

FUTURE NEWS

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A FIRM PLATFORM

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. Hebrews 10:35-36.



I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps—the first, second, and third angel's messages. Said my accompanying angel, 'Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.' I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid and immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints; for God was the Master Builder, and they were fighting against Him. They recounted the wonderful work of God, which had led them to the firm platform, and in union raised their eyes to heaven and with a loud voice glorified God. This affected some of those who had complained and left the platform, and they with humble look again stepped upon it.

"I was pointed back to the proclamation of the first advent of Christ. John was sent in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of Jesus. Those who rejected the testimony of John were not benefited by the teachings of Jesus. Their opposition to the message that foretold His coming placed them where they could not readily receive the strongest evidence that He was the Messiah. Satan led on those who rejected the message of John to go still farther, to reject and crucify Christ. In doing this they placed themselves where they could not receive the blessing on the day of Pentecost, which would have taught them the way into the heavenly sanctuary. The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. But the Jews were left in total darkness. They lost all the light which they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings. The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly, yet they had no knowledge of the change. Therefore they could not be benefited by the mediation of Christ in the holy place....

"Those who rejected the first message could not be benefited by the second; neither were they benefited by the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. And by rejecting the two former messages, they have so darkened their understanding that they can see no light in the third angel's message, which shows the way into the most holy place. I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there."

Early Writings, 258-260.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to proclaim the final warning message of Revelation 14 as identified by the prophecies of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. The end-time fulfillment of Bible prophecy is no longer future; for it is taking place before our very eyes. The historic and prophetic understanding of Seventh-day Adventism is now present truth—we are the final generation. Our emphasis is placed upon the prophetic word, including all of the counsel of God's Word. To know what lies ahead is useless if we do not possess the experience to stand during these solemn times. Through obedience to God's law and faith in His promises, we are to receive that experience.

FFA and its educational institution of **School of the Prophets (SOTP)** fully endorse the definition of the everlasting gospel as being the work of Christ in developing and thereafter demonstrating two classes of worshippers based upon the introduction of a three-step prophetic testing message. Coupled with this prophetic gospel, we uphold all aspects of country living and the medical missionary work.

FFA is proactively spreading God's final warning message through various mediums, such as this monthly newsletter, daily recorded classes held by **SOTP**, DVD production, biannual camp-meetings, and social media. An integral part of this responsibility is meeting the demands of our extensive travel itinerary. The urgency in advancing present truth extends to every corner of the earth. By God's grace, we are fervently working to meet such demands.

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THE MOVEMENT DOES NOT SIN

by THABO MTETWA

The present truth movement has been rocked by a growing number of shakings in recent times. These shakings often follow a similar trajectory which can be summarized as follows: a new phase of light is unsealed to the students of prophecy; or alternatively, some individual or group arises with "new light" they believe their brethren need to hear and receive. But their new light is not light at all. It is rather some new or old phase of error. Once the teachings in question begin to be examined, division starts to occur between those who are grounded in the truth and walking in the advancing light, and those who are receiving error and descending into fanaticism.

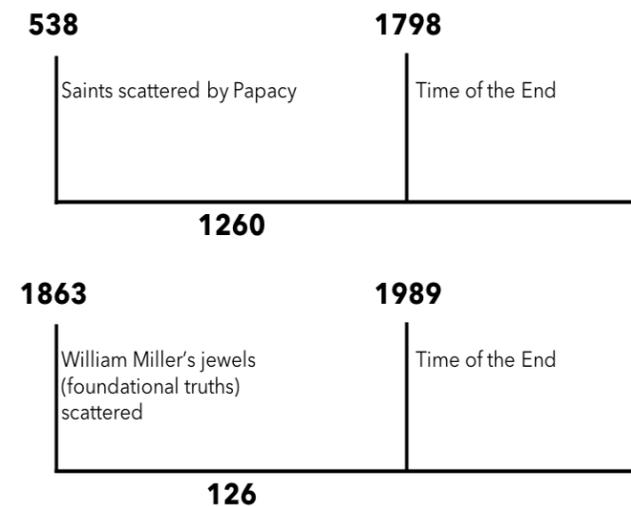
Often those on the wrong side of these situations become disgruntled and bitter, and begin to say things that are not true.¹ An example is the statement that the movement (which they freely acknowledged was led by God before their particular theories were rejected) is being led astray - either at the doctrinal level or in the direction in which it is being led by its leadership. And when the leadership of the movement present a united front in condemning their false teachings and accusations they plead mistreatment. Thus they follow the course of the first great rebel who gained the sympathies of a third of the angels by accusing God of mistreating him and misleading the church in Heaven.

It is a genuine tragedy that anyone would pursue such a course as that described above. A tragedy on account of the fact that such individuals set themselves in opposition to God and His work. They are leading souls to believe in lies and thus depart from the way in which He is leading. Fortunately, God has not left His people without light that will enable them detect the sophistries of these agents of the arch-deceiver. There are lines of truth that present clear counsel on whether it is possible for the movement to go astray. It must be said, however, that this study's purpose is not to convince the naysayers who, by their rejection of truth, are now falling backward, and being broken, and snared, and taken by the darkness of strong delusion (Isaiah 28:13). It will rather present evidences that will confirm the faithful and clarify their understanding of this subject. This study, therefore, presupposes an acceptance of and faith in the inspired methodology for our time—prophetic line upon prophetic line.



SINS OF THE FATHERS

From 1863-1989 a 126-year period is identified in which the rejection of the truths that are the foundations of Adventism took place (see diagram below). This is the scattering of the Jewels of truth in William Miller's dream.² This 126-year period which came to close at the Time of the End for the final generation (1989), is typified by the 1260 years of Papal scattering (or persecution) that came to a close in 1798. The jewels in Miller's dream are the foundations of Adventism illustrated on Habakkuk's two tables—the 1843 and 1850 charts.³ These charts are the tokens of God's covenant with Adventism. They are to us what the two tables of the ten commandments were to ancient Israel. They are thus a symbol of God's law. Now, sin is defined as the transgression of the law. So to break any of the ten commandments would be to break God's law. In like manner, to reject any of the truths on the two tables of Adventism's covenant is to break God's law and thus commit sin.



The truths on Habakkuk's tables are prophecies. So, sin here is prophetic in character. This corresponds with the identification of the everlasting gospel as a three-step prophetic testing message that develops and demonstrates two classes of worshippers.⁴ The point being that God's people are tested on how they respond to a prophetic message. From 1863-1989 the fathers of Adventism committed the prophetic sin of rejecting the truths on the 1843 and 1850 charts. They not only rejected these truths which are the foundations and pillars of Adventism, but they also accepted false and delusive doctrines in their place. These developments have borne fruit in this final generation of Adventism—a generation that is only Adventist in name and stands ready to receive the Sunday Law, which is the mark of the beast. These are the sins that are to be recalled and confessed now in fulfilment of the instruction in Leviticus 26:38-42 to confess the sins of the fathers.



And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them. If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. Leviticus 26:38-42.

These sins are confessed and forsaken by recognizing and acknowledging what has taken place within Adventism and returning to an understanding in acceptance of that which had been forsaken. This is seen in the call for Ephesus to return to its first love. It can be demonstrated that the history and counsel to the church of Ephesus (the beginning of the New Testament church) is a type of the history of the final reformatory movement. This call to remember the sins of the fathers became present truth at 9/11. This is also the call to return to the old paths of Adventism—the truths on the 1843 and 1850 charts—that have been identified as present truth since 9/11 (Jeremiah 6:16-17).

From the definitions set forth in the preceding paragraphs it can be understood that if the movement rejected the messages God sends it, or if it as a body received and propagated false and fanatical doctrines, that this would be sin. And if the movement, acting on the basis of these false doctrines, pursued a course contrary to that which God has delineated for it in His prophetic word, it would thus commit sin. It is therefore the fundamental contention of those who say the movement is being led astray that it is in fact sinning. As the kings of Israel caused them to sin, so the leadership of this movement is causing God's people to sin.⁵ Now what each individual needs to settle for themselves is whether or not such a development is even possible. This is the question the following sections will seek to answer.

THE INCARNATION

A pertinent line of truth is that of the incarnation. Since 9/11 the call to "eat the little book" has been present truth. It is an established truth within this movement that Millerite history is repeating to the very letter now in the history of the final generation. The first angel's message borne by Miller and his associates was empowered by the fulfilment of Josiah Litch's prediction about the fall

of the Ottoman Empire (second woe) on August 11, 1840.⁶ Following this fulfilment, the first angel's message rapidly advanced across the realm of Christendom. This development is symbolically represented by the angel of Revelation 10 descending with one foot on the sea and the other upon dry land—thus identifying the world-wide proclamation of the message.⁷ This development typifies the descent of the angel of Revelation 18 at the entrance of the third woe, radical Islam, at 9/11. As with the angel of Revelation 10, the angel of Revelation 18 presents a message, a little book, that God's people must eat. When the message from Heaven is comprehended and gladly received by the human agent, they thus bring their humanity in union with divinity.⁸ The union of divinity and humanity is represented in scripture as the incarnation. Christ in His own life illustrated the union of divinity and humanity. And he demonstrated that divinity combined with humanity does not sin. This is the testimony of inspiration.

"The Saviour took upon Himself the infirmities of humanity and lived a sinless life, that men might have no fear that because of the weakness of human nature they could not overcome. Christ came to make us 'partakers of the divine nature,' and **His life declares that humanity, combined with divinity, does not commit sin.**" *The Ministry of Healing*, 180.

"'The prince of this world cometh,' said Jesus, 'and hath nothing in Me.' John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character." *The Desire of Ages*, 123.

John, when commanded to eat the little book in Revelation 10, represents the Millerite movement that received the first angel's message and proclaimed it. Did the Millerite movement that partook of the divine message, and thus come into union with divinity, sin? Did they depart from God's will and purpose for them over the course of the time in which He was testing them? Did they fall prey to the machinations of wicked men seeking to mislead them for their own unrighteous purposes? No they did not. Notwithstanding their human mistake which led to their disappointment on October 22, 1844, inspiration testifies that they proclaimed the message as God would have had them. They fulfilled His will.



"Like the first disciples, William Miller and his associates did not, themselves, fully comprehend the import of the message which they bore. Errors that had been long established in the church prevented them from arriving at a correct interpretation of an important point in the prophecy. Therefore, though they proclaimed the message which God had committed to them to be given to the world, yet through a misapprehension of its meaning they suffered disappointment." *The Great Controversy*, 351.

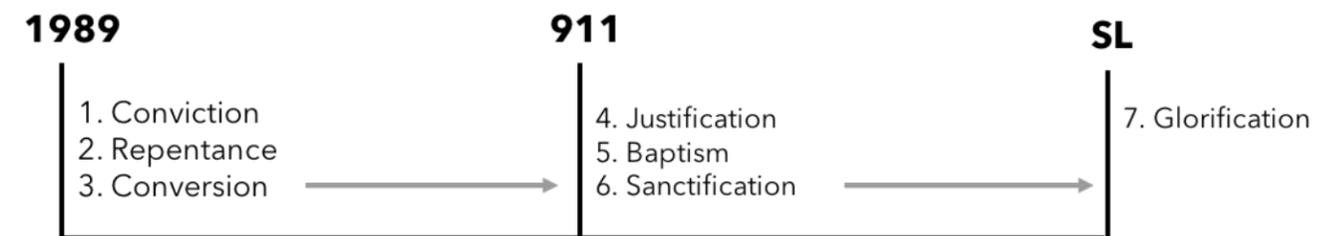
Now John is a type of the movement that receives and proclaims the light brought by the angel of Revelation 18, which is typified by the angel of Revelation 10. As with the Millerites, the movement that receives the light of this angel is bringing its humanity in union with God's divinity. And as with the Millerites, this movement will not sin. It will not depart from God's purpose either in the message it proclaims, the doctrines it espouses, or in the courses of action it pursues in response to the messages that have been opened to its understanding. Individuals may make mistakes and hold to erroneous views. Individuals may prove unfaithful. But the movement as a body does not fail.

SEVEN STEPS OF SALVATION

There is additional testimony from the reform lines of sacred history which prove that the movement does not sin. One is the seven steps of salvation highlighted in the book *Steps to Christ*. The movement can be represented as a Christian that the Lord is leading through the various steps of salvation. As it is with the individual so it is with the movement. This dynamic can be seen in other scriptural symbols. The figure of the growth of a plant can be used to illustrate the process of individual Christian growth. And it can also be used to illustrate the growth of the church.⁹ The temple as a symbol on one hand represents the church, but can also represent the individual Christian depending on the application being made.¹⁰

When these steps of salvation are laid upon the line of the final reformatory movement, they teach important truths about the development of the present-truth movement. The seven steps are as follows:

1. Conviction
2. Repentance
3. Conversion
4. Justification
5. Baptism
6. Sanctification
7. Glorification



Conviction

At the Time of the End, Daniel 11:40-45, the first angel's message for the final reform movement, was unsealed. The first angel's principal work is to convict of sin. This is brought to view in the language of the angel's message which says to "fear God." Daniel 11:40-45 brings about a fearful conviction of sin through its teaching that probation closes on Adventism first at the Sunday Law. And not only does probation close for Adventism at the Sunday Law, but the progression of events leading to this event and Christ's second coming has already begun. It began at the Time of the End in 1989. Thus bringing into focus the fact that all the sins in one's life must be presently put away if they will be prepared to close their probation on the right side of the great controversy. This process is set forth in more general terms in the following passage:

"But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. The 'Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' illumines the secret chambers of



the soul, and the hidden things of darkness are made manifest. John 1:9. **Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.**" *Steps to Christ*, 24.

Conviction is also described in the following passage along with the fact that it must be accompanied by confession.

"The 'honest and good heart' of which the parable speaks, is not a heart without sin; for the gospel is to be preached to the lost. Christ said, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Mark 2:17. **He has an honest heart who yields to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. He confesses his guilt, and feels his need of the mercy and love of God. He has a sincere desire to know the truth, that he may obey it.** The good heart is a believing heart, one that has faith in the word of God. Without faith it is impossible to receive the word. 'He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.' Hebrews 11:6." *A Call to Stand Apart*, 24.

Repentance

God's warning messages that bring conviction, if rightly received, will lead to repentance. Repentance is defined as a Godly sorrow for sin.

"Repentance is associated with faith, and is urged in the gospel as essential to salvation. Paul preached repentance. He said, 'I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts 20:20, 21). There is no salvation without repentance. No impenitent sinner can believe with his heart unto righteousness. **Repentance is described by Paul as a godly sorrow for sin**, that 'worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of' (2 Corinthians 7:10). This repentance has in it nothing of the nature of merit, but it prepares the heart for the acceptance of Christ as the only Saviour, the only hope of the lost sinner.

"As the sinner looks to the law, his guilt is made plain to him, and pressed home to his conscience, and he is condemned. His only comfort and hope

is found in looking to the cross of Calvary. As he ventures upon the promises, taking God at His word, relief and peace come to his soul. He cries, 'Lord, Thou hast promised to save all who come unto Thee in the name of Thy Son. I am a lost, helpless, hopeless soul. Lord, save, or I perish.' His faith lays hold on Christ, and he is justified before God."

Selected Messages, book 1, 365.

Conversion

The Godly sorrow of repentance is followed by conversion. These two developments are closely related. Conversion is described as a complete change of heart and mind—a process in which the thoughts, desires, and motives which were once at variance with God's law are brought in line with Him and His will.

"The great truth of the conversion of the heart by the Holy Spirit is presented in Christ's words to Nicodemus: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he can not see the kingdom of God.... That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.'" John 3:3-8, margin."

Christ's Object Lessons, 98.

"The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. **The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God.**" *Ibid.*

Conversion leads the sinner to desire to do God's will and to begin to act on these new impulses which have been implanted in their heart by the Holy Spirit. It necessarily follows conviction which is itself a response to a warning message. The warning message of Daniel 11:40-45 was unsealed in 1989. Therefore, conversion can be marked as commencing at this point also. It is important to understand that conversion is not an event but a process.¹¹ So while it began in 1989 it continues to its full development which is marked at 9/11.

Justification

When one is converted, God justifies them. The Greek word translated as 'justify' means to 'acquit.'¹² To acquit someone is to absolve them of guilt for a given offence. It is described by the Spirit of Prophecy as follows:

"As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.

"Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: 'This is My child, I relieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy—eternal life—because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son.' Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness, stands faultless before God."

Faith and Works, 103.¹³

Baptism

When one is converted and justified they will seek the ordinance of baptism. Baptism is an outward declaration of the spiritual renovation and cleansing from sin that they have experienced.

"Christ made baptism the entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Those who receive the ordinance of baptism thereby make a public declaration that they have renounced the world, and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.

"Those who do this are to make all worldly considerations secondary to their new relations. Publicly they have declared that they will no longer live in pride and self-indulgence. Christ enjoins those who receive this ordinance to remember that they

are bound by a solemn covenant to live to the Lord. They are to use for Him all their entrusted capabilities, never losing the realization that they bear God's sign of obedience to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, that they are subjects of Christ's kingdom, partakers of the divine nature. They are to surrender all they have and are to God, employing all their gifts to His name's glory.

"Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have accepted the invitation, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.'" *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 6, 1075.

Justification and baptism point to the new birth experience when the penitent sinner passes from death to life. His submersion in the waters of baptism represents the grave to which the old man of sin is consigned by death. The raising up out of the waters represents the new man, newly born in Christ and living a life of faith—walking with Him and doing His will.

Justification and baptism are marked at 9/11 where the baptismal waters of the Holy Spirit are shed upon God's people in the latter rain. In the reform line of Moses, this answers to the Red Sea crossing which is also a symbol of baptism and is also located at 9/11 prophetically (1 Corinthians 10:2). In the line of Christ, this answers to Christ's baptism in A.D. 27 which is also a type of 9/11 for the final reformatory movement.

Sanctification

Following the cleansing from sin at baptism, the Christian lives a new life in Jesus Christ. Now the Bible is clear that Christ did not sin, and those in whom He abides do not sin.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 1 John 3:4-6.



This is sanctification: a continual and growing walk in holiness. Sanctification has been described as the work of a lifetime and can thus be seen to be progressive in nature.

“Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience.” *Acts of the Apostles*, 560.

“The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man’s sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them.” *Ibid.*, 532.

Someone who is growing in a sanctified experience is growing in holiness. They are as a sapling that is perfect in its present form, but expresses more fully its Creator’s purpose at each successive stage of growth. Someone who is sanctified, according to the correct definition of the term, does not sin.¹⁴ And it is Christ’s will that the Christian abides in Him from the very onset of his walk until its close at his death.

Glorification

At death, the sanctified one sleeps in the grave awaiting Christ’s second coming; at which point he will be glorified, raised to new life with a glorified body.

“Graves are opened, and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth... awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:2. All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. ‘They also which pierced Him’

(Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient. *The Great Controversy*, 637.

“The living righteous are changed ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.’ At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels ‘gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’ Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers’ arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.” *Ibid.*, 645.

Glorification is marked at the Sunday Law in a prophetic application as the Sunday Law marks the close of probation. Those who close their probation with a sanctified experience will be glorified at Christ’s second coming. They also glorify God in the testimony that they give during the final crisis.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SEVEN STEPS OF SALVATION

The understanding set forth above has implications for how the current and future course of the movement is to be understood. The movement has been growing in sanctification since 9/11. As sanctification precludes sin by definition, it means the movement has not sinned and it cannot sin. It will continue to grow in this sanctified experience until the close of probation. Sin here is not moral but prophetic, as stated earlier. Prophetic sin being to reject light from heaven, to adopt erroneous doctrines, or to pursue wrong courses of action as a result of adopting erroneous doctrines.

This truth has grave implications for those who are now taking the position that men are leading the movement astray. The foregoing arguments show that by taking this position, they are demonstrating that they are in opposition to the truth. They are fighting against the God of Heaven, not against the human instrumentalities they have made the targets of their false accusations; and against whom they have manifested the most unreasonable and unrelenting bitterness. A bitterness which confirms the testimony of inspiration that former brethren who apostatize will be the most bitter enemies of their brethren who remain faithful to the truth.¹⁵

AN INSTRUCTIVE VISION

The point conveyed by the line of the steps of salvation is also conveyed by Sister White’s vision of a ship colliding with an iceberg.

“Shortly before I sent out the testimonies regarding the efforts of the enemy to undermine the foundation of our faith through the dissemination of seductive theories, I had read an incident about a ship in a fog meeting an iceberg. For several nights I slept but little. I seemed to be bowed down as a cart beneath sheaves. One night a scene was clearly presented before me. A vessel was upon the waters, in a heavy fog. Suddenly the lookout cried, ‘Iceberg just ahead!’ ere, towering high above the ship, was a gigantic iceberg. An authoritative voice cried out, ‘Meet it!’ ere was not a moment’s hesitation. It was a time for instant action. e engineer put on full steam, and the man at the wheel steered the ship straight into the iceberg. With a crash she struck the ice. ere was a fearful shock, and the iceberg broke into many pieces, falling with a noise like thunder to the deck. e passengers were violently shaken by the force of the collisions, but no lives were lost. e vessel was injured, but not beyond repair. She rebounded from the contact, trembling from stem to stern, like a living creature. en she moved forward on her way.

“Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders. I had heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, ‘Meet it!’ I knew what my duty was, and that there was not a moment to lose. e time for decided action had come. I must without delay obey the command, ‘Meet it!’

“That night I was up at one o’clock, writing as fast as my hand could pass over the paper. For the next few days I worked early and late, preparing for our people the instruction given me regarding the errors that were coming in among us.

“I have been hoping that there would be a thorough reformation, and that the principles for which we fought in the early days, and which were brought out in the power of the Holy Spirit, would be maintained.” *Selected Messages*, book 1, 205, 206.

In this vision the ship is the church (this movement) and the iceberg is the omega apostasy. The omega apostasy finds an application within this movement in the phases of error (or false latter rain messages) that have been entering since 2014. It is this movement that is instructed to meet the omega head on. These false teachers are to be opposed, not because they are disagreeable



in their moral conduct, but because the reception of their falsehoods would lead souls into a false religious experience and thus be lost for eternity.¹⁶ Some are pleading that those heeding the divine instruction to “meet it” are too zealous. They misrepresent faithfulness in opposing wrong as an arbitrary exercise of kingly power. They say the false teachers are being mistreated and thus the issue is mischaracterized as a moral controversy (a matter of right or wrong Christian conduct) instead of the doctrinal controversy that it is. These contentions raised by the false teachers and their sympathizers shake the movement from stern to stern, but it will not sink. This conveys the fact that although shaken, this movement will not fail. It will neither go into fanaticism, nor will it be hijacked, overthrown or misled. Rather, it will go on to fulfil the purpose for which God raised it.

WALK BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 2 Peter 2:1-3.

Many will be tested by the faith and trust they place in friends and associates. Many fall, not because they have been beguiled by false doctrines primarily, but because of the “cords of sympathy” that bind their hearts to those who have been beguiled by false doctrines and who are acting to propagate them. There is a situation that is sadly playing out in the country of Zambia in Southern Africa as of this writing. A certain teacher in the region once walked in lock-step with his brethren who are standing on the platform of truth. He believed the truth, proclaimed the truth, and defended it. He was a student at the movement’s *School of the Prophets* in the United Kingdom and was instrumental in the missionary effort to first carry the message to Zambia. He has thus formed bonds of friendship and trust with the brethren there. But in a repetition of the rebellions that have been from the beginning of the great controversy, he has departed from the faith and begun to speak evil of the movement and misrepresent its teachings to new believers in that area of the Lord’s vineyard. He has turned to using the very arguments, misrepresentations, and materials set forth by longtime enemies of the movement to win over the inexperienced and thus gain disciples to himself.



The only hope for the brethren there, and elsewhere in the world where this scenario is playing out, is to walk by faith and not by sight.¹⁷ And to “judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”¹⁸ The faith being referred to here is the faith that has its basis in the testimony of prophecy. Prophecy is being communicated prophetic line upon prophetic line in our day. And the testimony of these prophetic lines is that the movement does not sin. Hence any individual, no matter what their course has been in the past, and no matter what cords of sympathy bind one’s heart to them, cannot be trusted when their testimony is at variance with truths established upon many witnesses.

¹⁷This should be done in the case of every church. And when there is a servant of God, whom He has appointed to do a certain work, and who for half a century has been an accepted worker, laboring for the people of our faith, and before God’s workers as one whom the Lord has appointed; when for some reason one of the brethren falls under temptation, and because of the messages of warning given him becomes offended, as did the disciples of Christ, and walks no more with Christ; when he begins to work against the truth, and make his disaffection public, declaring things untrue which are true, these things must be met. The people must not be left to believe a lie. They must be undeceived. The filthy garments with which the servant of God has been clothed must be removed.

“If those who have done this work take shelter in the statement that they are led by the Holy Spirit, it is as Satan clothing himself with the heavenly garments of purity, while still working out his own attributes.”—Letter 98, 1897, pp. 5, 9. *Selected Messages*, book 3, 348, 349.

²Mtetwa, Thabo. “William Miller’s Dream with Explanatory Notes.” *Future News Canada*, 16 June 2015, www.futurenews.ca/william-millers-dream-with-explanatory-notes/.

³Mtetwa, Thabo. “The Foundation of Adventism.” *Future News Canada*, 16 Nov. 2014, www.futurenews.ca/the-foundations-of-adventism/.

⁴Jeff Pippenger

⁵1 Kings 15:25-30; 1 Kings 16:25-26

⁶*The Great Controversy*, 334

⁷*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 7, 971

⁸*Manuscript Releases*, volume 1, 249

⁹“A certain man,’ then, He continued, ‘had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?’”

“Christ’s hearers could not misunderstand the application of His words. David had sung of Israel as the vine brought out of Egypt. Isaiah had written, **The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel**, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant.’ Isaiah 5:7. The generation to whom the Saviour had come were represented by the fig tree in the Lord’s vineyard—within the circle of His special care and blessing.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 214.

“Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.’ ‘He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.’ In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. **The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God’s grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.**” *Testimonies to Ministers*, 506.

¹⁰“The apostle plainly outlined the result of turning from a life of purity and holiness to the corrupt practices of heathenism. ‘Be not deceived,’ he wrote; ‘neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, ... nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.’ He begged them to control the lower passions and appetites. **‘Know ye not,’ he asked, ‘that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?’**” *Acts of the Apostles*, 306.

“The Lord has provided His church with capabilities and blessings, that they may present to the world an image of His own sufficiency, and that His church may be complete in Him, a continual representation of another, even the eternal world, of laws that are higher than earthly laws. **His church is to be a temple built after the divine similitude**, and the angelic architect has brought his golden measuring rod from heaven, that every stone may be hewed and squared by the divine measurement, and polished to shine as an emblem of heaven, radiating in all directions the bright, clear beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The church is to be fed with manna from heaven, and to be kept under the sole guardianship of His grace. Clad in complete armor of light and righteousness, she enters upon her final conflict. The dross, the worthless material, will be consumed, and the influence of the truth testifies to the world of its sanctifying, ennobling character....” *Christian Experience and Teachings*, 208.

¹¹“The wind is heard rustling the leaves and flowers, yet it is invisible. So with the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place or trace the process of conversion, but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working on the heart. Little by little, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through reading the Scriptures or hearing the Word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders to Jesus. Many call this ‘sudden conversion,’ but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God—a patient, protracted process.” *From Heaven With Love*, 108.

¹²G1347 - from 1344; acquittal (for Christ's sake):-justification.

¹³“There is danger in regarding justification by faith as placing merit on faith. When you take the righteousness of Christ as a free gift you are justified freely through the redemption of Christ. What is faith? ‘The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen’ (Hebrews 11:1). It is an assent of the understanding to God’s words which binds the heart in willing consecration and service to God, Who gave the understanding, Who moved on the heart, Who first drew the mind to view Christ on the cross of Calvary. Faith is rendering to God the intellectual powers, abandonment of the mind and will to God, and making Christ the only door to enter into the kingdom of heaven.” *Faith and Works*, 25.

¹⁴“John did not teach that salvation was to be earned by obedience; but that obedience was the fruit of faith and love. ‘Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins,’ he said, ‘and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.’ 1 John 3:5, 6. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in the heart, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God. The sanctified heart is in harmony with the precepts of God’s law.” *Acts of the Apostles*, 563.

“True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God. We are to be sanctified to God through

obedience to the truth. Our conscience must be purged from dead works to serve the living God. We are not yet perfect; but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection. Great possibilities, high and holy attainments, are placed within the reach of all.” *Ibid.*, 565.

¹⁵“As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.” *The Great Controversy*, 608.

¹⁶“No sooner are erratic ideas started in his mind than Brother D begins to lose faith, and to question the work of the Spirit which has been manifested among us for so many years. He is not a man who will entertain what he believes to be special light without imparting it to others; therefore it is not safe to give him influence that will enable him to unsettle other minds. It is opening a door through which Satan will rush in many errors to divert the mind from the importance of the truth for this time. Brethren, as an ambassador of Christ I warn you to beware of these side issues, whose tendency is to divert the mind from the truth. **Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous.** The enemy has great power over minds that are not thoroughly fortified by prayer and established in Bible truth.” *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, 46.

¹⁷2 Corinthians 5:7

¹⁸John 7:24

SOIL part 3

by SARAH BLASING

The previous submissions in this series on ‘practical country living’ focused on the foun-dation of a garden—the soil. It should be our goal to cultivate healthy soil so that we may enjoy healthy, nutritious fruits and vegetables. Thus being the reason we should concen-trate our efforts on developing the soil.

In review per the first submission, soil is divided into four components: rock material, or-ganic material, air, and water. After examining one of these components, rock material, we found that different grain sizes are present in the soil (sand, silt, and clay particles). Furthermore, it was addressed how the composition of the different grain sizes influences the quality of the soil in terms of water, air, and nutrient balance.

In the second submission, we took a closer look at the organic components of the soil and understood that all plant and animal organisms form organic material, whether they are alive or dead. An active soil life composed of living organisms contributes to soil fertil-ity and it protects cultivated plants from diseases. Let us remember that in order to pro-mote soil life and improve soil structure, an adequate supply of organic material is nec-essary.

How do we add organic material to the soil? There are several options such as green manure, mulching, or adding compost.

This article will focus on compost. What is compost? Compost is a type of organic materi-al that has been decomposed to a certain degree by micro-organisms and then repro-cessed.

The following is an overview of the advantages of compost:

ADVANTAGES OF COMPOST

- Soil quality improvement of nearly any soil
- Light and airy soil
- De-compaction of soils with high clay content
- Easier tillage of the soil
- Good aeration
- High water retention capacity (80-90% of its weight)
- Improvement of sandy soils
- Improvement of soil structure
- Allows for air exchange
- Retains humidity while allowing excess water to run off
- Addition of nutrients



- Continues to decompose, thus adding nitrogen to the soil
- Ability to bind important minerals that otherwise would be washed away by rain
- Soil life improvement through food supply
- Soils that are provided with compost tend to produce plants that are more resistant to disease
- Can act as a buffer by neutralizing acidic or alkaline soils

Producing compost is basically initiating the natural processes that occur during the de-composition of organic material. There are two types of compost production: cold com-posting and hot composting.

Cold composting requires little effort, but it takes one to two years before the compost can be used in the garden. The duration of this composting process is difficult to estimate. It depends on the material and its size. The smaller the material, the faster it will decom-pose. No flowering weeds or diseased plants should be added to this type of compost because the temperatures that are reached here are insufficient to kill weed seeds and pathogens.

Cold composting uses the well-known compost pile at the back of the house where or-ganic kitchen waste is taken. After this kitchen waste is added, time goes by and soil-like material is produced. However, in order to ensure that the end product of this method is usable compost, we need to consider a number of things.

First, we need to make sure that there is sufficient air supply available for the compost. Often times with commercial composting bins, this is not the case. It is possible to create air buffers inside the bin by layering different types of materials. Because of this, it is recommended to add dry material like straw, sawdust, or wood chips after damp kitchen waste is added. A small amount of earth can be added as well, preferably already de-composed compost as this contains organisms that will aid the composting process. Breaking up the top layer every once in a while will also air the material causing it to ac-tually decompose, rather than putrefy.

The second type of composting is hot composting. For this process, all of the materials are used at once. If the pile is layered correctly, it will heat up to 60-70°C within the first two days and will maintain this temperature for several days. Under these conditions, weed seeds and pathogens die. Creating hot compost requires more effort, but it yields usable compost within a few months. The key to successful hot composting lies within the following components: nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, and water.

Carbon-Nitrogen Balance

All the organisms that re involved in the composting process require nutrients to work, live, and multiply. The more varied the initial materials, the more beneficial the environ-ment will be for those organisms—hence, the composting process. An important aspect of a good composting process is the carbon (C) - nitrogen (N) ratio (C:N). A ratio of 20-30 parts of carbon to 1 part nitrogen is ideal. If this ratio is closer, the compost composition will be too rich in nitrogen and thus too rich in energy, which will quickly make the com-post very hot. Temperatures that are too high lead to the death of many involved organisms.

If the carbon-nitrogen ratio lies further apart, the compost pile will not stay warm for long. Consequently, the rotting time is extended as the micro-organisms lack nitrogen for food and, therefore, cannot multiply as easily.

Here are some examples: grass cuttings have a C:N ratio of 10-15:1. Wood, however, can have a ratio of 400:1. There are tables showing the C:N ratio for different base mate-rials. They are interesting and informative, but for normal garden use, the following rule applies: If something is green and/or lush, like grass cuttings, kitchen waste, or dung from herbivores, the C:N ratio will be relatively close. While woody, brown materials like wood, straw, twigs, and sawdust have a much wider C:N ratio.

Basically, any excess garden material can be used for composting; be it remnants from the vegetable and fruit gardens, weeds, shrub cuttings, fallen leaves (except from nut trees and oaks), hay, straw, grass cuttings, kitchen waste, old soil from pots, cardboard, etc.

If you use material from a neighbor or friend, you need to make sure that it is completely void of any chemicals. There are certain ingredients in chemical garden products, espe-cially lawn herbicides, that will not decompose in a compost pile, thus impeding vegeta-ble growth in your garden.

Pay attention to the ratio in which the basic materials are added to your compost pile.

Oxygen

Oxygen is a vital element for organisms that are involved in the composting process. They require oxygen for their growth and for energy to convert the composting materials. A lack of oxygen will lead to putrefaction. Putrefaction does not produce good compost. Anaerobic micro-organisms proliferate and produce acids like ammoniac that give the compost pile an unpleasant odor.



The basis for sufficient oxygen in the compost pile can be laid at the start by alternating layers of various materials in different sizes or by mixing them. Straw and twigs for in-stance, create air pockets. As the composting process progresses, turning the material over provides aeration.

Water

Water, too, is among the vital elements for organisms that play an active role in compost-ing. The optimum water content of a compost pile is about 40-60%. A handful of compost should feel like a well wrung sponge. If the compost is too wet, it will putrefy and smell bad. If it is too dry, decomposition does not set in properly and the compost most often gets stuck in the fungal phase and turns grey. In either case, the pile should be turned over, and depending on the situation, be watered or provided with dry material such as straw.

Two seasons are particularly suitable for starting a new compost pile: autumn and spring. Autumn, in particular, provides many materials that can be used straight after the garden has been cleaned. The ideal time for this is before winter sets in.

The correct location for the compost pile should be in an easily accessible and relatively flat place in the garden. It should not be placed on a concrete or tarmacked base, but on natural ground. Contact with topsoil is important for the bacteria and fungi that create the decomposition process to quickly enter the composting material. For the same reason, the location of the compost pile should not be changed on a yearly basis. The place should be sunny in the winter, but in partial shade during the summer (for protection from too much rain). Placing a compost pile under the canopy of large trees is not recom-mended, as the heat that is required for decomposition will not develop and water drops that fall from the leaves will soak the compost for much longer than normal.

An exception to this rule are areas with little rain, where the humidity of the air is higher under the trees preventing the compost pile from drying out too quickly. Moreover, the compost location should not be in the farthest corner of the garden where it will be easily forgotten. An area we pass on the way to the garden is helpful because it makes it easy to check the moisture levels. The area the compost pile is made should be at least twice as big as the pile itself so that it can be turned over easily. It is recommended to choose an even bigger surface area that offers room for the gathering of composting materials. For a garden of 1000m² a composting area of 60m² is recommended.

A compost pile should not be smaller than 1m³, as a smaller amount of material might not heat up sufficiently and/or release the heat too quickly which would slow

the decomposi-tion process down. Yet, it should not be bigger than 1.5m because large piles tend to re-tain too much water and oxygen cannot reach the middle of the pile in sufficient amounts. The ideal compost pile should have a basic width of 1.2m and a height of 1-1.2m.

The bottom layer of the pile should consist of dry, rough stalk materials like straw, corn stalks, or shrub cuttings. This layer ensures aeration of the compost pile, as well as water retention. These materials can now be alternated in thin layers or mixed beforehand. As you make your pile, be sure that eventually two parts of brown material with a wider C:N ratio and 1 part of green material with a closer C:N ratio are added into the pile. Wood and branches that are larger than a thumb's width should be shredded beforehand be-cause they will decompose too slowly. Green plant material should not be shredded, as this will make the material too compact which encourages putrefaction. Allow grass cut-tings to wither before adding them to the pile in thin layers. Dry and damp materials should be well mixed. The more varied the materials the better.

It is good practice to mix in elements of finished compost, rough remnants from sieving the previous compost pile, or some half decomposed compost from an older pile. This allows fungi and bacteria cultures to be transmitted. This process is similar to using yeast when making bread. Another type of material that can be added is rock or clay powder. This promotes the development of stable clay-humus complexes and regulates the pH balance.

When starting your compost pile, add water to the base materials, but keep in mind the humidity levels. One thing to remember as you are making your pile is to add the individ-ual layers loosely and to never compress them or even stamp them down with your feet. Once the pile has reached a height of 1.2m, it is covered. The cover protects the compost from drying and crusting over at the top, but still allows air to enter. It should also filter out sunlight because the decomposition process needs darkness. To cover the pile longer, use grass cuttings, shrub cuttings that are not too big, straw, or a compost fleece. Com-post fleeces are UV resistant, breathable, and drain strong rain along the edges of the pile.

Once the compost pile has been set up, the typical decomposition process that starts consists of three phases. The time it takes varies and is dependent on the season of the year.

During the first phase, the thermophilic phase, the breaking down of carbon com-pounds generates heat. Within two to five days, the compost pile reaches temperatures between 35-65 °C. The ideal temperature range is between 50°C-60°C as these higher



temperatures destroy weed seeds and certain pathogens. In temperatures above 70°C, vital organisms die and the compost pile becomes lifeless and thus unusable. The heat phase lasts about 1-4 weeks and finishes when temperatures have gone back down to 45°C. In order to maintain the higher temperatures of 50-60°C during the heat phase, the material should be turned over regularly. "Turning over" means to thoroughly mix the material from the outside in. This is easily accomplished with a pitchfork, whereby the pile is taken down fork-load by fork-load and then rebuilt in an adjacent area.

It is good practice to check the temperature and humidity of the compost pile daily with the help of a compost thermometer. This way, you will also quickly notice anomalies like many flies, for instance, or a strong smell. If the pile does not heat up within the first five days, nitrogen (e.g. grass cuttings) should be added when turning the material over. Should the pile dry out too much, the "turning over" process is a good time to add water. But, be careful. Do not add too much water, as this can cool the pile down. High temperatures can also be the result of too large of a pile. If necessary, reduce the amount of material. In case of bad smell, there is probably too much nitrogen in the mix. Add some carbon-rich material like straw or wood chippings while turning the material over.

During the second phase, the mesophilic phase, bacteria and fungi are highly active and break down more stable materials. Gradually, the initial components of the pile are no longer recognizable. During this phase, the pile should be turned over once the temperature drops below 30°C. If the pile is no longer warming up, this phase has ended once the compost temperature is at 25°C.

The third phase is the maturation phase and it can be recognized at the many 'creepy crawlies' in the pile. Many different small creatures are at work like earth worms, wood-lice, mites, millipedes, and above all the manure worms. They digest the compost and withdraw only when the compost has fully matured.

Mature compost is dark brown, loose, crumbly, and smells like forest soil. Once it has reached this phase, it should be used soon because it is most effective at that stage. The earlier the compost is used, the higher its fertilizing effect and the 'spicier' the compost. Unripe compost should only be used for heavy feeders.

If you are not sure whether your compost has matured enough, you can do a simple 'cress test'. Mix one part of compost with an equal amount of soil in a dish and add cress seeds. In order to compare, you can simultaneously sow the cress in another dish with just soil. If the cress

seeds sprout quickly, and they look green and healthy, the compost is ready. If they sprout slowly, turn yellow, or are deformed, the compost is not mature.

One good use for mature compost, if it is available in autumn, is to spread small quantities (1-2 liter per square meter) on the harvested and loosely dug up areas of the garden. Then, cover the whole area with a thin layer of leaves (not from nut trees, though). Do not worry, 95% of the nitrogen in compost is organically bound and will not be washed away during winter. Compost is most effective if loosely worked into the soil or mulched. The soil life suffers from direct UV. This is why compost should not be left on the surface. If used in plant pots, even mature compost should always be mixed with soil.

Let us go back briefly to the seemingly labor-intensive process of turning the compost and rebuilding the pile. In order to maintain good compost throughout a perfect hot composting process, turning the material is unavoidable. By doing this, the quality of the compost will be homogenous and maturation is reached quickly. Compost turning has important advantages. It is much easier to check and adjust the humidity levels while turning the material. Maintaining high temperatures during the first phase improves hygiene as weed seeds and most pathogens die. This means time is saved later on when it comes to weeding. The turning also saves time in that the compost is ready for use within a matter of weeks rather than a couple of years. Turning your compost becomes good exercise, and the more we practice, the faster we get.

SUMMARY

Hot composting requires more effort, but provides usable compost in far less time than cold composting. All the material for the entire pile is needed at once and cannot be gradually added. If hot composting is done correctly, seed-bearing weeds and diseased plants can be used.

Cold composting requires little effort. Material can be added at any time. Flowering weeds and diseased plants should not be added. The maturation time of a cold compost is one to two years. Its fertilizing effect is not as high as with well-decomposed hot compost. But it certainly contributes to soil improvement and helps build up humus.

As mentioned earlier, two seasons of the year are particularly suitable for setting up a hot compost pile—in spring and in autumn when the beds have been cleaned and shrubs and trees have been pruned. This provides us with a fair amount of material. It is also good practice to gather plant waste materials throughout the whole gardening year. Twigs and branches can be easily stored



without putrefying. Fresh materials like kitchen waste are best mixed with soil or mature compost so that they have not started to putrefy by the time the real pile is set up. Remember, the putrefaction process occurs when the material is too damp and/or an insufficient amount of oxygen enters the mix.

Compost is a great way to recycle garden waste. Whether your garden has high clay contents or is very sandy, from the above mentioned advantages of composting we know that compost improves the quality of the soil, promotes soil life, and helps develop good soil structure.

In the depth of the earth blessings are hidden for those who conjure the courage, the will, and the perseverance to gather its treasures.

"The earth is to be made to give forth its strength; but without the blessing of God it could do nothing. In the beginning, God looked upon all that He had made, and pronounced it very good. The curse was brought upon the earth in consequence of sin. But shall this curse be multiplied by increasing sin? Ignorance is doing its baleful work. Slothful servants are increasing the evil by their lazy habits. Many are unwilling to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, and they refuse to till the soil. But the earth has blessings hidden in her depths for those who have courage and will and perseverance to gather her treasures. Fathers and mothers who possess a piece of land and a comfortable home are kings and queens." *Country Living*, 18.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Cultural Influences on Marriage

Answer by **GEORGE & ANDREA SEAMAN**

Question: In my culture, the bridegroom is required to provide a cattle to be slaughtered to confirm a marriage ceremony if the bride's family is heathen. Is it advisable to do this if I am interested in marrying someone?

Answer: Your question seems to be mostly directed to whether or not it is advisable to slaughter a cow as a sign to confirm the marriage. You mentioned that this a cultural and customary thing to do. In this response, we are not judging the custom. We can tell you with confidence that the Holy Bible does not give any instructions pertaining to marriage wherein we must slaughter any animal to confirm a marriage ceremony. That is to say, slaughtering

an animal to confirm a marriage is not a requirement for marriages among fellow believers. So, if you are confident with answering this question by taking wisdom from the Bible, it would be perfectly good within the instruction of God's Word not to require slaughtering the cow. We see examples in the Bible too where animals were probably slaughtered and prepared for consumption for various feasts and celebrations. But, your question has more to do with a cultural tradition that is symbolic of a marriage confirmation.

If this is a heathen tradition, this may be easily refused to carry it out. If the potential spouse is heathen also, then the question changes to whether or not you should even marry a heathen spouse before ever considering the slaughtering of a cow.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 provides instruction to not join ourselves with unbelievers. This applies to marriage or heathen religious observances. Remember, God flooded the earth because the sons of God took wives of the daughters of men.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

Regarding the specific matter of slaughtering a cow to confirm a marriage, you may consider whether or not it is a stumbling block to you and/or other believers. It is better to abstain from any appearance of evil. If this matter troubles you because you consider it to be a heathen religious observance (the slaughtering of the cow), it is best that you do not participate. 1 Corinthians 8:6-13 may be good counsel to consider that is comparable to your question of slaughtering the cow. Even though your question does not really have anything to do with eating things sacrificed to idols, I think the bigger theme of the counsel given here is to not partake of things that cause others (or yourself) to stumble.

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat,

are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hath knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; Any through any knowledge shall the weak perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. 1 Corinthians 8:6-13.

IN THESE FINAL HOURS

The Great Controversy, 488-491

"Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days....

"We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

"Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition: 'Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.' Mark 13:33. 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' Revelation 3:3.

"When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.' Revelation 22:11, 12.

"The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the Flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. 'So,' says the Saviour, 'shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' Matthew 24:39. Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men.

"'Watch ye therefore: ... lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping.' Mark 13:35, 36. Perilous is the condition of those who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world...."