the temple, Jesus was claiming to house within himself the very presence of God and the reality of the law. He was claiming to replace the temple as the center and the focus of God's presence and revelation and authority to his people.

After studying this passage in Matthew 12, the reality of Jesus actually housing within himself Sabbath rest became much more clear to me. I could visualize how accepting Jesus' finished work was literally to embrace the true Sabbath which was not related to time but to a Person.

I still had a lingering question, however, about the unending quality of the law.

Of Citizenship and Laws

The final pieces of my fragmented questions began to come together one day a couple of years ago when my husband Richard told me about a conversation he had just had with a person who asked about these same troublesome texts which proclaim the continuation of the law.

"I know God gave me this analogy," he said, "because I had never thought of it before." Here is his explanation. Suppose you were born in Brazil but emigrated to the United States and became a naturalized citizen of this country. As an American citizen, the laws of Brazil have no more authority over you. You answer only to the laws of the United States. Brazilian laws still exist, but they only apply to citizens of Brazil. Similarly, when you become part of God's family, you live in the new covenant. The indwelling Holy Spirit becomes your new standard and authority. The law still exists, but it still only has the power to draw unbelievers to Christ and to promise the curse of death to them if they refuse to believe in Jesus.

Suddenly Matthew 5:18, Luke 16:17, and Romans 3:31 began to make logical sense to me. But there was still one more level of understanding which I had to discover.

These Testify About Me

One morning I came across a verse I had read many times, but this time it made sense in a new way. "These are the Scriptures that testify about me," Jesus was saying to the Pharisees, "yet you refuse to come to me to have life." (John 5:39-40)

Suddenly the last piece of my puzzle fell into place. The Scriptures to which Jesus referred were the law and the prophets, the books which we call the Old Testament. Because of the law and the prophets, the Jews had all the information they needed to have been able to recognize Jesus—yet they missed him.

Other texts confirm this essential function of the law and the prophets. Jesus reprimanded Nicodemus when he did not under-

stand Jesus' talk of the new birth. "You are Israel's teacher...and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony," (John 3:10-11) Nicodemus, Jesus was saying, should have understood what Jesus was talking about because of his scholarly knowledge of the law and the prophets. He was Israel's teacher.

In Romans 3:21 when Paul introduces a righteousness from God that provides hope for depraved humanity he says, "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify."

Now I understood: even today the law and the prophets serve as the evidence which confirms the identity of Jesus. Without the ceremonies, the metaphors, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, we would have no concrete means of confirming Jesus' claims to be the Messiah, the Holy One of God. As long as there is life as we know it on earth, humans will need the law and the prophets to confirm that Jesus is their true fulfillment.

Until Heaven and Earth Pass Away...

The fact that not the tiniest detail of the law will pass away until heaven and earth disappear does not mean the law remains our authority when we become Christ-followers. On the contrary, when we become children of God by faith in Jesus and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the law has no more power over us. When we are in Christ, the demands of the law have been met for us in Christ. Its curse was nailed to the cross in the Person of Jesus.

The law, however, does remain intact. It still reveals God's demands for righteousness and the certainty of the curse of death if one fails to embrace that righteousness through Jesus. Further, it will stand throughout time as the evidence that Jesus is who he says he is: Immanuel, God With Us, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. He is the sacrificial lamb, the scapegoat who bears our sins away, the city of refuge to which we can flee for protection from the curse of the law. He is the bronze serpent lifted up in the desert who heals our fatal disease. He is our sanctuary through whom we can personally enter the presence of the Father. He is the curtain that protected sinful people from the presence of a holy God, and he is that same curtain that tore by a divine act and opened a new and living way to the Father. He is our high priest, our mediator, our Messiah. And overarching all of these, he is our Sabbath rest. In him we can experience peace, freedom from anxiety, and the palpable presence of God every day of our lives. In him a day in time is eclipsed by Today (Hebrews 4:7) and the eternal rest of embracing Jesus' complete fulfillment of the law.

As I read Romans 3:31 with my friend, I felt a deep confidence that is new to me. Jesus is faithful, and the Holy Spirit does reveal truth through the Scriptures.

"Turn to the story of the transfiguration in Matthew 17," I said.

I knew now exactly how I would answer her question: the law, including the Sabbath, testifies about Jesus.

It's all about Him!

I recently challenged my church elders on the subject of the Seal of God

I was a strong Seventy-day Adventist for seven solid years. I recently challenged my church elders on the subject of the "Seal of God." They did not like this. I did not mean to upset them but I knew we were wrong. I am reading your book, *Sabbath in Christ*, and it is just an amazingly insightful book. I borrowed it from my friend... I will do my best to get this message out.

You are a fanatic to believe such nonsense

(*Proclamation!* regarding Dr. Fredericks "A Biblical Response to Abortion, Part I")

If there is no specific Scripture prohibition, my opinion is just as valid as yours. I believe that when the new born takes that "breath of life" it becomes a "child" and "human." All of your "arguments" are based solely on your emotions. A fetus looks like a baby? Yes, but at one time it also looked like a fish. You say some 21 million abortions have been performed. It is clear that you think each one is performed at the request of a woman who believes, like you, that it is a murder. Yet she says, "Do it anyway." You are so massively wrong it stuns me. You are a fanatic to believe such nonsense. Please remove my name from your mailing list. Thank You, W. P.

I am so amazed at the changes that God has brought

Dear Dale, Thanks for your dedication to God in publishing *Proclamation!* magazine. It is read from cover to cover in our household within days of receiving it! The articles are also a topic of discussion with our friends who also left the SDA church when we did six years ago. Each magazine is timely when we receive it. There are three couples in our group who are not receiving *Proclamation!* Would you please include them on your mailing list? We are enclosing a check to help out with the Magazine. We hope to send something monthly from now on. We would also like for you to send us a copy of *Sabbath in Christ*. We were given a copy of *Sabbath in Crisis* when we first left the SDA church and it took me almost a year before I could read it. It was so helpful to me when I finally did read it. I was questioning so much and as I read it I began to see why. It is true; you can't see the forest for the trees when you are standing in the very middle of it all. My husband and I are so grateful to be where we are today. I am so amazed at the changes that God has brought about. We will be praying for you and the others who are involved in this ministry. There must be many obstacles thrown in your path to try to discourage you. Please know that there are many of us out here that are being encouraged through this ministry. Our love in Christ, D. & D. P.

It is a cause of discussion for some and disgust for others

Dear LAM, I truly wish to thank you for sending a copy of *Sabbath in Christ* to me. I found the book to be thoroughly researched and gently written. I have read it and have begun sharing it with the various sabbatarians here. It is a cause of discussion for some and disgust for others. That means it is saying the right things at the right time. Thank you for putting me on the *Proclamation!* mailing list. I've enjoyed reading it...

I want to offer encouragement

LAM, I always enjoy receiving your magazine each month. I was born, raised, and schooled in the SDA ways for 30 some years, and grew spiritually, but about five years ago the Holy Spirit removed the scales from my eyes, exposing the Gospel and many of my non-biblical beliefs, emphasis, and practices. God mainly used the Bible and your books to help me to see clearly. I am fortunate that at the same time God was leading me, my church (Grace Place), transitioned out of the SDA church, which meant I could respond to where God was leading me without even changing churches. What a blessing! Although now most all of Adventism has faded from my life, whenever I read *Proclamation's* Letters to the Editor I'm reminded that others' transition

is much more difficult than mine. I feel for them. I want to offer encouragement to those who are finding such a transition difficult. In my life, I have found that beyond the personal blessings of understanding the Gospel, it is also such a pleasure to be part of a group that reaches out to the community with a package that is functional and pure, and to see people respond to Christ alone, without being required to load a backpack of extras on there back afterward! What a joy! Looking back, the only thing I wonder about is why I resisted the transition as long as I did. Thank you for your ministry.

Super good!

I want to tell you how much the tapes, "On Becoming Who You Are" has meant to me. Super good!

I cannot stop praising God!

Hi Dale, I cannot stop praising God all the while I was reading this e-mail. God is awesome and merciful and wills that no man or woman should be lost. I will continue to support and pray for the opening of the eyes of all people especially those who are under bondage. I have a terminally ill SDA friend who is afraid to die because of her understanding—or misunderstanding—of the shedding of Jesus' [blood] on the cross. She needs to recognize that Jesus fulfilled the Law for her and she is saved by grace. O what a terrible place to be when one refuses to believe the Truth. I will continue to see her and try to help her see Jesus in a totally different way. I will be looking for *Proclamation* and hope that the ministry will continue or be able to keep going. God bless all of you and especially all those in Africa whose eyes have been opened. E.T.

Cain's offering (Sunday as a holy day)

Dear People: I received your *Proclamation* for March/April a couple days ago, so I decided to write a comment or two. I have written you before, but you never include my letters in your letter section. I notice Verle Streifling is still very busy apprising everyone of the "distortions" in the *Clear Word* Commentary [sic].

I think this is a good work because if people do go to their Bibles and study it out, at least, they will be doing some Bible study. I find much of your paper very sad, but it has its amusing components. After these two pages of admonition paying attention to what a man has written, I find on page 19 this contradiction: Someone has written about Isa. 66:22-24 about the Sabbath in the New Earth, and the advice is given to find an answer on pages 359-361 in *Sabbath in Christ*. Now, why on earth would I buy a book (written by some man maybe with a Ph.D.) and read three pages to have him tell me the Bible doesn't mean what it says? My Bible is very consistent. In Genesis, it says God created the earth in six days and rested the seventh. Then it says in Exodus that He wrote with His Own Hand the Ten Commandments, and buried the fourth one right in the middle stating He wants His people to also rest on the seventh day Sabbath and spend it with Him. My Bible says that the Ark of the Covenant was built specially to hold the Ten Commandments Ex. 25:21,22. It was overlaid with pure gold. Ex. 25:11. It was so sacred that when Uzzah touched it, he died. 2 Sam 6:7. The ark is still in heaven: Rev 11:19. And I'm supposed to believe that God wrote with His Own Finger something that was to be valid until someone here on earth decided to change it? Well, the Bible started out that way: Cain thought he could improve on God's methods and requirements. When men continue to bring to God Cain's offering (Sunday as a holy day) He is not going to recognize it any more than he accepted Cain's offering. Jesus rose on the first day of the week. The event was important, the day it happened on isn't. You all have my sympathy May you see your errors before it is too late. M. J. E.

What are the anti-biblical SDA doctrines?

Editor, I have been reading *Proclamation* for some time now and I have a question. What are the anti-biblical SDA doctrines that you are talking about? I have not been able to disprove any of

the SDA doctrines that I have been exposed to. I use only the KJV of my Bible when I study—not Ellen White's writings, garbage off the Internet, or incorrect and sometimes legalistic views like I have been seeing in your magazine. Topics such as the Sabbath cannot be explained any other way except the way that my bible explains them. I don't believe that you have any "new light"—only darkness and deception. I still read your publication for one reason—to know your enemy. A. G. SDA Elder.

Editor's note: We believe the following SDA doctrines to be in error: The Investigative judgment 1844 sanctuary theology; The SDA church as "the remnant church of Bible prophecy"; The writings of Ellen G. White as a continuing and authoritative source of truth; The seventh-day Sabbath as the "seal of God"; Sunday as the mark of the beast; Soul sleep (as a testing truth); Clean and unclean foods (as a testing truth).

It is great to have some good materials for discussions

Thank you for sending me the March/April issue of *Proclamation!* The article on the *Clear Word Bible* was quite revealing. Keep up the good work... Thank you so much for your ministry. SDA ministries evangelize Christians here, [in jail] so it is great to have some good materials for discussions. In Christ, M.B.

I am a third generation SDA who is struggling

I have just recently picked up a copy of *Proclamation* that was issued in January of this year and noticed an offer for a free copy of the book *Sabbath in Christ*. I am a third generation SDA who is struggling, along with my husband, a 4th generation SDA, on the issue of the Sabbath, the church, etc. We spent 4 years traveling with an interdenominational missions group and seeing God alive in so many people of so many denominations that much of what we have been taught (16 years of SDA schools each) is being called into question. In addition to that experience, we are now actively involved

in leading worship at a couple of other churches...in town and are finding much freedom in the worship and the grace that is so alive in these churches. I'm sure that you are aware that there is much fear involved in even questioning things, as we have much baggage. However, we just want to honestly know what God's will is for us regarding the SDA church and the Sabbath—regardless of what the answer is from Him, we need to know and will follow Him. Would you consider sending me a copy of the book? I understand if you are out of the free copies—I can pay for it if you wish. I just feel that we need to search desperately after God and read all that there is (SDA and non-SDA) on the topic and see where God leads us as a family. I don't want my kids...raised with the confusing contradictions that I was raised with (i.e. "You can wade, but not swim on the Sabbath!"). I appreciate anything that you can do to help in this search! We pray daily that God will reveal His heart for us. Please pray for us as well! K.W.

How wonderful!!!

Dear Dale: I was raised and educated in the SDA church. (Atlanta Union Academy, Little Creek Academy, SMC, LLU School of Dentistry.) My son Mark gave me one of your books *Sabbath in Christ*. I've been reading it over the 4th [of July] holiday and it is helping me to understand some of my frustrations. I had already dropped my membership but feel the need to solidify my own belief system. Fortunately, a few of us discovered the Gospel in our home Bible study. How wonderful!!!

I understand why Paul was so enthusiastic having come out of the heavy burden of legalism. Anyway, you don't have the time to read my life story. I would like to order (5) more copies. If you could tell me how to do this, I'd appreciate. D.S.

Mail letters and donations to:

Life Assurance Ministries
PO Box 11587
Glendale, AZ 85318

The memoirs of Elder Henry Brown

I will remember "Elder Brown" as he was affectionately known by his friends. Elder Brown lived in Santa Cruse, near Monterey Bay Academy, where I taught for seven years. Although retired, occasionally he would preach for Adventist pastors in the area. As far as I know, Elder Brown remained a well-respected Adventist to his death. When I left the Adventist ministry and started an independent church, Elder Brown seemed quite supportive of me. We talked on several occasions as I was struggling trying to make sense of the Investigative Judgment, etc. He assured me that the writings of Ellen White should not be used for authority and that there were problems with SDA's sanctuary theology. However, I never knew the full extent of Elder Brown's experience until recently when I received his memoirs. We think that the majority of our readers will appreciate looking through the large, polychromatic window of Elder Brown's perspective of Adventism. —The Editor

My name is Henry F. Brown, and I have decided to write out my reminiscences from a long life in connection with Mrs. Ellen White and her literature. Today is the 5th of December, 1984.

I've been a member of the Adventist church since I was 12 years old, born in 1892, making me at this time 92 years old. I was baptized at a camp meeting in Southern California, Los Angeles. I've been a minister of the Adventist church since 1919, just 60 years ago. I served the church during all the time since then.

I was sent down as a boy to Mexico to sell books. We called ourselves Colporteurs then, and I didn't know one word of Spanish. They handed me a typewritten page of paper and the book, and I pasted the description upside-down in the book and tried to read it to the people, which of course I couldn't do very well. They would take it out of my hands and read it and turn it to the next page and read that and the last page said "In two weeks I would bring you this book," and the cost, and believe it—miracles of miracles—they would sign their names on there and I would deliver the book. But I couldn't say a word to them that they could understand.

Before I became a Seventh-day Adventist, I was twelve years of age when I finished the eighth grade, and my father, being an immigrant, had almost no education in English. I think he had been in school for about three weeks, and I considered myself educated

comparing myself to my father. But the Adventists said, "No, no, you must get an education and be a missionary." So I went to school and spent four years in the academy, as they called the high school, and then went down to Mexico as a colporteur.

My brother had been sent to Spain to begin the same type of work in Spain, as he had learned Spanish already. He wanted me to come to Spain and work with him there and develop into something useful. On my way to Spain, while in New York, I decided I'd go down to Washington which I considered to be, as we consider Palestine today, the Holy Land. Down there a school was in operation called the Foreign Missionary Seminary, and the students said, "No, you mustn't go to Spain; who are you going to marry over there?" I was a boy of about 18 at the time, and I told them I hadn't thought of that.

They took me to _____ and she said, "Henry, if you were my son I would tell you to stay here at the school and find you a sweetheart and then go to Spain, and she could come later." This I did. I spent four years there and graduated from the Washington Missionary College in 1919.

It was there that I realized that I had the opportunity of my life. The General Conference men lived in Tacoma Park where the college was, and they would come and speak to us in assembly meetings and also in our classes. They would become very close friends of ours, and I chatted with them about problems. Now, remember I knew nothing at all about religion, or about the Bible, and all I knew about it was being taught by a good professor whom I loved greatly, Elder C. S. Sorensen. The matters that I learned were what they wanted me to learn, and I discovered, to my sorrow later on, that I knew very, very little about the Adventists themselves.

One time they called together all the book men who were selling books around the United States, and inasmuch as I'd been down in Mexico, I considered myself one of them. I went there, and they were discussing the matter of the revision of the book *Daniel and Revelation*. Uriah Smith, the author of the book, was an Arian. In this book he had stated that Christ was a created being, or had emanated in some way from the Father. This was not good Protestant belief. Elder W. A. Spicer was present at that meeting, and he got up after they discussed the problem a long while, and said,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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