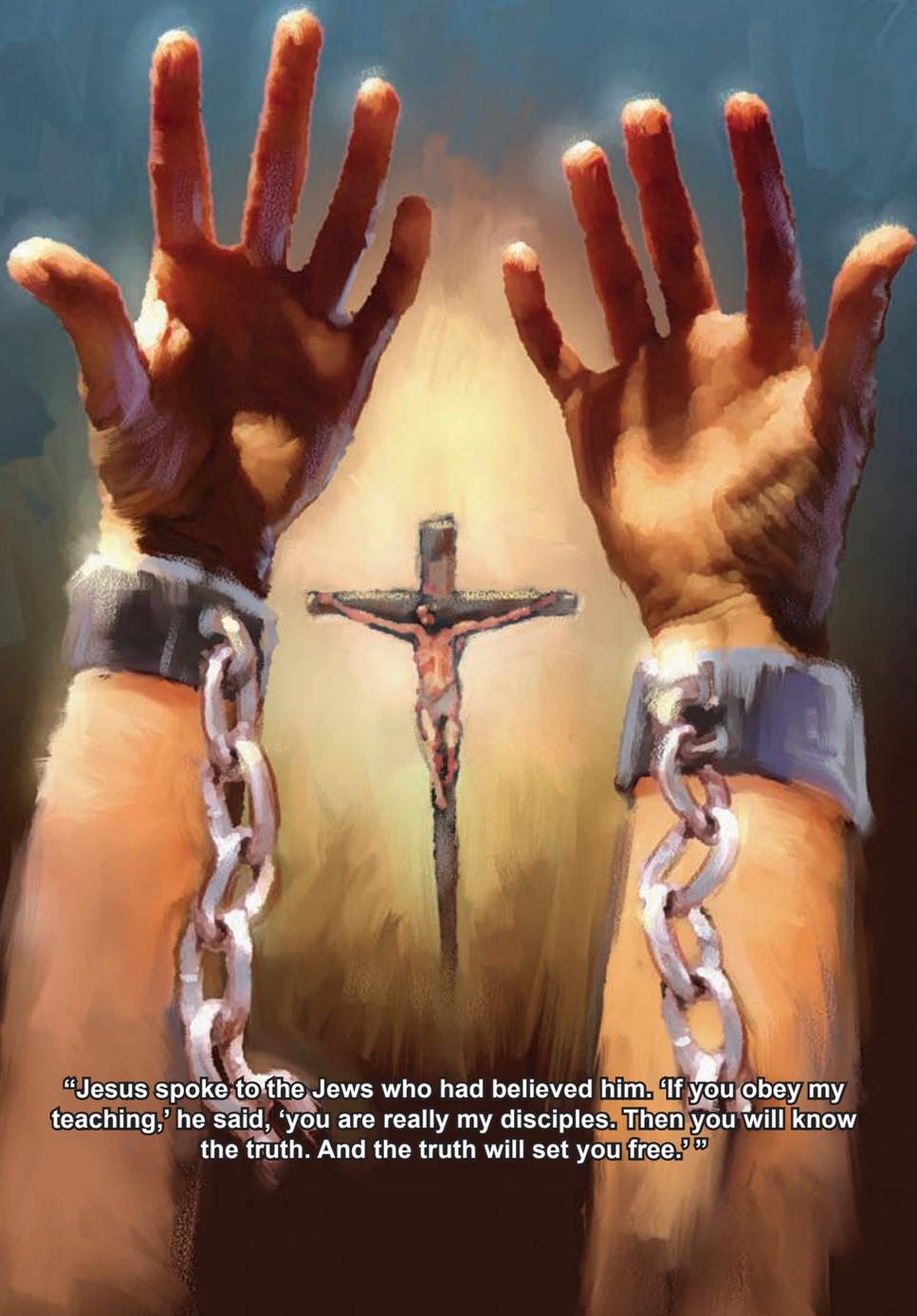


Summer 2015

THE DEAF MESSENGER



“Jesus spoke to the Jews who had believed him. ‘If you obey my teaching,’ he said, ‘you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free.’”

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The purpose of this magazine is to inform the deaf reader about such topics as practical Christian living; basic Bible truths; and what the past, present, and future historical events mean to each of us. This magazine attempts to cover spiritual, mental, and physical aspects in its articles and columns.

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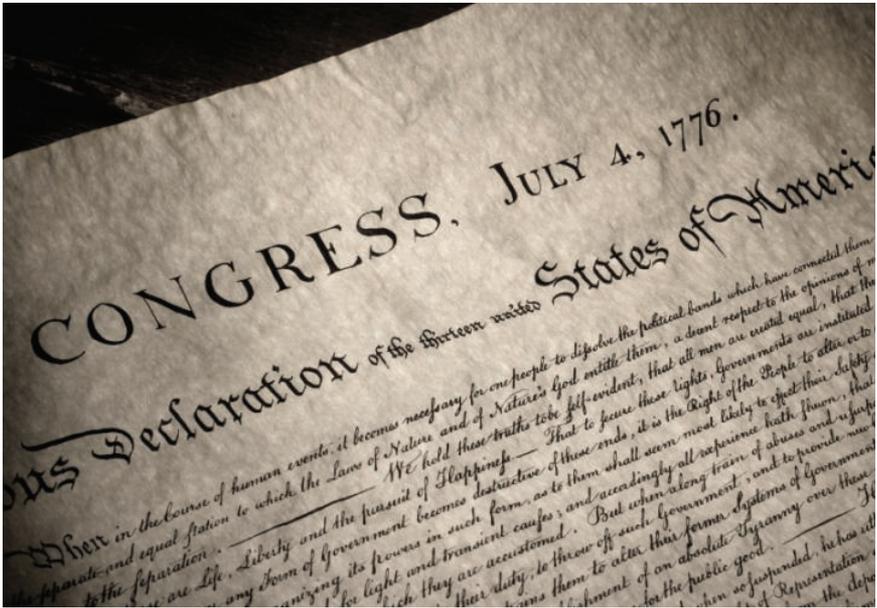
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Freedom In Christ

By David M. Trexler



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On July 4 Americans will celebrate Independence Day. It is a national holiday to remember the Declaration of Independence that was approved in the Continental Congress in 1776. It declared independence from Great Britain that controlled 13 colonies. But, that legal independence didn't come without a price. The British refused to recognize the Declaration of Independence and sent its Army to force the Americans to stay with

Great Britain. But, the Americans fought back and the war brought many deaths and destruction before the Americans finally won the war forcing the British to accept our independence.

Also, it is a birthday of the democratic nation that was different from other countries in the world of that time. The United States of America has been a role model of freedom for the world. Many countries of the world have attempted to create their

government based on the principles of democracy. Millions of people from all over the world travelled across the dangerous ocean to find prosperity and freedom in our lands. It is true still today. The famous Statute of Liberty has been the symbol of hope for all.

But, America's democracy was threatened by the Civil War, World War II, Cold War and terrorism. Tyranny and dictatorship are the real threat to our democracy. We want to stay free according to our conscience and beliefs. Freedom of religion, speech, expression, etc. are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the United States. If the Bill of Rights is destroyed then we will lose our true freedom and independence. We need to remember that God created our country that is based on God's given rights to humanity. Of course, our rights should be within the context of God's perfect law of love—two great tables of commandments. For example, we are free to choose what religion

we want to be part of. But, we are not free to prevent people from choosing their religion or we do not force people to follow our ways. We are Americans who are independent people who are following the laws of the land. We can do what we want to do with our life as long as we respect each other. The government doesn't force us to go to church or not to go to church.

Now, let us talk about our relationship with God. Our relationship with God is based on love, not by force. In the beginning God created Adam and Eve with the power of choice. That is a great gift of God to human beings. We are special creation. We are created with the mind that is higher and nobler than animals.

But, God respects us and He doesn't force us against our will or wish. There was a great controversy (war) between Christ and Satan so He put a voting booth in the Garden of Eden. That was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God clearly told Adam and Eve that if they ate the forbidden fruit

from the tree of knowledge of good and evil they would die (Genesis 1:15-17). It was a test of their loyalty toward God. That shows God had given them the gift of choice—to obey God or rebel God. That is love because if He didn't give them the choice then He wouldn't be a God of love.

Unfortunately, God was saddened when Adam and Eve chose to believe the lie of the enemy of God (Genesis 3:1-15). But, what happened to them after they chose to be independent from God and be dependent on Satan? Fear, distrust, unhappiness, death, curses, etc., came into the world. But as they would like they could not be free from Satan's power because they had chosen to believe him and followed his lie against the clear warning by our loving God. Once they rebelled against God they are stuck with sin and they cannot escape from it at all. Satan wouldn't allow them to become independent from him once they joined him.

But, God already had a plan of rescue that would

give them independence from the power of sin and death (Revelation 13:8b). So, God gave them the rescue plan through the plan of salvation that included the sacrificial system that was the symbol of the death of Jesus Christ. Four thousand years later Jesus Christ came into the world and He lived and died on the cross fulfilling God's promise of salvation to all who believed in Him. Yes, we are still here as sinners, but we are saved through His sacrifice. We are awaiting the day of deliverance from the prison of sin and death when Jesus Christ returns to earth.

God of love gives us the power of choice. We can decide to accept Him or reject Him. He respects our decisions. But, Satan doesn't respect our decisions. He tries hard to keep us on his side, even though we want to be free from him. The devil uses different ways to trick us to believe that God cannot forgive us if we are sorry for rebelling Him. The devil keeps us in the prison of sin. For example, in a Communist country people

were not able to move out of their countries. They were stuck in those countries. So, some people had escaped to find freedom in a free country. Satan's world is like the Communist country. We are slaves to Satan as we have no freedom to be free from him. But, God is different. Yes, He does expect us to follow His law of love, but He doesn't force us to obey Him. Also, He doesn't force us to accept His precious gift—Jesus Christ. He allows people to reject Him as a free choice, but He is sad when they reject Him.

Jesus Christ is our Savior who has freed us from sin by His death on the cross, but we must come to Him with repentance and accept Him as our Savior. Then we are free from the power of sin and eternal death. "But now you are free from sin and have become slaves of God. This brings you a life that is only for God, and this gives you life forever. When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives us a free gift—life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord"

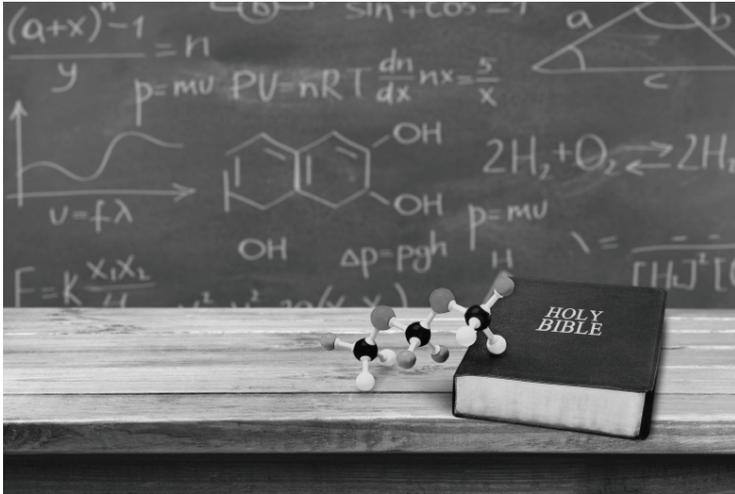
(Romans 6:22, 23, NCV). "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32, NKJV). What is the Truth? Jesus is the Truth who has freed you! Also, He has kept you free as long as you stay with Him. If you leave Him, you are not free!

As a child of God we obey Him because we love Him. That is what God wants—that kind of obedience through love—free choice to love Him. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NKJV). Jesus has always opened His arms to receive you so you can have the true freedom in Him forever. You are free to follow Him wherever He goes according to the truth in the Bible. "These [God's people] are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (Revelation 14:4, NKJV).

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Creation

By John Blake



One night my wife and I were out for a walk and we stopped and looked at the stars in the sky. Where did they all come from? What holds them in their order and place in the universe? With the naked eye without a telescope, a person could possibly see as many as 60,000 stars. But, with the latest electronic telescope systems and the famous Hubble telescope, there are now billions of stars that the astronomers can see. There are also hundreds of “planets” moving around suns, but so far no scientists know the exact conditions for life like we have on this earth

with the correct temperature, water, oxygen, elements, etc.

Today most scientists believe that all these stars and galaxies (huge groups of stars) in the universe just appeared and evolved without any Creator or supernatural guidance! But, the Bible says very clearly in Genesis 1 that God made the world in six literal 24-hour days. After studying the evidence, we must each decide which side has the best evidence!

Let us take a moment and look at a human cell of the body. The cell is made up of proteins, enzymes (chemicals that guide the

thousands of chemical reactions in the body) and a master formula (like a computer program) called DNA. There are 239 different proteins that make up every cell. The chance that each of the 239 proteins accidentally formed into a specific needed type, and then all 239 of them combined in just the right way to form a human cell, is really impossible. This is just one example.

The human brain is an amazing biological marvel. We still cannot fully understand how the brain can think, remember and guide our body in all its automatic functions and thinking processes. The idea that all these complex brain programs could accidentally come into existence in the brain and then work in harmony guiding in the digesting of our complex foods or processing the signals from the eye into beautiful pictures, does not make sense. It is the human brain that can design a computer, or by combining with thousands of other people's brains,

design and send a rocket to reach the planet Mars. How truly amazing! But still many people still think all these amazing things just happened by chance!

After examining much evidence, I have come to believe that there must be a Creator, a designer and an ultimate power behind our world and our solar system. That is God. Do I fully understand God? No! Has God always existed (lived)? Yes! I believe from examining the Bible that God has given us much evidence so we can understand many of the major things about God. The Bible has the true answers to three important questions: (1) Where did I come from? (2) Why am I here? (3) What is going to happen to human beings and to me personally?

If I believe that we just evolved and that there is no God, then we have no definite answers to any of these three most important questions. We would have no true guidance as to what is right, or wrong. If we accept the Bible story, then we have answers to all these

questions.

Do we have answers to every question? Absolutely not. But, I choose to seek as many answers as possible in God's "Casebook - Story Book"—the Bible. This is the story of how God has worked for about 6,000 years to help and save people. And, it tells how our earth will end, with a loving God in control and a just reward given to those who have fought and opposed God and what is right and good.

The Bible says, "It's impossible to please God apart from [without] faith. And why? Because anyone who wants to approach God must believe both that he exists and that he cares enough to respond to those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). In His Word, God gives us thousands of examples of His loving way with man, but does not try to prove that He exists. After examining the evidence, we have to make up our own minds. God does not force belief!

The Bible explains how God created a beautiful world for man in six literal 24-hour days. But, a few

chapters later, it tells us how man lost his dominion or rulership over the earth when man fell to the temptations of Satan.

But, the Bible does not leave us without HOPE. With His followers' faithfulness and obedience, before He returns, God is going to give a final demonstration to the Universe that the false accusations of Satan against God are untrue, and that God truly is love. Then God plans to clean out the Universe from every bit of sin, and finally Satan and all sinners will be no more.

After that God plans to create a new earth. Revelation 21:1-4 tells us:

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth were completely gone. There was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem. It was coming down out of heaven from God. It was prepared like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne. It said, "Now God makes his home with people. He will

live with them. They will be his people. And God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be.”

In Revelation 14, we find what is called the “Three Angels’ Messages,” a last warning of love from God to the world as people are prepared for Jesus’ second coming. In the first of these three messages, we find a call to worship God as the Creator of heaven and earth! This worship is extremely important because the ‘hour of his judgment is come.” A major point in God’s final message to the world is that God is Creator. So, He also has the right to be our loving judge! All this disagrees strongly with evolution. This message shows that one of the most important messages to go to the world today is that we are to worship our Creator God. Recognizing HIM as Creator will also lead us to give Him our loving

obedience—a response from hearts touched by his love and grace! This is an urgent message that we now need to share with the whole world!

The book, *Evolution* by Raymond Halverson, on p. 21 & 22, tells an amazing story about Sir Anthony Flew. He had been one of the world’s leading writers on atheism. He had written 30 books and one of his essays, “Theology and Falsification” was very widely known and read. He had scheduled one of his public debates for May 2004 at New York University. However, as the debate was about to begin, Flew made an amazing announcement that he now believed in a God. He said that especially the study of the human DNA finally convinced him that there must be an intelligence to have designed and planned the whole complex DNA system of human genetics. So, the debate changed into a joint exploration of modern scientific evidences that point to a higher intelligence. Sir Flew said that he now believed that the universe

must have come into existence through an “infinite intelligence.”

How about you? Have you settled it in your mind that there is a loving God who created the world and all our universe, and that He really cares about you? That God cared so much for us that He sent His Son to die for us, so we can live for eternity? If you surrender your life fully to Him, He will not only guide you, but give you eternal life!

Sometimes I am a bit like the disciple, Thomas—I find some things harder to believe. But, I have come to the conclusion that all my questions will never be

answered before we get to Heaven. So, for now, I must act on the basis of the overwhelming evidence! I believe that overwhelming evidence points to the fact that God created, and continues to control and monitor His universe, and—that He cares personally for you and me!

I believe that I have a place in His great plan! How I long to see Him face to face, and see and feel His love, and then have Him answer all our questions with His perfect answers!

John Blake is a retired pastor and Gospel Outreach Deaf Ministry Director who lives in Clive, Alberta, Canada.



HIGHER CLIPS

The Test of Discipleship

By Ellen G. White



HIGHER CLIPS

born of the [Holy] Spirit” (John 3:8).

We cannot see the wind, but we can see what the wind does. We cannot see the Holy Spirit as He works on the heart, but His power brings us new life. That power changes a person to reflect the image of God.

“When anyone is joined to Christ, he is a new being [person]; the old is gone, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

A person may not know the exact time or place he gave his heart to God. He may not know how the Holy Spirit led him to Christ. But this does not prove that he is not a child of God.

Christ said to Nicodemus, “The wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is

We cannot see or hear the work of the Holy Spirit, but we can see what He has done.

If the Holy Spirit changes our hearts, our lives will show the change. We cannot change our hearts or make our characters like [as] God’s. And we must not think that our good works will save us. But our lives will show if we have the grace of God in our hearts. God’s power will change our characters, our habits, and the way we live. Other people will see that there are big changes in us.

One good act or one bad act does not reveal our character. The way we speak and act most of the time reveals our character.

We can act right without the power of God changing our hearts. We may do good so that other people will like us. We may avoid evil because we want our friends to think we are good. A selfish person may do things that are not selfish. Then how do we know if we are doing God's will or Satan's will?

Who has our heart? Whom are we thinking about? Whom do we love to talk about? Whom do we love most? For whom do we do our best work? If we are God's, we will think often about Him. Our thoughts and desires belong to God. We very much want to be like Him and have His Holy Spirit in us. We desire to do His will and please Him in everything.

If we become new persons in Christ Jesus, we will have the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives. These fruits are "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Followers of Christ will act different than they acted in the past. They will follow in Christ's footsteps by faith. They will reflect Christ's character and seek to become pure, as He is pure.

People who follow Christ will love the things they used to hate. They will hate the things they used to love. Proud people will become humble. Foolish people will become wise. People who drink alcohol will stop. Impure people will become pure. People will stop loving the customs and fashions of the world.

Christians will not try to get attention by the things they wear. "Instead, your beauty should consist of your true inner self, the ageless [never grows old] beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of the greatest value in God's sight" (1 Peter 3:4).

A person who truly repents will make changes in his life. He will confess his sins and return anything he may have stolen. He will love God and all people.

When the sinner does these things, he will know that he has passed from death to life.

When we come to Christ and accept His forgiveness and grace, love grows in our hearts. Our work becomes easy. We will enjoy doing God's work. We will be glad to sacrifice for Christ. When the sinner accepts Christ, the future no longer seems dark. Then he walks in the light [knowledge] that shines from Christ, the Sun of righteousness.

The world will see the beauty of Christ's character in His followers. Christ was happy to do what His Father asked. Love for God and desire for God's glory gave the guiding power in Christ's life. Love made all Christ's acts kind and beautiful.

Love comes from God. Love cannot come from a sinful heart. Love is only in hearts where Jesus lives. "We love because God first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Love is the power in the heart God's grace has made new. Love changes our characters and controls our feelings and desires. Love

replaces hate and helps us to be kind. God's love in us makes our lives happier and has a good influence on everyone around us.

Children of God need to guard against two wrong ideas. People who have just started to trust God need to be especially careful.

(1) We must not think our good works will bring us to God. We cannot become holy by obeying the law in our own strength. Selfishness and sin ruin everything we do without Christ. Only the grace of Christ, through faith, can make us holy.

(2) The second wrong idea is that we do not need to keep the law of God when we believe in Christ. Some people think our works are not important because we receive the grace of God through faith alone.

The Bible teaches that obedience is more than doing what the law says. Obedience is doing what is right because we love God. God's law reflects His character. God's law is based on His love. God's government in heaven and

on earth is based on His love.

Will we follow God's law if we have His love in our hearts? God promises: "I will put my laws in their hearts, and write them [laws] on their minds" (Hebrews 10:16). We know God has kept His promise when His love is in our hearts, and we have become like [as] Him. The law written in the heart will influence the life.

If we love God, we will obey Him. Our obedience shows we are true followers of God. The Bible says, "Our love for God means that we obey His [God's] commands" (1 John 5:3).

"If someone says that he knows Him [God], but does not obey His [God's] commands, such a person is a liar and there is no truth in him" (1 John 2:4). Faith does not excuse us from obeying God's law. Faith brings us the grace of Christ. Christ's grace gives us power to obey His law.

We do not earn salvation by obeying God's law. Salvation is God's free gift that we receive by faith. Our faith in Christ causes us to

obey Him. "You know that Christ appeared in order to take away sins, and that there is no sin in Him. So everyone who lives in union with Christ does not continue in sin; but whoever continues to sin has never seen Him or known Him [Christ]" (1 John 3:5, 6). We know our faith is true if we love God and obey His law.

Christ controls our feelings and our thoughts when we live in Christ and His love is in us. Our actions will agree with God's holy law. "Let no one [person] deceive you, my children. Whoever does what is right is righteous, just as Christ is righteous" (1 John 3:7). God's righteousness is shown in God's law [Ten Commandments]. The law was given to Israel on Mt. Sinai.

True faith teaches that we must obey God. "For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). "So it is with faith: if it [faith] is alone and includes no actions, then it [faith] is dead" (James 2:17). Before Jesus came to earth He said, "I love to

do Your will, My God! I keep Your teaching in My heart” (Psalm 40:8).

Before Jesus returned to heaven He said, “ I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his [God] love’ ” (John 15:10, KJV).

The Bible says, “If we obey God’s commands [commandments], then we are sure we know Him.” “Whoever says that he remains in union with God should live just as Jesus Christ did [lived]” (1 John 2:3, 6). “For Christ Himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in His steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

God’s plan of salvation has always been the same. The plan is the same as it was in the Garden of Eden before Adam and Eve sinned. God gives eternal life [salvation] to people who obey His law.

The happiness of all creation would be in danger if eternal life were given to people who refuse to obey God. Sin, suffering, and unhappiness would continue forever.

Adam could have developed a righteous [perfect] character if he had obeyed God’s law. But Adam and Eve sinned, so we are all sinners. We cannot make ourselves righteous. We cannot perfectly obey God’s law because we are sinful and unholy. We do not have any righteousness of our own to obey God’s law.

Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth. Christ had the same kinds of trials and temptations we have. Christ lived without sin. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness.

We are righteous if we give ourselves to Christ and accept Him as our Saviour. Christ’s character will take the place of our characters. Then God accepts us the same as if we had not sinned.

Also, Christ changes our hearts. He lives in our hearts by faith. We are to keep Christ in our hearts by faith and let Him guide all our choices. Then Christ will work in us, and we will do what pleases Him. Then

we may say, “This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave His life for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Jesus said to His disciples, “ ‘The words you will speak will not be yours; they will come from the [Holy] Spirit of your Father speaking through you’ ” (Matthew 10:20). With Jesus working in us, we will obey God as Jesus obeyed God. Our lives will show we obey God’s law.

We have nothing to be proud of and no reason to praise ourselves. Our hope is in the righteousness of Christ that God gives us, and in the work of the Holy Spirit, who helps us to obey.

We should understand the true meaning of faith. Faith is more than just believing facts. We know God lives. We believe in God’s power. We know His word is true. Satan and his angels know and believe these things. The Bible says that “the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19, KJV). But this is not faith.

We have faith when we believe God’s Word and do

what He wants us to do. We show our faith when we give our hearts to Him and love Him. Love makes faith work. Faith makes us pure.

Our hearts become new by faith. When our hearts have not been made new by God, we cannot obey God’s law. But our new hearts love to obey God’s law.

We can say with David, “How I love Your [God’s] law! I think about it [law] all day long” (Psalm 119:97). The righteousness of the law becomes part of us when we “live in union with Christ” (Romans 8:1).

Some people know that God has forgiven their sins. They really want to be His children. They know their characters are not perfect and their lives have many faults. So they doubt the Holy Spirit has made their hearts new. To these people I say, “Do not become discouraged and lose hope.”

We will often have to kneel and weep while we pray to God because we make mistakes. But we are not to give up. God does not turn away from us when we make mistakes. God does

not leave us alone.

Christ is at the right hand of God. He is asking His Father to forgive us. John, the greatly loved disciple, wrote, "I am writing this to you, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf—Jesus Christ, the righteous one" (1 John 2:1).

We must not forget these words of Christ: "The Father Himself loves you" (John 16:27). Christ desires to bring us back to Himself. God wants to see His purity and holiness in us. If we will give ourselves to Him, He will continue the good work He has begun in us until Jesus comes.

We must pray with great desire. We must believe more fully. We need to stop trusting our own power and trust the power of our Redeemer. Then we will praise God.

The closer we come to Jesus, the more faults we will see in our own lives. We will understand better our sinfulness as we compare our sinful selves with the

perfect Saviour. Realizing we are sinful shows that Satan is losing his power over us, and that the Holy Spirit is leading us.

We cannot have a deep love for God if we do not know we are sinful. We must realize we are sinful, or we will not see the beauty and perfection of Christ. The person whom the grace of Christ has changed will want Christ's holy character.

The more we think about the perfect purity and beauty of Christ's life, the less we think about ourselves. When we realize how sinful we are, we will turn to Christ, who can forgive. When we realize we need help and ask Christ for help, He will use His power to help us.

The more our need of forgiveness leads us to Christ and the Bible, the more we will understand and want His perfect character. Then we shall become more and more like Christ.

Ellen G. White was a well-known religious writer and speaker on three continents. This article is from "Steps to Christ, Easy Reading Edition." "Steps to Christ" is the most popular and widely read book.

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