

PART IV

OVERCOMING THROUGH CHRIST

(Last of Four-part series on Preparing for the Latter Rain)

OVERCOME OR “OVERCOMETH” in the King James Version is translated from the original Greek *nikao*, meaning, to subdue; conquer; prevail; get or obtain the victory. The English Dictionary defines it as: “To get the better of; to conquer, hence, to render helpless or exhausted; as, to be overcome by illness; to gain the superiority; to win.”-*Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 5th edition, 1942.*

Jesus said to His disciples then, and now: “Indeed the hour is coming, yes, and has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me you may have peace. *In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*” John 6: 32, 22, NKJV. This is the *cheerfully good news* indeed! Christ’s true disciples can, are expected, and empowered to “overcome even as Christ overcame.” Rev. 3: 21.

John says that those truly born of God *will overcome* by faith *in Christ*. Any one who professes faith in Jesus but does not believe that he is to overcome cannot be a true follower of Christ. “For whatsoever is born of God *overcomes* the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is *he who overcomes the world*, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God,” 1 John 5: 4, 5.

Those who “love the world and the things of the world—the desires of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” are those who *are being overcome by the world* that is rapidly passing away together with all its desires and lusts.” But he who does the will of God to overcome like Him, by faith in Him, *will live forever!* See 1 John 5: 5-17.

The way to overcome is “with *good*, not with evil.” Rom. 12:1. Thus, all attempts to allegedly “better the lot” of any people or nation by employing political or financial pressure or manipulation, invasion, war, and occupation—with all the humiliation, fear, pain, violence, torture, bloodshed, and death that such “mission” and activities entail are not of God, the Life-giver, but of Satan, the destroyer of life, “the one who has power over death,” Heb. 2:14 (last part).

No true Christian will ever volunteer to go to war and take away the lives of *any* person, who, according to the world’s corrupted maxims and standards is an “enemy combatant.” If he is forced by law to enlist in the armed forces of his country, he asks to be deployed in the medical or non-combatant divisions; or he can opt to be a “conscientious objector.” Desmond Doss received the Purple Heart Award from Congress for bravery in World War II for saving lives, not taking them away. The true Christian simply clings by faith to what Jesus said:

“My kingdom is *not* of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from hence.” John 18: 36. “But I say unto you, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;* that ye may be the

children of your Father which is in heaven. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5: 44, 45.

The warfare that that true Christian soldier wages relentlessly and courageously is against "principalities and powers of darkness in high places," meaning, against *self*, *sin*, *Satan*, and *temptation*, by putting on the whole armor of God. Eph. 6: 11-18.

"Resist the enemy; do not be seduced by his flattering inducements and presentations. It is the work of the human agent to be strong, not in his own finite strength, but in the strength of the Lord, in the power of His might. . . . Christ has said, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' *The resolutions you may make in your own finite strength, will be only as ropes of sand; but if you pray in sincerity, surrendering yourself, soul, body, and spirit, unto God, you are putting on the whole armor of God, and are opening the soul to the righteousness of Christ.* And this alone,---Christ's imputed righteousness, makes you able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The work of every soul is to resist the enemy in the power and might of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promise is that the devil shall flee from us." - *Sons & Daughters*, p. 346.

All directly and indirectly responsible will be called to account for every life that was lost, whether as combatants or innocent "collateral victims," in their day of judgment. Their blood shall be required of them for all these souls were sacred purchases of God's blood shed at Calvary. He owns every soul twice---by creation and by redemption. And anyone who usurps God's exclusive authority over His creatures, for whatever reason, will be weighed in the balances with His terrible exactness and perfect justice.

OVERCOME!

Christ's Constant Plea and Command to all the Churches since Pentecost!

Through John by the Holy Spirit, Christ made specific promises to the *individual overcomers in the church* throughout the seven stages of her history since after Pentecost. Three things are clear from the following Scriptures dealing with the seven churches of Revelation: (1) The Faithful and True Witness--Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit--is addressing the church only (2) Only those who are members of His true church, throughout her seven stages, and overcome, are the only ones who receive the special promises. (3) All who possess the genuine "gift of the spirit of prophecy in the remnant church" will believe, obey, speak, and teach this very same truth.

Here are the specific promises made to those who overcome:

- **To the church in Ephesus** (A.D. 31-100), the Faithful and true Witness says: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. *To him that overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*" Rev. 2: 7.
- **To the church in Smyrna** (100-313 A.D.), He says: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. *He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the *second death.*" Rev. 2: 11. (See Rev. 21:8 on second death).
- **To the church in Pergamos** (313-538 A.D.), He says: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. *To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone, a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.*" Rev. 2: 17.

- **To the church in Thyatira** (538-1798, the Dark Ages), He says: “*And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him will I give power over the nations—he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and the potter’s vessels shall be broken to pieces as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the Morning Star.* He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Rev. 2: 26-29.
- **To the church in Sardis** (1798-1833), He says: “*He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before the Father and before His angels.*” Rev. 3:5.
- **To the church in Philadelphia** (1833-1843), He says: “*He who overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.* He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Rev. 3:12.
- **To the church in Laodicea** (the remnant church, since after 1844 up to the latter rain, He says: “*To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.* He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Rev. 3: 21.

Towards the end of the Revelation, John summarizes what the Faithful and True Witness has been constantly repeating in the gospel message, in one unmistakable conclusion:

“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall their part in the lake of fire which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Rev. 21: 7, 8, NKJV.

We want to be sure that we are not fooling ourselves and others by living hypocritical, double-lives by mouthing Christian jargon, yet twisting God’s Word in order to make it appear to justify or excuse our sins. This is adding or taking away from God’s Word (Rev. 22:18). This is living a lie and no liars shall ever inherit eternal life.

The nature of the sins enumerated in John’s list from which the overcoming Christian has been gaining progressive victory over, are familiar to all. They were also the sins which sealed the fate of the antediluvians, and Sodom and Gomorrah, and *are* the very same predominant fashionable sins of these last days, just before Christ returns! This list also finds its counterpart in Apostle Paul’s listings, as follows:

- ungodliness and unrighteousness of those who hold the truth in unrighteousness
- they don’t really know who God Creator is, thus, they do not glorify Him as the Creator
- unthankful to God, they are vain in their imaginations, their foolish hearts darkened
- professing to be wise they are actually fools in God’s sight
- they change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image of corruptible, mortal man, and even into birds, four-footed animals, and creeping things.
- through lust of their own hearts, they dishonor their bodies between themselves
- they change the truth of God into a lie, worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator
- they indulge their vile affections and passions, the women changing the natural use into that which is against nature laws—lesbianism
- men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burning in lust towards one another—homosexuality
- filled with unrighteousness

- fornication
- wickedness
- covetousness
- maliciousness and envy
- murder
- strife/debate
- deceit
- malignity (bad character; mischievousness)
- whisperers/whoremongers/gossipers
- backbiters
- haters of God
- spiteful
- boasters
- inventors of evil things
- disobedient to parents
- without understanding
- covenant-breakers
- without natural affection, perverts
- implacable
- unmerciful

“who knowing the judgment of God that they which commit such things are worthy of death.” Rom. 1: 18-32.

In his letter to the Corinthians Paul adds and/or repeats more to the above:

- the leaven of malice and insincerity
- extortion
- brethren taking each other to court and suing one another
- deceivers; all forms of dishonesty are deception, including self-deception
- fornicators (once more)
- idolaters (“Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” 1 Sam. 15:23).
- adulterers (once more)
- effeminate (more specific language)
- abusers of themselves with man (more specific language)
- thieves (all who claim His name yet misrepresent Him in character steal His glory)
- covetous (once more)
- drunkards (includes those who are drunk with “the wine of Babylon”--false doctrines)

“none of these shall inherit the kingdom of God.” 1 Cor. 6: 1-10; 5: 8-10.

A review of the Ten Commandments (Exo. 20: 1- 17; Deut. 5: 7-22), quickly reveals that all these sins are but transgressions of the Decalogue’s pure and holy precepts and principles—the very law of heaven and Paradise itself! This is why the law, instead of being a “burden,” as many have been wrongly taught, is actually the “law of love,” “the law of life,” and “the law to live by,” for in obeying it *from the heart*, through God’s grace, mankind was to enjoy everlasting peace, pure love, perfect harmony, health, and prosperity. By disobedience and rebellion against God’s law, man has brought upon himself the woe of the “wages of sin,” which is pain, misery, and death.

Apostle Jude encapsulates these listings of the sins of the last days into three main categories by citing the names of the individuals in the Bible who exemplify and personify these sins: “The way of **Cain**, the covetousness of **Balaam**, and the gainsaying of **Core** (korah).” A terrible “woe” is pronounced on them all. See Jude 11.

Note: Full length discussions on each of these 3 topics are available in print and tape/CD from this ministry. Write or email me mentioning specifically which study you are interested in, or all three.

E.G. White magnifies on what overcoming comprehends, how to be successful in this sacred work, and the exclusive privileges of the overcomer. Finding delight in doing the will of God is the secret power of overcoming! Jesus said, "If you *love* Me, keep My commandments," John 15:10. Notice:

"The expression, 'He that overcomes,' indicates that there is something for every one of us to overcome. The overcomer is to be clothed with the white raiment (garment) of Christ's righteousness, and of him, it is written, 'I will not blot out his name from the Book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.' [Rev. 3:5]. **O what a privilege it is to be an overcomer, and to have our names to be presented to the Father by the Savior Himself!** And when, as overcomers, 'we shall be clothed in white raiment,' the Lord will acknowledge our faithfulness as verily as in the days of the early Christian church He acknowledged **the 'few names in Sardis'** who had 'not defiled their garments,' and we shall walk with Him in white, for through His atoning sacrifice we shall be accounted worthy." – *Review & Herald*, July 9, 1908.

"It means much to be an overcomer. The besetments of the enemy and all his evil agencies **must be firmly resisted.** Every moment we must be on guard. Not for one instant are we to lose sight of Christ, and of His power to save in the hour of trial. Our hand must be placed in His, that we may be upheld in the power of His might. If you are to sit at Christ's table, and feast on the provisions He has furnished at the marriage supper of the Lamb, you must have a special garment, called **the wedding garment, which is the white robe of Christ's righteousness.** Everyone who has this robe is entitled to enter the city of God. . . . Their names are retained in the Lamb's Book of Life, enrolled among the faithful of all the ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. . . . The [faithful] remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored." – *Sons & Daughters*, p. 368 (see also Eph. 6: 10-18; James 4: 70).

"Jesus said of Himself, 'I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.' Ps. 40:8. When on earth he said to His disciples, 'I have kept My Father's commandments.' John 15:20. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garments of His righteousness** [the "wedding garment"]. Then as the Lord looks upon us, he sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin [Laodicean condition], but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312.

Many theologians and Bible teachers assert that Christ did not actually incarnate into *our fallen flesh and blood human nature*, even if the writer of Hebrews in the New Testament definitively states so. See Heb. 2:10, 14, 16-18. Finding themselves contradicting the plainest teaching of the Word, they are forced to add or subtract from it in order to justify their preconceived positions. This they do by various unscriptural assertions and confusing theories such as: "Christ did not have *the sin nature*," as though sin is nature, not a matter of choice, or that Mary, His human mother with her fallen nature, was somehow exempted from this nature during her conception, and thus did not transmit the fallen human nature to Jesus, her son, etc., etc.

If thus asserted, Christ could not then be the *second or last Adam* (1 Cor. 15:45) that Paul says He was for He would have had an unfair advantage over Adam and all his fallen sons and daughters thereafter. Therefore, He should never ask and expect us to "*overcome even as He overcame*" (Rev. 3: 21), for He would be asking us to do the impossible—which is totally against the character of Christ!

If that be the case then His life example was in vain, nothing but a pathetic life of self-denial and suffering, even if it was a veritable parade of miracles, perfect righteousness

and obedience—for it was all beyond the reach of *any* mortal. Therefore, He is not really “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” because He was not actually “tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). He should not have said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross [of self-denial] daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23), for nobody can really *follow His perfect example*. Therefore He cannot really be the *Savior* of the gospel who, as angel Gabriel announced at His birth, was “to save His people *from their sins*.” Matt. 1:21.

But thank God, all these false theology based on “doctrines of the devils” are exposed by the Word of God, particularly by the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14*!

*These messages have three keynotes, namely: (1) the pre-advent judgment of mankind already begun in the year 1844—the antitypical Day of Atonement, the end-point of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14. Thus mankind is being given the final warning to “fear God,” not man, and “worship,” meaning, adore, give glory, and obey “Him,” not any man or institution. He who created the world in six days and then rested, blessed, and sanctified the seventh day as *the memorial* of Creation, declares in these messages that it is false worship that excludes the truth of the judgment and the seventh-day Sabbath (2) the warning that there is only one true church of the last days—the remnant church “who keep the commandments of God and the have the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy;” all the rest of the churches have fallen away from this testing truths, hence, are called of God as “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” (3) the final warning not to be deceived or forced into finally receiving “the mark of the beast”—the counterfeit day of worship authored by “the man of sin”—the papacy, and enforced by “the lamb-like beast that becomes the “image of the beast”—America. These message close out with the final call at the outpouring of the latter rain to “come out of her My people that you receive not of her plagues for her sins have reached unto heaven and God has remembered her iniquities.” Rev 18: 4, 5. Earth’s probation closes soon after this.

“We need not place the obedience of Christ by itself as something for which He was particularly adapted, because of His divine nature; for He stood before God as man’s representative, and was tempted as man’s substitute and surety. If Christ had a special power which it is not the privilege of a man to have, Satan would have made capital of this matter.

But the work of Christ was to take from Satan his control of man, and He could do this only in a straightforward way. He came as a man, to be tempted as a man, rendering the obedience as a man. Christ rendered obedience to God, and overcame as humanity [must] overcome.

We are led to make wrong conclusions because of erroneous views of the nature of our Lord. To attribute to His nature a power that it is not possible for man to have in His conflicts with Satan, is to destroy the completeness of His humanity. The obedience of Christ to His Father was the same obedience that is required of man. Man cannot overcome Satan’s temptations except as divine power works through humanity.

The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what God in His own divine person could do, but what He could do through humanity. Through faith man is to be a partaker of the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset. It was the Majesty of heaven who became a man, who humbled Himself to our human nature; it was He who was tempted in the wilderness and who endured the contradiction of sinners to Himself.” – *Signs of the Times*, Apr. 10, 1893.

Selfishness, and all that it comprehends, **is the nature of fallen mankind**, who have *experienced sin*. Christ did not experience sin by participating in it. But “*He was made to be sin for us*.” In the yet unconverted or spiritually unborn state, the Word calls this “the natural man,” “the carnal mind,” “the heart of stone,” “the lover of the world and the things of the world.” It is *natural* for man to doubt and disobey God’s Word and to question His authority, decisions, and will—-not because of his “sin nature” but because of the *sinful inclinations, tendencies, and propensities transmitted to him by his parents*. But all these are not sin till they are yielded to, practiced, and cherished.

It is to these weakened and thus, highly vulnerable areas of the fallen human nature that Satan, through his numberless agencies and unnumbered schemes, subjects his fiercest, most deceptive, beguiling, and alluring *temptations*. The tendency to yield or fall for all these is exacerbated further by (a) ignorance and indolence to study God’s Word “as for

hidden treasure” (b) indulgence of that which is known to be erroneous, health-destroying, and (c) sinful presumption on God’s mercy—the counterfeit of faith.

In the plan redemption, the Creator was to *condescend* to become a man “born of a woman according to the law” (Gal. 4:4)—the law that governs the nature of man that is *subject to* and *capable of yielding* to temptation. He had to withstand all that mankind is tempted with, and in that perfect victory *demonstrate by living example* to men, angels, and to the whole unfallen universe, what fallen man could be when humanity is *united* with divinity. This is the very nature and purpose of **the work of atonement** which is explained in the finest detail by the comprehensive sanctuary doctrine and message.

God can *only* be approached by the penitent sinner by two interdependent means—through sacrifice and incense:

1. *By the sacrifice of contrition and repentance* at the foot of the cross where Christ paid the perfect atoning sacrifice of His perfect life—the redemption price specified by the plan of salvation, and,
2. *By the incense of His perfect righteousness.* Only then can the sinner, with humble “boldness and confidence,” approach the Almighty whose eternal throne of authority and glory rests on the mercy seat underneath of which is the law. The eternal *foundation* of God’s enduring love and mercy is His immutable law.

See Matt. 4: 1-11. “Jesus paid an infinite price to redeem the world, and the [human] race was given into His hands; they became His property. He sacrificed His honor, His riches, and His glorious home in the royal courts and became the son of Joseph and Mary. . . . When His ministry commenced, after His baptism, He endured **an agonizing fast of 6 weeks**. It was not merely the gnawing pangs of hunger which made His sufferings inexpressibly severe, but it was the **guilt of the sins** of the world which pressed so heavily upon Him. **He who knew no sin was made sin for us.** With this terrible weight of guilt upon Him because of our sins, **He withstood the fearful test upon [1] appetite, and [2] upon the love of the world and honor, [3] and pride and display which leads to presumption.** Christ endured **these three great leading temptations** and overcame in behalf of man, working out for Him a righteous character, because He knew man could not do this of himself. He knew that upon these three points Satan was to assail the race. He [Satan] had overcome Adam, and he designed to carry forward his work till he completed the ruin of man.

Christ entered the field in man’s behalf to conquer Satan for him because he saw that man could not overcome in his own account. **Christ prepared the way for the ransom of man by His own life of suffering, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, and by His humiliation and final death.** He brought help to man that he might, by following Christ’s example, overcome on his own account, as Christ has overcome for him.” – *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 372.

Q. So why and in what areas does man fail in,—if not because of his sinful nature?

A. An unsanctified heart and a perverse will.

“Let no one say, ‘I cannot overcome the defects of character,’ for if this is your decision, then you cannot have eternal life. **The impossibility is all in your will. If you will not, that constitutes the can not.** The real difficulty is the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the will of God. [However], When there is a **determined purpose** born in your heart to overcome, you will have a *disposition* to overcome, and will *cultivate* those traits of character that are desirable and will *engage with the conflict with steady, persevering effort*. You will exercise a ceaseless watchfulness over your defects of character; and will cultivate right practices in little things. **The difficulty of overcoming will be lessened in proportion as the heart is sanctified by the grace of Christ.** Earnest, persevering effort will place you on vantage ground of victory; for he who strives to overcome in and through the grace of Christ, will have divine enlightenment, and will understand how great truths can be brought to little things, and religion can be carried into the little as well as into the larger concerns of life.” – *Youth’s Instructor*, Sept. 7, 1893 (see also Luke 13:24; 1Cor. 9:25).

"The **heart** is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked' [Jer. 17:9]. Professors of religion are not willing to closely examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith [2 Cor. 13:5]; and it is a fearful fact that many are leaning on a false hope. Some lean upon an old experience which they had years ago; but when brought down to this heart-searching time, when all should have a daily experience, they have nothing to relate. They seem to think that a profession of religion will save them. **When they subdue those sins which God hates, Jesus will come into sup with them, and they with Him, They will then draw divine strength from Jesus, and will grow up with Him, and be able with holy triumph to say; 'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' [1 Cor. 15:57].** It would be more pleasing to the Lord is **lukewarm** professors of religion had **never** named His name. They are a **continual weight** to those who would be faithful followers of Jesus. They are **stumbling-blocks** to unbelievers, and evil angels exult over them, and taunt the angels of God with their crooked course. Such are a **curse** to the cause at home or abroad. They draw near to God with their lips, while their heart is far from Him." - *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 188.

"**Christ passed over the ground where Adam fell, and overcame in our behalf. He endured every test that man will ever be called upon to endure.** *He met all the temptations which men will meet. He has traveled over the path in which He calls us to walk* 'If any man will come after Me,' He says, 'let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily* and follow Me.' Luke 9:23. As I endured the test and trial, so you may endure it. **He who is at last crowned conqueror must depend, as Christ did, upon divine power.** Every step Christ took was taken in dependence upon God, and not in a single point did the enemy overcome Him. He declares, 'be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' [Rev.3: 10 quoted]. - *Bible Echo*, July 23, 1900.

The Terrible Test of Appetite

The test on appetite is not confined merely to the inordinate or unsanctified desire for physical food and drink, let alone "junk food," though they are at the very center of it.

This is one area where many good-intentioned, and in fact, powerful and influential health reformers fail in,—from the organic, vegan, alternative-medicine health activists, to certain health reformers employing esoteric, spiritualistic means and methods, etc. They focus largely on the physical and ignore the spiritual, meaning, the real reason why and how man fell, and the true cause of suffering, ailments, and diseases. The spiritual application they make is *spiritualistic*—of the occult, thus, devilish—not spiritual, meaning, "Unto the law and the testimony," Isa. 8:20. Apostle Paul clarifies this by saying: "Let us therefore cleanse ourselves of filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" 2 Cor. 7:1. Satan is also the counterfeit master physician. He causes disease and thus can also bring about healing. But his "miraculous healing," as always, is based in disregarding God's moral and physical laws, not in obedience to it. Thus his healing is "unto death," not "unto everlasting life," as Christ's true healing of heart, mind, and soul is.

Adam and Eve were not physically hungry, as was Jesus in His 6-week fast in the Wilderness when Satan, *disguised* as a serpent, then the most beautiful animal, beguiled and tempted them. The forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was merely the *second* bait of deception; the real temptation-in-camouflage was *appetite*, the desire "to become *like gods* knowing good and evil."

Satan deftly asserted that the "selfish reason" why God forbade them to partake for the fruit of this forbidden tree was that He "did not want them to ascend to much higher heights of exaltation," and "become like gods." Thus, the appetite for *self-exaltation*, *self-pleasing*—*covetousness*, in any sphere and in every shade and form, is the real foundation of all temptations. It is self-centeredness and selfishness that lead man to break any and every law and covenant,—both divine and human. This was the mysterious grounds of iniquity for the first falling away and apostasy in heaven. Lucifer,

the “covering cherub,” nevertheless a created being, coveted Jehovah-Creator’s position, authority, and power. He wanted “wanted to be like the Most High and exalt himself above the stars. . .” This led to, and culminated in open rebellion and war—which he and a third of the angels that joined him, lost, and were cast down to earth.

This is why the first and last of the Ten Commandments are mirror images: First, “Thou shalt have no *other gods* before Me” and then, “Thou shalt not covet.” Every single one of the other commandments in between, beginning with the first four which defines our duty to God, and the last six which defines our duty to our fellowmen are detailed expansions of these two. See Exo. 20:1-17; Deut. 5: 6-22; 6: 4-7; Mark 7:22; Luke 12:15; Rom. 1: 29; 7:7; 13:9; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 2:3; Heb. 13:5, etc.

The English Dictionary defines appetite in such as way as renders the same Biblical definition of it,—that it is personal gratification either of body or mind! Appetite, it says is: “**1.** an inherent or habitual desire or propensity for *some personal gratification, either of body or mind*; craving. **2.** desire for, or relish of, food or drink.” -*Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 5th edition, 1942.* Hence, as the inspired writer says:

“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness.” - *Steps to Christ*, p. 43.

Appetite *per se* is not evil, even as money in itself isn’t. It is the perversion of appetite, and “the *love of money* that is the root of all evil,” 1 Tim. 6:10. It is also called “filthy lucre.” 1 Sam. 8:3; 1 Tim. 3: 3, 8; Titus 1:7, 11; 1 Pet. 5:2. Perverting and carrying into excess even that which is good renders it sinful. The sacred institution of marriage was one the very first blessings to mankind that that was immediately perverted by Satan.

It is true that it is becoming even harder in these last days to overcome appetite. The whole atmosphere is deluged with the witchery of Satan’s delusive and tantalizing temptations, threatening to overwhelm all our senses. But it is equally true that God’s *empowering and enabling grace* is much greater than *any* need or emergency that arises. “For where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.” Rom. 5:20.

Jesus is *the* perfect Example and Model of fallen humanity—from childhood to youth, to adulthood—in all phases, places, instances, situations, and circumstances of our conscious life. That is the reason why He died—“to make a way of escape”. . . . Therefore:

“In the name and strength of Jesus every youth may conquer the enemy today on the point of perverted appetite. My dear young friends, advance step by step, until all you habits shall be in harmony with the laws of life and health. He who overcame in the wilderness of temptation declares, ‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in My throne, *even as I also overcame*, and am set down with My Father in His throne.’ Rev. 3:20.” - *Temperance*, p. 90.

“We can overcome. Yes; fully entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him. It is our privilege to have faith and salvation. The power of God has not decreased. His power, I saw, would be just as freely bestowed now as formerly. **It is the church of God that have lost their faith to claim, their energy to wrestle, as did Jacob**, crying, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.’”- *Testimonies*, vol.1, p. 144. (The problem of overcoming is because of the loss of faith of the church!)

1 Cor. 9: 27. “Paul declared that kept his body under, lest after he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. *Those who in ancient times ran for a prize realized the importance of temperate habits, and how much more should we, who are running a race for a heavenly crown! We should put*

forth every effort to overcome evil. Christ came to set an example of how to overcome. He endured a fast of 40 days, and He has made it possible for man to overcome on the point of **appetite**. The battle is before us. We must fight valiantly. If we are successful we shall one day realize the fulfillment of the promise, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne.' Rev. 3:20." - *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 116.

"Those who would overcome must put to tax every power of their being. They must agonize on their knees before God for divine power. Christ came to be our example, and to make known to us that we may be partakers of the divine nature. **How? -By having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust.** . . . Men may have a power to **resist** evil--a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. **Divinity and humanity may be combined in them.**" - *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 409.

"But many will say that Jesus was not like us, that He was not as we are in the world, that He was divine, that we cannot overcome as He overcame. But Paul writes [Heb. 2: 14, 16-18; 4: 15, 16; Rev. 3:20 quoted]." - *Review & Herald*, Mar. 1, 1892.

"Those who claim that it was not possible for Christ to sin, cannot believe that He really took upon Himself human nature. **But was not Christ actually tempted, not only by Satan in the wilderness, but all through His life, from childhood to manhood?** In all points He was tempted as we are, and because He successfully resisted temptation under every form, He gave men the perfect example, and through ample provision Christ has made, we may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust [see 2 Pet. 1:4]. Jesus says, '[Rev. 3:20 quoted]. Here is the beginning of our confidence which we must hold steadfast unto the end [Heb. 3:14]. **If Jesus resisted Satan's temptations, He will help us to resist. He came to bring divine power to combine with human effort.**" - F.G.W. *Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 929.

"For it is God which worketh in you both *to will and to do* His good pleasure." Phil. 2:13. God's promise is "Ye shall seek me, and find Me, when you shall search for Me *with all your heart.*" Jer. 29:13.

"Pure religion has to do with the **will. The will is the governing power in the nature of man, bringing all the other faculties under its sway.** The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the deciding power which works in the children of men unto obedience to God or unto disobedience." - *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 513.

The Three Major Classes of Widespread Idolatry among Christians

"The Savior says, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be My disciple.' Luke 14:33. Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up.

1. **Mammon** is the idol of many--the love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan.
2. **Reputation and worldly honor** are worshipped by another class.
3. **The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility** is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken.

We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. We are not God's children unless we are such *entirely*. . . . Desires for good ness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail *nothing*. **Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians.** [Why?]. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not choose to be Christians." - *Steps to Christ*, pp. 44-48.

No one will plead the excuse in the judgment that he was forced to sin, or that someone else made the wrong choices for him or that he "joined the wrong company," and thus cannot be held accountable for his sins. Or that "he heard voices in his head" directing him perform acts that make even the most hardened law enforcers shudder. Satan's only power over anyone is when the tempted yields to the temptation--as a matter of choice.

"The Lord does not propose to save us in companies. **Individually we are to make our choice.** One by one we are to appropriate the grace of God to the soul, and one cannot decide for another what course he shall take." - *Youth's Instructor*, Oct. 17, 1895.

"A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to everyone who will unite his weak human will to the omnipotent unwavering will of God."- *Ministry of Healing*, p. 176.

What is the Biblical definition of sin?

"Whoever comitteth sin transgresses also the law: *for sin is the transgression of the law.*" 1 John 3:4. The law of Ten Commandments, written with God's very own hand (Exo. 32:15,16; Deut. 4:13, etc.), is the divine transcript of the character of God, transcribed into human language that all can understand. This perfect law is *an agency* in the conviction and conversion of the sinner. The psalmist says: "*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.*" Ps. 19:7. Paul thus taught:

"For until the law sin was in the world. *But sin is not imputed when there is no law.*" Rom. 5:13. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known **sin**, but by the law. For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Rom. 7:7.

The universal truth that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" means sin has been "imputed to all" because the law which defines both righteousness and sin has been transgressed by all, whether out of ignorance, rebellion, or presumption. The apostle merely said that this law *revealed* to him what *sin* was and is.

Conversion is preceded by conviction. Reconciliation between God and the sinner through the atonement is the purpose and work of the gospel. Thus:-

"**The first step in reconciliation to God is the conviction of sin.** 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' 'By the law is the know ledge of sin.' 1 John 3:4; Rom. 3:20. In order to see his guilt, the sinner must **test** his character by God's great standard of righteousness. It is a **mirror** which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him to **discern** the defects of his own."- *Great Controversy*, p. 467.

Divinely-designed to bring about intelligent conviction as "a school master" (Gal. 3: 24, 25), the law has its predetermined limitations as well; *it cannot save*—for that was never its purpose or function in heaven, on earth, and in the everlasting gospel. By the conviction of the Holy Spirit *in* the heart *through* the Word, the law *reveals sin and shows* the impurities and defects of the sinner; but it cannot cleanse or correct—it is lifeless. The law is not our Savior but it is the Savior's law that defines sin, as its transgression, and righteousness, as obedience to it from the heart.

"**The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy.** While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. **The Gospel of Christ alone can free him from condemnation or the defilement of sin.** He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains '**remission of sins that are past**' and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries: 'Abba, Father!'[Rom. 8:15]."- *Ibid.*

Notice that is only *past* sins, that are repented of and confessed, that are forgiven. The expiation or forgiveness of *future* sins cannot be purchased in advance by *anything nor by anyone—not even by God.* This is one of the monstrous decretals of Rome promulgated in the Dark Ages through the Indulgences. Like the false doctrines of Purgatory, the Mass, and the worship of dead persons, blasphemously canonized as "saints" to be prayed to by numberless adherents, wealth and power were secured by the papal church at the expense of truth and righteousness. She is indeed, as the godly Reformers exposed, "Mystery Babylon, the Mother of Harlots" of Revelation 17.

Most religious teachers assert that the law was abrogated by the death of Christ, and thus, they allege, we "live by the grace of God and not by the law of God." "We walk by

faith and faith alone,” they further claim. But does the law of God, the grace of God, and the faith of God disagree, clash, or cancel out one another? God forbid! God is not the author of confusion or disagreement but of peace, unity, and harmony! Is the “grace-filled” Christian now free to transgress the law of God—the very law which Christ, as our Redeemer and Exemplar—came to *magnify and make honorable* with His life and works? Hear the clear answer of Apostle Paul:

“Do we then make void the law through faith? **God forbid: yea, we establish the law.**’ ‘How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?’ Rom. 3: 31; 6:2.

Biblical faith, in fact, establishes the law! It is those who are still *alive to sin*, who make void the law—i.e., in their own hearts and lives while those who are *dead indeed to sin* establish and magnify the law—as did Christ! Life and death in both the physical and spiritual realms mean *everything* now and for all eternity. Death means absolute nothingness. Thus *alive to sin* means actively sinning, knowingly transgressing the law presumptuously or with impunity. *Dead to sin* means striving to intelligently and willingly *resist* Satan’s unnumbered temptations and not yielding to the clamors of the fallen sinful flesh—all by God’s enabling grace.

And John declares: ‘*This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.*’ Rom. 3: 31; 6:2; 1 John 5:3. **In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with His law.** When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death into life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. The old life [‘the old man’] of alienation from God has ended; the new life of reconciliation, of faith and love, has begun. Then ‘the righteousness of the law’ will ‘be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8:4. And the language of the soul will be: ‘O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day’ [Ps. 119: 97].” – *Great Controversy*, p. 467.

THE PERFECT VICTORY IN AND WITH CHRIST

The true gospel assures us of perfect victory over sin through Christ. With Christ dwelling *in* us by faith, through the Holy Spirit in the Word, we can overcome all our sins while we are alive and are still capable of thinking and exercising our will. It is by *eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ daily*, meaning, studying, believing, and obeying—that the work of overcoming is a partnership between God and man, a joint project with a specific plan, and with one goal in mind: the full restoration of the lost *original moral image* of God in man. As in building a house or a tower, it starts from the ground up, beginning with its foundation and is constant and progressive in a heavenward direction.

Such is the nature of the work of moral character-building. It is the “house that is built on the rock by the wise man” in the parable. It begins with death to self, “the old man,” which is a *daily* matter for self constantly seeks to assert itself which is natural to sinful human nature. It is only when selfish self is still alive that sin continues to have dominion over us. But when sinful self is *crucified* with Christ, the Sinless One who was *made* sin for us, then *the body of sin of the old man in us is destroyed; it dies*. And when one is dead *to sin*, he does not, and cannot serve sin and Satan, the author of sin, for one must be alive in order to serve. This is one of the bright sides of death—dead to sin, alive in Christ. On the other hand, dead to Christ, alive in Satan!

The good news of salvation includes the truth that there are *only two* real masters, both responding to the title "Lord," to deal with, both diametrically opposed to each other,-- Christ or Satan. We are either serving one or the other consciously or unconsciously; never both for in doing so we are actually serving Satan even more effectively and efficiently. Jesus Himself declared, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Tiy cannot sere God and mammon." Matt. 6: 24.

The second exciting news of the gospel is that when we are truly dead to sin we are emancipated from slavery to Satan the destroyer, and have become a royal servant, even a "slave," as Paul puts it, to Christ the Life-giver! Once more, this is a daily matter for we live but one day at a time, and therefore, gain *progressive* victory one day at a time only.

Thus one may live an **uninterrupted** victorious life by **daily increments**. This begins with a determination that *this one day* will be a *victorious day* by making the *morning sacrifice* of consecrating self and the dedication of his means to the glory of God *for that day*. He waits to receive the blessings sought by lingering in his prayer chamber, then he rises up in faith believing that all his requests, asked in accordance with God's will, have *already* been answered in God's way and time. Thus he proceeds to take on the challenges and the opportunities of the day *sheathed with the whole armor of God!*

He ends his victorious life for *that day* with the evening sacrifice by reading the Word, followed by a prayer comprised of: (1) thanksgiving for His companionship, guidance, and protection for the whole day (2) asking for forgiveness for any known or unknown sins he may have committed, (3) a petition for angelic protection during the dark hours of the night (4) ascribing praise, honor, and glory to God for His goodness and mercy (5) petitioning for the special needs of those in his prayer list (6) the hope to see the dawn of the next literal day, or if not, to be included in the glorious resurrection morning. Such did all the faithful patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and faithful followers of Christ through all generations till the close of time.

That this is so is proven beyond doubt by considering the following:

I. The Evidence from the Scriptures:

Dead to sin; dead indeed to sin; freed from sin

"What shall we say then? *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. Who shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" Rom 6: 1, 2.

"Knowing this, that *our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*" Rom. 6: 6, 7.

"Being *made free from sin*, you become servants of righteousness." Rom. 6:18

"But now *being made free from sin*, and become servants of God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Rom. 6:22. (cf. John 3:16).

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to *be dead indeed unto sin*, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*" Rom. 6:14.

Sin shall not have dominion over you

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.” Rom. 6:14. (See Rom. 1: 4, 5, 16 on the power of grace in the gospel of Christ!).

But go and sin no more

After forgiving her of her sin, Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery, “Go and sin no more.” John 8:11. He didn’t say “taper off.” In simple language He said, “Stop sinning.” After healing the man who was sick for 38 years, He said: “Behold, thou art made whole. *Sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.*” John 5:14. The man’s disease and suffering were a consequence of his *specific* sins. Christ is “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Heb. 13: 8. Likewise, His saving grace--the basis of His forgiving, healing, and cleansing mercies, are the same yesterday, today, and forever. If we have indeed “tasted and seen that He is good,” we are likewise to strive “to sin no more”---not because of fear for the sure evil consequences of our sins but because of fear to offend and grieve Him whom we have learned to *love* because “He first loved us who loved us even while we were yet in our sin.” Indeed, “love conquers all.” Rom. 5:8; 8:37.

“Be ye therefore perfect,” i.e., set free from slavery to sin

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said: “Be ye therefore perfect *even as* your Father in heaven is *perfect.*” Matt. 5:48. (See also Heb. 5:9). Jesus never asks us to do the impossible. He enables and powers us but *only* as we willingly co-operate with Him. At His birth the angel Gabriel said to Mary, “And you shall call His name Jesus for He shall save His people *from* their sins.” This perfection that Christ spoke of is “being made free from sin.” It is the perfection of Christ Jesus dwelling *in us through* the Holy Spirit.

“God designs that every one of us shall be *perfect in Him*, so that we may represent to the world the perfection of His character. **He wants us to be set free from sin** that we may not disappoint Heaven, that we may not grieve our divine Redeemer. He does not desire us to profess Christianity, and yet not avail ourselves of *the grace which is able to make us perfect*, that we may be found wanting in nothing.” - *My Life Today*, p. 15 (cf. pp. 73-75).

“Our Savior took up the *true relationship* of a human being as the Son of God. We are sons and daughters of God. In order to know how to behave ourselves circumspectly, we must follow where Christ leads the way. **For thirty years He lived the life of a perfect man, meeting the highest standard of perfection.**” - *Sons and Daughters*, p, 154.

“Our work is to strive to attain *in our sphere of action* the perfection that Christ in His life on earth attained in every phase of character. . . . *Every faculty which the Creator has endowed us should be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection, that we may be able to do the greatest amount of good which we are capable.* In order to purify and refine our characters, we need the grace given us of Christ that will enable us to see and correct our deficiencies, and improve that which is excellent in our characters. **The Son of God was faultless. We must aim at this perfection, and overcome as He overcame, if we would have a seat at His right hand.**” - *Ibid.*

By liking Him we are going to be like Him

“If you are the children of God, you are partakers of His nature, and **you cannot but be like Him.** Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God’s children,--begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells the ‘all the fullness of the godhead bodily’ (Col. 2:9) and the life of Jesus is made manifest in our ‘mortal flesh’ (2 Cor. 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for ‘the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul’ (Ps.

19:7). Through love 'the righteousness of the law' will be 'fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,' (Rom. 8: 14)." - *Mount of Blessing*, p. 118.

Paul shows how this perfection will be achieved,—through the power of the Scriptures, the Word of God, even as Christ said, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by *every word* that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4.

"All Scripture is by inspiration of God and is *profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be **perfect**, thoroughly furnished into all *good works*." 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.

Wholly sanctified; preserved blameless until the Lord's coming

"And the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*; and I pray God your whole *spirit and soul and body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." – 1 Thess. 5: 22,23.

He is able to keep us from falling into sin

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24.

He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to Him

"Wherefore He is able to save them [His people] to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb 7:25.

He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Eph. 3: 20.

He is able to make us more than conquerors

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Rom. 8:37

Never tempted more than we are able; a way of escape is provided.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13.

Christ died that He might provide a way of escape from every temptation. How does this "way of escape" work for us?

"We should present before the people the fact that God has provided that we shall not be tempted above what we are able to bear, but that with every temptation He will make a way of escape. *If we live wholly for God, we shall not allow the mind to indulge in selfish imaginings.*" *Adventist Home*, p. 402.

"Temptations to indulgence of appetite possess a power which can be overcome *only by the help* that God can impart. . . *Why, then, are so many overcome? It is because they do not put their trust in God.* They do not avail themselves of the *means* provided for their safety. The excuses offered for the gratification of perverted appetite, are therefore of no weight to God." – *Counsels on Diet*, p. 154.

"Christ is our Tower of strength, and Satan can have no power over the soul that walks with God in humility of mind. The promise, 'Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.'" *In Christ there is perfect and complete help for every*

tempted soul. Dangers beset every path, but *the whole universe of heaven* is standing on guard, that none may be tempted above that which he is able to bear." - *My Life Today*, p. 316.

"Temptation is not sin. Jesus was holy and pure, yet He was tempted in all points as we are, but with a strength and power that man will never be called upon to endure. *In His successful resistance He has left us a bright example, that we should follow His steps.* If we are self-confident and self-righteous we shall be left to fall under the power of temptation; but if we look to Jesus and trust in Him, we call to our aid a *power* that has conquered the foe on the field of battle, and with every temptation He will make a way of escape. When Satan comes in life a flood, *we must meet his temptations with the sword of the Spirit* [the word of God], and Jesus will be our Helper and will lift up for us a standard against him [Satan]." - *Ibid*, p. 48.

God does not only forgive but cleanses from all unrighteousness. "If we *confess* our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and *to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" 1 John 1:9. And, "all unrighteousness is sin." 1 John 5: 17 (first part).

Now if one believes that "he is already saved," he will never see the need to "confess his sins" nor "to agonize in prayer on his knees." Therefore he cannot receive forgiveness from God much less be cleansed from all his sins, which include the besetting sins of spiritual pride, self-righteousness, lukewarmness, and presumption.

God's will for us is that we do not sin, which is sanctification. "My little children, these things write I unto you, *that you sin not.* And is any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2: 1. "This is the will of God, even your *sanctification.*" 1 Thess. 4.3.

If we are truly abiding in Christ we will choose not to sin. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 1 John 3:6.

He who is truly "born of God" keeps himself from sinning willfully. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God." 1 John 3:9. "And we know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God *keepeth* himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." 1 John 5:18.

We should be holy and without blame. "According as He hath chosen us in Him *before* the foundation of the world, that *we should be holy and without blame* before Him in love." Eph. 1:4.

Spotless and blameless in this wicked world. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things [new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," v.13], be diligent that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless." 2 Pet. 3:14.

Here we see that if we would meet Jesus in peace when He comes again, we must be without spot and blameless *before* His coming! This is the work, objective, and power of the true gospel!

Not having spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. "That He might sanctify and cleanse it [His church] with the washing by water by the word, that He might it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5: 26,27.

No guile; without fault. "These are they which were *not defiled* by women [false churches] for they are [spiritual] virgins. They are they which followeth the Lamb withersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men [not from the grave], being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found *no guile*; for they are without fault before the throne of God." Rev. 14: 4, 5.

Transformed by the renewing of the mind. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Rom. 12: 1, 2.

Given the mind of Christ. “Let this mind be in you which was *also* in Christ Jesus.”— Phil. 2:5

Every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. “Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Cor. 10:5.

The godly delivered out of all temptation. “The Lord knoweth how to deliver *the godly* out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” 2 Pet. 2:9.

God is willing, able, and ready to provide all help needed. “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” 2 Cor. 9:8.

We can overcome all sin and sinful things through Christ. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Phil. 4:13.

God’s grace is more than sufficient for any need. “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Cor. 12: 9, 10.

Predestinated to be conformed to His image (character). “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, the He might be the firstborn among many may brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom he justified, them He also glorified. What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” 2 Cor. 8: 29-31.

Changed into the image of God. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass (mirror) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Cor. 3: 18.

No need to fall to temptation. “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make you calling and elections sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall.” 2 Pet. 1:10 (see verses 4-12 for the Biblical “Life Insurance Policy”).

David shows us how to stop sinning!

“Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might *not* sin against Thee.” Ps. 119:11.

II. SPIRIT IT OF PROPHECY REFERENCES

Many have not read some of these passages that clearly say we can, in this life, reach the condition of *sinlessness*, or the perfection that Adam and Eve had *before* their transgression! These, however, are not merely assertions or interpretations of E.G. White—as some people accuse her of but echoes of the Bible verses we just cited above.

The problem is not the want of clear evidences and instructions from the Word that such is possible but because we are not yet willing to give up *all* the treasures of this

destruction-bound world, its maxims and worldly wisdom, and its fatal attractions and pleasures! They are still the “other gods *before* the God of heaven” to us. Until the object of our affections and desires changes we will never find delight in these truths neither have any hope whatsoever for eternal life in Christ, our self-sacrificing Redeemer!

Everyone can reach the condition of sinlessness which Adam had before the fall!

“Everyone who by faith obeys God’s commandments *will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before transgression*. When we **submit** ourselves to Christ, we live His life, This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.” – *Signs of the Times*, July 23, 1902/*Maranatha*, p. 224.

“Those only who through faith in Christ **obey** all of God’s commandments will reach *the condition of sinlessness* in which Adam lived before his transgression. They testify to their love of Christ by obeying all His precepts.” – *E.G. W. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 118.

We may reach the condition of “no sin” like Christ!

“He (Jesus) had kept His Father’s commandments [John 14: 15; 15:10], and there was *no sin in Him* that Satan could use to his advantage. *This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.*” – *Great Controversy*, p. p. 623.

We can fully and entirely overcome every sin!

“*We can overcome. Yes—fully, entirely.* Jesus died to make a way of escape for us that we might overcome *every evil temper, every sin, every temptation*, and sit down at last with Him.” – *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 144.

We need not yield to sin—not even in thought!

“Not even by a thought did He(Christ) yield to temptation. *So it may be with us.*” – *Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

We must stop sinning by God’s grace!

“In order to let Jesus into our hearts, *we must stop sinning.*” – *Signs of the Times*, Mar. 3, 1898. This is not speaking of tomorrow or some future time!

Christ’s death makes it possible to stop sinning!

“Christ died to make it possible for you to *cease to sin.*” – *Review & Herald*, Aug. 18, 1894.

Redeemed means to cease from sin!

“To be redeemed means to cease from sin.” – *Review & Herald*, Sept. 25, 1900.

All sin may be overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit!

“All sin. . . . may be overcome by the Holy Spirit’s power.” – *The Faith I Live By*, p. 118.

God’s purpose is to save man wholly and entirely from sin!

“Those who do not aim for perfection of character. . . . **rob God** of His glory in the work of saving them, *wholly, entirely, from all sin.*” – *Manuscript 42*, 1890.

This is one prevalent species of stealing or robbing God that many Christian ministers, preachers, and Bible teachers strangely fail to warn their adherents of! Why? because they teach that the Decalogue was “done away at the cross” and obstinately refuse to believe that character perfection is attainable or necessary because “one is already saved.” Hence, they toss out the 8th commandment as well, and then “take the name of God in vain,” transgressing the third commandment in grand fashion. They warn about “robbing God in tithes and offerings,” and this is true, but not of robbing Him of His glory in the work of saving them, wholly and entirely from all sin! What blindness!

We may possess Christ’s sinless humanity!

“Christ unites in His person the fullness and perfection of the Godhead and *the fullness and perfection of sinless humanity*. He met all the temptations by which Adam was assailed, and overcame these temptations because in His humanity He **relied** upon divine power. . . . *Christ’s life is a revelation of what fallen human beings may become through union and fellowship with the divine nature. . . . The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partakers of the divine nature* [2 Pet.1:4]. *All that Christ received from God we too may have*. Then ask and receive. . . . Let your life be knit by hidden links to the life of Jesus.” – *The Faith I Live By*, p. 219.

Christ is ready to set us free from sin but only with our consent!

“Christ is ready to set us *free from sin*, but He does not force the will.” – *Steps to Christ*, p. 39.

Christ can overcome sin in us, if we cooperate with Him!

“He can *overcome sin in you*, when you *cooperate* with His efforts.” – *Our High Calling*, p. 76/ *Youth’s Instructor*, June 29, 1893.

We cannot be overcome if we repent and receive the life of Christ!

“He who repents of his sin and *accepts the gift of the life* of the Son of God, *cannot be overcome*. . . . When tempted and tried, he claims *the power that Christ died to give*, and overcomes through His grace. . . . Through the merits of the blood of Christ, you may be a conqueror, yea, more than a conqueror. . . . Heaven is worth everything to us, and if we lose heaven we lose all.” – *Sons & Daughters*, p. 349.

We must carefully analyze what it means to “accept the gift of the life of the Son of God.” The life-gift of Christ is the life He lived on earth as a Man among men. And that life of thirty-three and a half years was *a perfect, self-less life of suffering, obedience, and service to God and men*. Are we willing to accept *this life* and live it, too?

We must accept Christ’s power to keep us from sinning!

“We must accept that power to save and keep him (us) from sin. . . . The truth must be admitted into the soul, and it will work the *sanctification of the character*. It will refine, and elevate the life, and fit you for an entrance into the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love Him” – *Ibid.*

His grace overcomes our sinful human nature!

“The character of Daniel is presented to the world of what God’s grace can make of men fallen by nature and corrupted by sin. The record of his noble, self-denying life is an encouragement to our common humanity. From it we may gather strength to nobly resist temptation, and firmly in the grace of the meekness stand for the right under the severest trial” – *Sanctified Life*, p. 17.

“When sin struggles for the mastery in your soul,
and burdens the conscience,
go to the Savior. His grace is sufficient to subdue sin.”
– *God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 259.

BIBLICAL HOLINESS

The apostle says: “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy even as I am holy.” 1 Pet. 1: 15, 16; cf. Lev. 11: 44, 45. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said, “*Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*” Matt. 5:48. How these holiness and perfection, which are the result of the work of sanctification, can be achieved by every true follower of Christ, is summarized in the following (More in-depth studies are required):

“The sanctification set forth in the Scriptures *embraces the whole being---spirit, soul, and body.* Paul prayed for the Thessalonians that their ‘whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ 1 Thess. 5:23. Again he writes to believers: ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.’ –*Great Controversy*, p. 473 (see also 1 Thess. 5:23; Rom. 12:1).

“Perfection, holiness—nothing short of this would give them success in carrying out the principles He had given them.” – *Sons & Daughters*, p. 10.

Holiness is entire surrender to God. “Holiness is . . . *an entire surrender* to the will of God.” – *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 51.

“Holiness is. . . *the entire surrender of the heart and life* to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.” – *Desire of Ages*, p. 55.

Holiness is agreement with God. “God has commanded us, ‘Be ye holy; for I am holy;’ and an inspired apostle declares that without holiness ‘No man shall see the Lord’ [Heb. 12:14]. *Holiness is agreement with God.* By sin the image of God in man has been marred and well-nigh obliterated; it is the work of the gospel to *restore that which has been lost.*” – *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 743. “Holiness is *constant agreement with God.*” – *Review & Herald*, May 16, 1907.

Holiness is likeness to God, or Godliness. “Righteousness is holiness, *likeness to God*, and God is love.” – *Mount of Blessing*, p. 18.

Holiness is wholeness for God. “Holiness is *wholeness* for God.” – *Desire of Ages*, p. 556.

Holiness is purity of life. “Perfection, holiness, nothing short of this, would give them success in carrying out the principles He had given them. . . . *Holiness of heart and purity of life was the great subject of the teachings of Christ.*” – *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 445.

Holiness is lifting the cross of self-denial. Luke 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31; Ps. 40:8; 119:70, 77, 174. “Holiness does not consist in profession, but in *lifting the cross*, doing the will of God.” – *Review & Herald*, May 21, 1908.

Comprehensive Definition of Holiness

Biblical holiness is:

- Entire surrender heart, soul, mind, and strength—the will;
- Complete agreement with God;

- Likeness to God;
- Wholeness for God;
- Purity of life;
- Lifting the cross;
- Living by every Word of God;
- Doing the will of God (as defined by His law);
- Trusting God (“Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus.”)
- Walking by faith not by sight;
- Relying totally on God;
- Completely resting in God’s love. (See Acts of the Apostles, p. 51)

Who Shall Receive the Seal of the Living God?

See Rev. 7:1-4; 14: 1-5; Eze. 9: 4-6. *“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal of the living God. Those who are planning sin, and acting it will be passed by. Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in this great antitypical Day of Atonement, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God’s protection.*

*The names of those steadfastly looking and waiting and watching for the appearing of their Savior---more earnestly and wishfully than they who wait for the morning---will be **numbered among those who are sealed.** Those who, while having all the light of truth flashing upon their souls, should have works corresponding to their avowed faith; but are allured by sin, setting up idols in their hearts, corrupting their souls before God, and polluting those who unite with them in sin, will have their names blotted out of the Book of life, and left in midnight darkness, having no oil in their vessels with their lamps. [Mal. 4:2 quoted].” – Testimonies to Ministers, p. 445.*

The Only Hope for the Sinner

“Salvation means to us complete surrender of soul, body, and spirit. Because of the unruly elements of our nature, our passions often gain the mastery. **The only hope for the sinner is to cease from sin.** Thus his will will be in harmony with the will of Christ. His soul will be brought into fellowship with God.” – *Manuscript 73, 1899.*

DEDICATION AND CONSECRATION

Add this petition to your personal prayer of dedication and consecration:

“Dear Father in heaven, Let the latter rain come into my vessel. Let the light of the glorious angel, which unites with third angel shine upon me. Give me a part in this mighty work for the salvation of souls before my probation closes. Let me help proclaim the final messages of mercy and warning to those around me by giving it that certain sound. Let me be a co-laborer with Christ my Savior. I am determined to gain the victory of self. I am determined my life shall be hid in Christ with God. I beseech Thy throne of grace for power, for light, that I may reflect it upon others, that souls may be saved. I want my last days to be the most triumphant. It may be so for You want it to be so. I do not care nor want any worldly honor. All I want is a “well done” from the lips of my

Redeemer to fall like music on my ears. For this I will labor. I will do right because I love the right. I will obey You at any cost to myself by Your grace, and I know that the crown of glory will be given to me by and by." Amen.

**We need not worry about the latter rain!
The condition to be met:**

"All we have to do is to keep the vessel clean and right side up and prepared for the reception of the heavenly rain. . . . The time to be crucified is just now. Every day, every hour, self is to die; self is to be crucified; and then, when the time comes that the test shall come to God's people in earnest, the everlasting arms [will be] are around you. The angels of God [will] make a wall of fire around you. All your self-crucifixion will not do any good then. It must be done before the destiny of souls is decided. It is *now* that self is to be crucified---when there is work to do; when there is some use to be made of every entrusted capability. **It is *now* that we are to empty and thoroughly cleanse the vessel of all impurity. It is *now* that we are to be made holy unto God.**

"This is our work this very moment. You are not to wait for any special period for a wonderful work to be done; it is today. I give myself to God today. *Are you ready to make that surrender now?* Do not say that you are going to overcome by degrees; that you are going to try little by little to give up sin. Now, while it is called today, heed the invitation and harden not your hearts! He has made provision ample enough for you that you can, through Him, be more, yes, more than conquerors!"

This concludes our Four-part study on "Preparing for the Latter Rain." Other studies related to it may be addressed in the months ahead, depending on the urgency arising from the rapidly-fulfilling end time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

***The grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion
of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Cor. 13: 14.***