

Open Face

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THE FIGHT OF FAITH

David Clayton



Some years ago, while reading the book, "Christ's Object lessons", I came across a statement on page 69 which has given me cause for much reflection ever since I read it:

"When the character of Christ shall be fully reproduced in His people, then He shall come to claim them as His own." C.O.L. – 69

We often think of the finishing of the work in terms of the number of people who have not yet heard the everlasting gospel, but the Holy Spirit shows us here, another perspective: Until we, His people, are in our behavior and in our thinking exactly like Jesus, then He will not return to take us home. (see Eph. 4:13,14; 5:25-27)

It is depressing, but interesting to note that even among those who call themselves "reformers", there is a strong emphasis on correctness of doctrine, but very little focus on the issue of a Christlike character. The real issue is this: Am I like Jesus? Am I ready to meet Him now? If the answer is no, then everything else is meaningless.

IS COMPLETE VICTORY TRULY POSSIBLE?

1 John 3:9 reads:

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...."

I must confess that this text has caused me to ask myself many questions and has caused a few anxious moments. At times I have had to ask myself, "can it be that I am not born of God?" The point of the text is very simple: A certain kind of person will not sin; does not sin. My question is, "why am I not that kind of person?"

Truly, it is not because we do not try. It is not for lack of effort. We make resolutions, we pray harder, we fight with all our might for years and years. Yet, like the man in Romans 7, we find that:

".....I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Rom. 7:22,23

Yet there is a way. There is a sure way to the life of victory. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ......" and Jesus Himself stated that, "with God all things are possible (Phil. 4:13; Matt. 19:26)." How much is comprehended in this "ALL THINGS"? is anything at all impossible for God? Some say, "He can do all things, but I was born in

sin, and because of this I cannot stop sinning." They place a limit on God's power. They do not believe He can, and will deliver them here and now from the power of sin. But whether in heaven, or on earth, or in me, all things are possible with God.

HOW MAY THIS VICTORY BE OBTAINED?

On the other hand, how much is possible without God?

"....Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5

Nothing is possible without God (in terms of spiritual accomplishments)! To put it another way, all things are impossible without God. This settles it forever then that the only hope for me is to find the way that God may do His way in me, for it is plain that all that I can ever do will always be of no value whatever. Will always be worth exactly nothing.

Simon Peter had this lesson indelibly imprinted on his mind during his experience in which he denied Jesus. Earlier that night, he had been vehement in his protestations that he would not

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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be offended because of Christ. He had been certain of his strength, his integrity, his loyalty. But Jesus knew what was in man, and in His mercy, He counseled Peter to watch and pray with Him as He sought God's strength for the ordeal before Him. Peter however, was not aware of his need of divine strength. When he should have been seeking God, he was sleeping. He put his confidence in his own abilities, and as a result, when he faced the crisis later that night, he publicly and loudly denied his Lord with curses. This is how it always is when we try to manage on our own. We may mean to do well, but inevitably, we fail.

"for I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Rom. 7:18

Will I ever reach the place where I am good, or where I may say, "good now dwells in my flesh?" if I live the life of the overcomer for fifty years and then one day I lose my hold on Christ, what happens then? Will I be able to continue to live the victorious life because

some good has rubbed off on me? Will I have learned how to be good? Will fifty years sanctification have made me a better person? The answer is no. Now and throughout eternity it will always be true that there is "none good but one, that is God (Matt 19:1)." I, by myself will always, always be no good; will always be a total failure. Any good thing which I do, every worthwhile thing which appears in me, must be done in, and through and for me, by God. He is everything. I am nothing. This is a lesson which we must learn thoroughly and forever.

Think for a moment, do you truly desire to conquer every single sin? Then why do we fail so often? Is it lack of effort? Don't we try and try, yet fail again and again? The whole reason for this is that we are fighting the wrong fight! The fight against sin is hard. For me, in fact, it is a battle which can never be won. Thank God, this is not our fight. This is God's fight. This is God's part.

So often we emphasize the wrong thing. We see the wrong end of a text. "Walk in the Spirit," says Paul, "and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16) So immediately we start out trying not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. How is it that we did not see that all we were told to do is to "Walk in the Spirit?" "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." (2Cor. 5:17) My part is to be in Christ. That is all. His part is to make me into a new creature.

Yet, we are so oriented to works, so confident of our strength, so determined to be independent that sometimes we must suffer defeat after defeat, year after year, be battered and broken and it is only then, when at last we humbly and truly acknowledge our helplessness and become genuinely aware of our nothingness and turn to God alone as our only hope that He is able to do His perfect work in us.

THE LINK OF FAITH

The great question then, is this: How can I (who am nothing) place myself in such a relationship with God (Who

is everything), that He will be able to overcome sin and to do His perfect work in me?

"For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world even our faith." I John 5:4

The answer, of course, is that it is through faith that I may achieve and maintain this relationship with God. This is repeated over and over again in the Bible.

"The just shall live by faith"....(Gal. 3:11)

"We walk by faith, not by sight—" (2 Cor. 5:7)

The trouble is that we often repeat something, or hear it said so often that it fails to make any meaningful impression on our minds, or else we fail to appreciate what it is really saying. What is faith? How do we "walk by faith"? In a practical sense, what does it mean to say that the Christian must "fight the good fight of faith"? (1 Tim. 6:12)

We understand very clearly how to fight a physical battle; we flex our muscles, we exercise our will power, we put all our energy into a determined effort. The heartbeat increases, the blood races as every faculty is exerted in an attempt to conquer the foe. But is this the way to "Fight" the fight of faith? What in fact is faith? Faith in the truest sense is absolute confidence in God. It is the eye that looks through the veil which separates the visible from the invisible; it is the hand that grasps the hand of God across the gulf that separates the physical from the spiritual; it is the confidence which enables us to act upon the promises of God before there is any demonstration to support them. Our fight, as Christians is the fight to keep this faith alive and strong. This is our faith. Our fight is the fight to "walk by faith". (2 Cor. 5:17)

It is easy and natural to walk by sight. When I take my small child into a crowded place, he understands that he

must keep his eyes fixed on me, or else, risk getting lost. In a thick crowd, if he looks away for a moment he may lose sight of me. But how do we walk by faith? My physical eyes cannot see Jesus, my hand cannot grasp His! No, the only faculty which I can use to lay hold on Him, is faith. Faith has to do with the mind. It has to do with the spirit of man. To walk by faith means, simply to keep the mind constantly focused on Christ. It means to be aware of Him and all that He is, of His power; allowing nothing to divert my mind for even a moment. It means living my life in Him so that my job, pastimes, recreation etc. may be simply various facets of my experience with Christ. The fight of faith is the battle to maintain this focus of the mind in the midst of the thousand different distractions which come my way every single day, especially in this, the twentieth.century.

We have bad habits of mind. We permit our minds to roam freely about. Even in worship we are easily distracted by the antics of a child or the crying of a baby. We allow sports, economics, political issues etc. to absorb our attention. We must bring our minds under control and fix them immovably upon Christ. This is where our battle lies. This is where we need energy, discipline, where we must exert our effort.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

This was the secret of the power and the perseverance which was found in the heroes of Bible times. Moses, we are told, "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." (Heb. 11:27) When something is invisible, it means that it cannot be seen, yet, here we are told that Moses saw the invisible God, or rather lived as though he could see Him. Moses cultivated an awareness of God's presence. He took God into account always, every moment. This is how Moses was able to endure, to persevere in faithfulness to God.

Elijah was another of the outstanding heroes of the Old Testament. Which of us has not wondered at the complete dedication of Elijah to God and His cause? His single-mindedness in seeking the glory of God? I have thought at times that Elijah must have been born a different kind of human being. When we see how he was able to continue his lonely way for years at times, almost without human companionship, I am tempted to believe that he was not a normal man. Yet, we are reminded by the apostle James that he was a man "subject to like passions as we are". (James 5:17). So what was the secret of his life - his power? Always, there is only one answer. As Elijah stood in the palace of Ahab to deliver the message of judgment from God his first words were, "As the Lord God liveth, BEFORE WHOM I STAND...." Here was the secret of Elijah's life! Elijah had cultivated the presence of God until he stood by faith, always in the presence of God! At that very moment Elijah knew himself to be in the very presence of the everlasting God, the King of the universe, before whom the glory of Ahab's palace was as the glory of a dunghill. If I may become aware of God's presence as Elijah was, then I may overcome as Elijah did. Listen to the words of Sister White:

"....with an abiding sense of God's presence it will not be possible to disregard his holy law." {RH, June 3, 1880}.

Just think, if I could look upon the face of Jehovah at this moment, if I could see that glorious countenance, if I could know myself to be in that awesome presence, could I commit sin? Could I indulge in idle jesting? Could I criticize others or lose my temper? Never!! And yet, isn't God literally here with me at this moment? Isn't He really and truly present with me in this very room at this very moment? God Himself! Can this be true?

The awful question is, how is it possible for God to be here, in this room with me, yet to be unrecognized, unacknowledged by me? When I am in the same room with my wife, is it possible to be unaware of her presence?

Do I not take her into account in all my actions? I would not turn off the light and step out leaving her in darkness, I could not make a loud noise without first considering the effect it might have on her. Not unless I were unaware of her presence because of not looking in her direction, or because I were blind.

Perhaps this word "blind" best describes our problem (Rev 13:17). We are spiritually blind. Long practice in looking only at physical things has caused us to lose our spiritual faculties. Is it true, really true that Jesus is here, in this very room at this very moment? When we were children we listened to stories which began, "once upon a time..." We would allow our imaginations to take us off into lands of fantasy. But soon we would return to reality and realize that it was all just pretence. Is this perhaps how we treat spiritual things?

I once read of a discussion between an actor and a minister. the minister asked the actor, "how is it that you actors bring out such strong emotions and reactions from people when you are dealing with things which are not true, and yet, people are so unresponsive to the things which we ministers preach, even though they are true?" The actor's reply was: "This is because we take things which are not true and act as though they are real, while you speak about things which are real and act as though they are not true."

When I recognize that I am in the literal presence of God, and that this is not just a figure of speech, everything about me will change. My very physical bearing; the way I sit, the way I walk, will be transformed! In the presence of the King, I will bear myself in the manner of one who is royalty, the son of the Everlasting One. With this realization, I can never be made to feel inferior, or insecure. Like Elijah, I may stand unawed, or unimpressed by the grandeur of the "great" people and places of the earth. I may know myself, as God's true son to be more than the equal of any mere human being,

regardless of his money, fame or titles.

DEPENDENCE ON GOD

There are times when we all enjoy this high communion with God. Moments when we are filled with this consciousness of His presence and we find that we are victorious in the fight against sin. But why is it that we cannot maintain it? We make resolutions, we renew our covenant with God, but these purposes quickly fade from our minds! Often they do not remain with us beyond the hour of worship!

In the story of Peter's short walk on the water, there is a lesson which we do well to remember:

With his eyes on Jesus, Peter did the impossible. He defied the laws of physics, confounded reason and logic and stepped out upon the waves. I suppose that he was hardly aware of how incredible a thing it was that he should walk on water. He saw Jesus, and in gazing upon Him, he was aware of the fact that he had never known Him to fail; aware that Christ was completely trustworthy, and that it was He who had bidden him, Peter, to come to Him across the water.

But in a moment, Peter's attention was distracted. His gaze was diverted to the waves. Instead of Christ, he saw the physical situation. He took a "realistic" look at what was happening and in that moment he began to sink. There was nothing, absolutely nothing in the surrounding scenario to give him one ounce of encouragement. In all his lifetime he had never heard of any man walking on water. Such a thing defied natural law, was contrary to logic. As he looked at these things, his faith failed and the billows began to overwhelm him.

Isn't this the simple reason for our frequent failure in our efforts to live for Christ? We have not realized how vital it is that we should keep our minds focused always on Jesus. We count it an admirable thing, a mature thing to be "independent" (isn't this another term for "self-sufficient?"), to be able

to stand on our own. But to act on our own, or even to think on our own for a moment is to lose sight of Christ. In that moment, inevitably, we begin to sink.

Years ago I used to believe that one day I would know all that I need to know about God and about serving Him. Then I would be perfect. I would have "learned" how to be good; my character would be transformed and so I would be able to live a good life in my own strength, even if God should abandon me. "Surely," I reasoned, "God is able to take away sin from me and to change me into a good person." You know, this is what we expect in rearing our children. They lean heavily on us when they are young. But as they grow older, our aim is that they should learn to manage on their own. If they are properly trained, then the time will come when they "outgrow" us. They no longer need to lean on us.

Do we sometimes think of our relationship with God in these terms? Do we imagine that He is taking us to a place where we can learn to live without Him? To the place where we may graduate from His school and face life on our own? This is an absolutely wrong concept! The true Christian experience is completely different. The goal of the Christian life is to depend more and more completely on God. The ultimate in Christian perfection is perfect dependence on God. He is able and willing to guide us in the job which we choose, in our life's companion, yes, even in the clothing we wear, the kind and the amount of food we eat, even in the way we comb our hair. In fact, there is no other way that we can ever overcome sin than in allowing God to possess us, to overrule our will so completely that all our decisions will be simply His decisions without any trace of self-will whatever.

It is only in this kind of relationship that we may truly know the meaning of Christ's statement that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Have you noticed the difference when you send your children to do a job as opposed to when you go with them and you do it together? What may be a heavy burden when they must do it alone, becomes for them a pleasure when performed with Mummy or Daddy. This is particularly true of small children. This is how it is when we are always with Jesus. Missionary work becomes a pleasure. There is no burden, for the work is not the focus, Jesus is. I need not worry about the success or failure of the venture. This is not my business. My only duty is to go wherever He leads; to do whatever He says. The rest is entirely His business. In being with Him I have found my goal in life. This is my only reason for existing, now and for all eternity: That I may be with

HOW MAY I HAVE STRONG FAITH?

On my side then, everything centers on the issue of faith. God is able to do all things, but in me, this is limited by the degree of my faith. Strong faith leads to a strong hold on God, and a strong hold on God leads to the happy life of the victorious Christian. Often, we hear the complaint, "but my faith is so small!" We recognize our need, but we have no idea what to do about it. "FIGHT" says the apostle Paul, and the Holy Spirit is careful to make us know exactly how we ought to go about fighting this fight. While I was studying this subject, four things were impressed on my mind. Four means by which faith may be encouraged and strengthened:

1. The Word of God

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17)

Hearing the word of God is the first and most essential element which we need. Yet it is true that many people read the Bible over and over, listen to the preaching of the word time and time again, and still remain weak in faith. It is not everybody who listens to the Bible or reads it, who really "hears" the word of God. "He that hath ears to

hear let him hear." These are the words of Christ, and they reveal to us that in the Biblical sense, "hearing" is more than merely having the sound waves reach our ears. The message must reach the brain, the words must be analyzed and understood. But more than that, the message must lead to conviction, must affect my feelings, must affect my soul in such a way that it leads to action. Only then may it truly be said that the message has been heard. In other words, unless the words of God are thoroughly understood, and carefully obeyed, then they have not been "heard" in the truest sense, and they have no value in helping our faith.

2. Works

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2:22)

This statement of course, refers to Abraham. From the time that he first heard the call of God, the whole of Abraham's life was an example of faith. The greatest test came for him when he was commanded by God to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. This experience was not only a test of faith, but it was the means used by God to bring Abraham's faith to perfection.

Abraham had the opportunity for three days to seek a way of escape from the awful command to sacrifice his son. He might have convinced himself that he was mistaken, that a lamb would do just as well; that God did not accept human sacrifices. But to take any of these escape routes would have been to cut himself off from communication with God. It would have made it very difficult for him to discern the will of God in the future. It would have seriously damaged his faith. But against all appearances, Abraham determined to trust God, no matter what the consequences.

He bound his son to the alter, denying the pleading of his heart. He raised the knife to thrust into Isaac's heart. And in that fleeting moment as the muscles tensed for the final plunge, Abraham had trusted God to the uttermost. His faith had been stretched to the limit, and in obeying God even in this, he had perfected his faith.

Faith is perfected by works. No man may grow in faith who will not walk out into the dark with God. Faith is more than mere intellectual assent. It is casting ourselves recklessly upon God. It is acting upon the strength of His word only, contrary to all appearances, contrary to human logic and reason. Often the Lord seeks to lead us higher in the walk of faith, but alas, at the critical moment, we find a human solution. We convince ourselves that we should borrow some money, or ask a friend for help. We give up waiting on God, and so He is unable to perfect our faith. This happens time and time again.

3. Fasting and Prayer

In Matthew 17:14-21, an incident is recorded where the disciples of Jesus were unable to cure a demon-possessed boy. In disappointment, Jesus referred to them as a "faithless and perverse generation." Later they came to Him with the question, "why could not we cast him out?" We learn much from the reply of Jesus:

"Because of your unbelief: for verily I sat unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed...nothing shall be impossible to you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." (Matt. 17:20,21)

Because of unbelief; this we understand. But what does fasting and prayer have to do with this? Because of unbelief, God was not able to work through them, but by fasting and prayer they may have obtained power with God. How so? Would fasting have softened the heart of God? Would it have caused God to change His mind? Obviously the answer is no. Fasting and prayer would not have changed God, but it would have changed the DISCIPLES. Fasting and prayer would have strengthened their FAITH to the point where God would have been able

to do for them what He could not do otherwise.

It is significant to note that fasting and prayer has always been a part of the experience of God's people in all ages. Those whom we regard as outstanding, people such as Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Paul and others, have been prominent examples of men whose faith was developed and maintained by fasting and prayer.

4. Seeking only God's Approval

Some years ago I was invited to speak at a small church and I delivered a sermon which I was sure many regarded as a fine message. Afterwards, I sat down and awaited the closing exercises. At that time I had just recently been convicted that the proper attitude to take in public prayer was to kneel, and it occurred to me that in a few moments, after the closing hymn, it would be time for prayer, and we would be asked to remain standing for this. As the moment approached a conflict raged in my mind. I was sure that if I chose to kneel when everyone else was standing I would be considered to be strange. The effectiveness of my "fine" sermon would be lost. Perhaps I would even be thought to be a "Shepherd's Rod."

Soon the announcement was made, "let us remain standing for prayer," and I confess to my shame that I stood with the crowd. Afterwards, I sat down with a heavy heart and listlessly opened my Bible. I shall never forget the verse which almost leaped at me from the page: "How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44)

The only consolation which I could find in that moment was the thought that at least God was still speaking to me, even though it was in the form of a firm rebuke. He taught me then, what I now share with you. That we can never have faith as long as we continue to

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More on Bishop Hill and an Apology

A couple of months ago we published an article entitled "More on Bishop Hill" in which we told the story of Bishop Hill's experience with the SDA church and certain independent ministries as he related it to us. Before we published that article we were cautioned by several persons to be careful of Bishop Hill. We also read an article in the Steps to Life newsletter which stated that their experience with Bishop Hill indicated that he was a fraud.

Before all this however, I had watched a couple of video-taped interviews with Bishop Hill done by David Mould of Laymen for Religious Liberty which had convinced me that Bishop Hill was a sincere, earnest converted Christian. It must be admitted that I found it very difficult to believe that the person who I saw in that interview was a fraud, trickster and a con-man.

Before we wrote the article we tried to check up on sources which were claiming that Bishop Hill was a fraud. We telephoned Steps to Life and asked for more details as to the reason for the rift between Bishop Hill and Steps to Life.

However, the person who spoke to us stated that all that they had to say about Bishop Hill was already published in a letter that they had sent out. We also called American Cassette Ministries but were unable to get anybody there who would speak to us, We were told that we would have to speak to Al Newhart who was unavailable to speak to us both times that we called.

We also spoke to one person who told us that he knew from personal experience that Bishop Hill was a fraud but that he could not make his evidence public for some reason which he did not disclose

All of this left us with no option but to hear Bishop Hill's side of the story and to decide for ourselves whether or not it was true. The article we published was the result. We came to the conclusion that he was telling the truth and that he was a genuine person. As it turns out, we have since received evidence which indicates that at least in some things Bishop Hill is not truthful, and this leads us to the conclusion that if he is untruthful in some things, he probably has been untruthful in a lot of things. As a result I have decided to write this article apologizing to the persons that were named by Bishop Hill in the previous article published by us.

A few weeks ago, Pastor Allen Stump visited Bishop Hill and asked to be taken to the church at which Bishop Hill had been supposedly pastor at the time of his break with the Pentecostal Church. Bishop Hill took him to a church and told him that this was the place. However, when Pastor Stump drew near and spoke to a gentleman who apparently lived on the premises, the man told him that he was the present pastor, that he knew nobody by the name of Bishop David Hill and that he had been the pastor for many years and his father had been pastor before him.

In addition, the person who originally had said that he had evidence that he could not reveal, has since come forward and revealed that evidence which also indicates that Bishop Hill is not what he professes to be.

Because of this we have to apologize to Steps to Life, to Laymen for Religious Liberty (David Mould's ministry) and also to American Cassette Ministries for the things we reported.

We cannot personally verify or contradict any aspect of these stories of Bishop Hill's dealings with these ministries but based on the fact that we have found him to be untruthful at least in some things, we feel that we must apologize for everything that was written

I was contacted by a representative

of Steps to Life, Christopher Peppel, who sent me a listing of items which he claims were inaccurate, in our first article and which I have published below.

Though I have not received any similar statement from David Mould or American Cassette Ministries, I am going to assume that the stories I received concerning them from Bishop Hill were not true, and on the basis of what we have discovered concerning his untruthfulness, we would ask all our readers to treat that previous article accordingly.

We do sincerely apologize for any inconvenience we might have caused to anybody, and for the fact that we might have misled people. Our motive in publishing the article was sincere. David Mould's interview with David Hill did convince us that he was truly a Christian, and I think this is what outweighed everything else in my mind. We did feel that he deserved to have a hearing. However now that we have egg all over our face we're apologizing, and just want to close by saying we thank God for the lessons we have learned from this experience.

According to Brother Peppel the following points were inaccurate in our previous article.

- 1 "The fact is that David Hill defrauded Steps to Life of \$10,000. I have personally been in contact with the BET legal department and will be receiving shortly a document from BET that states that no one authorized to sell BET has any knowledge of David Hill and at no time did a lawyer authorized by BET meet with David Hill in Arkansas and accept \$10,000 as a downpayment."
- 2 "You also stated in your newsletter that David Hill forwarded the \$5000 returned by the "BET lawyer" to Steps to Life and has been making monthly payments of \$1000 for the

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LETTERS

My love and prayers are with my brethren at Restoration Ministries of Jamaica, W.I. May God bless you each one.

I received "Open Face" yesterday. It is like a Spiritual feast when I receive all the publications on one day. I hardly know where to begin. As I read your story of "An Eight Cow Wife" it brought this thought to mind. 'It never fails to bring tears to my eyes when I think about the price that God the Father and Jesus His Son paid for me—a vile, undeserving sinner so that I could be called a "daughter of God." In the eons of ages I will never be able to fully comprehend and appreciate their love for me; and had I been the only person on earth, Jesus Christ would have died for me. What astounding, incomprehensible Truth!'

My neighbor came over today and I shared your audio tape "God's Administration" with her. That was the third time I had listened to it in about as many weeks.

DA,. Montana, USA

Please do me a favour by taking my name from your mailing list, in other words, Don't send any more of your Open Face Material, Are you not afraid to speak against the Holy Spirit? Are you not afraid Divine wrath come upon you suddenly?

CM, St. James, Jamaica W.I.

Please include us on your newsletter mailing list.

RG, Oregon, USA

Yesterday I received a file of your publication, OPEN FACE and downloaded and printed all 12 pages of the Feb 2001 edition

As I read, I was aware that God has gifted you with extra talents in writing and clarity of thought. The articles I read were very well produced, and well written. However, I was saddened when I came to the conclusion. Your life seems to be dedicated to the wrong issues and projects.

I was honestly reminded of Saul in the book of Acts. He was such an earnest and dedicated and talented person who was dedicated to the wrong task...

In Jesus Name, I invite you to use your talents and abilities to be a blessing in God's church. Why persecute Jesus Christ by dedicating your energies to the wrong mission? Let Jesus convert your life as He

did for Saul, into Paul, so He can use your genius to hasten His coming and bring a lost world into the preparation required for heaven and eternal life.

BB, Michigan, USA

Thank you for he booklet and the cassette ... they are really inspiring. I enjoyed listening to and reading them. Thank you.

The question that is left unanswered for me is, why is Jesus sometimes called "God?" If you have any more materials that I can read please send it. I will be very grateful.

MW, St. Ann, Jamaica

I enjoyed seeing you and your wife at the camp meeting in Eastern Washington. I am sorry we did not have more time to talk.

I spent a lot of time in prayer at that camp meeting *as* I watched the tensions build. I pray that good came out of all those discussions.

Your article, "The Divinity of Christ" will be valuable for handing out to people. It explains what I believe. It answers questions I've had about what happened when Jesus died.

BD, Montana, USA

Thank you for sending me your issues, especially the information on the Trinity.

I have for a long time now known than our church needed meat in due season. I have also been studying with an independent group and have been enlightened immensely.

Would you send me some more literature on who you think Christ is and who you think the Holy Spirit is? I have read many quotes from Sister White where she refers to Jesus as God. I have also found Jesus being God in the Bible. Please send me your views with quotes.

AM, Ontario, Canada

I enjoyed very much a tape a friend of mine let me listen to by you on the church of Philadelphia. It was very enlightening to me

I live in a unique area here in northern Washington. Ron Spears is my neighbor, along with a host of other independent ministries. This seems to be the melting pot for many of them. Iwas always pretty close to them until I adopted a non-Trinitarian position. Some of the very same people, who are usually very anti-conference, were actually calling the conference to have them deal with me. They set up a meeting at the conference office, & I was able to present to them the topic of the Godhead, and since then, I haven't been very welcome in the local church. There have been several people who have studied the topic since then though, and have changed their view. It is very hard to reach some of these people, for although they do not follow conference people, they do follow their leaders.

ME, Washington, USA

We love receiving the newsletters and material. They're very encouraging and helps to keep our eyes on the goal and to know that others are believing and doing also. Never let your courage falter no matter what. We are praying for the work over there and so thankful that God has revealed these previous truths to you all and to us as well. Thank you so much. Looking forward to meeting you and Allen and others hopefully in October.

LC, Australia

I am a member of the Seventh Day Adventist ReformMovement. Over the last 2 or 3 years I have come across some of your tapes and literature. I have had a few questions over the years and many of our leaders were not able to answer them, mainly because the subjects belong to the so-called "gray-zone" of our understanding of Scripture. Your publications have helped me a lot in understanding these issues.

In the last few months the issue of the Trinity has gained more and more momentum in our church and there is a lot of confusion. Your tapes and your Open Face magazine have really helped me understand the truth. I believed the same way as you explained it in your July 2000 issue before I even became an Adventist, but over the years, I got confused due to all the other ideas that people bring forward.

Also your article on Don Hawley was very good. Growing tired of the constant controversy surrounding Adventism, I started using Hawley's arguments as an escape hatch. Most Adventist people do not study enough to refute any of

Hawley's arguments, so it was easy to hide behind some of the trickier points of our doctrinal position in trying to get some distance. He has some good points, but you are right that overall he needs our prayers.

Well, in short, see this e-mail as a pat on the shoulder, for your good work. I just wish that more people would read your newsletter. If there is a way, please keep me up-to-date with new releases of the Open Face,

AH. USA

Thank you for the latest copy of Open Face. I am especially impressed with the article The Measure of God's Love. I've photocopied several to distribute to people I know and am going to copy many many more to send out. I thought I might even get the whole article made into a little booklet and do a letterbox drop to thousands of homes here. Is that OK with you? I can't wait for part 2 of the same article so I can put it all together. No use only sending out half the story. I'd like to get the full article first and then get it made up and

sent out. I hope it won't be too long away.

I've just taken delivery today of 10 copies of your book Who is Telling the Truth about God. Excellent piece of work. Keep up all you are doing David, along with Allen and Lynnford and staff. We all need you for resources and encouragement to continue spreading God's message of love to a dying and lost world. Hope is a wonderful thing and so many are without hope in this day and age. I am so thankful my hope is in Jesus and His and the Father's love for us. Thank you again, and may God continue to bless you and your work richly.

LC, Cooranbong, Australia

I pray and hope that my email finds you in good health and covered by God's grace. I really enjoyed you both during your stay here in the Carolina's. It was certainly gratifying to find that there are brothers still as yourselves taking the gospel to the 4 corners of the Earth. I pray that our initial meeting was not the last. I pray that our paths will cross again soon. I am doing well. My health is still the same but I am still holding on to God's healing power. *GA, North Carolina, USA*

THE FIGHT OF FAITH

Continued from page 4

seek man's approval rather than God's. the ways of men are often contrary to the ways of God. This is true even when we are in the midst of those who are called the people of God. Therefore, if we are careful to please men, then it is certain that we will often displease God. Not only that, but it will be impossible for us to have a faith which is genuine and strong.

As we face the awesome task of taking the Third Angel's message to the world, let us remember that we can do nothing, but God can do all things. Let us determine above all else, to keep our eyes immovably fixed on Him. May our faith in Him be unshakeable, so that in and through us, Christ may be all in all.



More on Bishop Hill

Continued from page 6

remaining amount. David Hill did not forward \$5000 from BET and has not paid the remaining portion. To date we have received only \$3000 with the last payment being in November of 2000. We have photocopies of all the Postal Money Orders sent as well as money wired through Western Union by David Hill."

"Steps to Life has never solicited tithe from anyone let alone from another church. When David Hill brought up the (ex-Armstrongite) United Worldwide Church of God and that they were supposedly saving their tithe because they didn't know what to do with it, I personally told him that Steps to Life wasn't interested in their tithe money as they were an organized church body with an infrastructure already in place. They should use their own money to share the truth of the Three Angel's Messages amongst their

own people. At this, David Hill's countenance changed to an expression of surprise and disbelief. He couldn't fathom that Steps to Life didn't want their millions! Everything which David Hill said about Pastor Grosboll concerning this is an outright lie. You might be interested in knowing that I have not been able to verify that the United Worldwide Church of God even exists. I was able to talk to the lawyer of the United Church of God which is an ex-Armstrongite group and they don't know anything about this supposed group or of their supposed leader "Bishop Odis Rodgers Greene".

5 "You need to know that the group of men that David Hill brought to Steps to Life and pawned off as "Bishops" of other churches was a scam to get us into believing him. Since then we have found out that two of the "Bishops" that came with David

Hill to Steps to Life were actually SDA lay pastors which feel very bad about their involvement in deceiving Steps to Life

6 "There was never a sermon preached by anyone dealing with the "Trinity" and Pastor John is not the type of person to call people an infidel if they don't believe the same way he does."



We squander health
In search of wealth
We scheme and toil and save;
Then squander wealth
in search of health and all we get's a grave.
We live and boast of what we own,
we die, and only get a stone.

Unwilling to compromise

As the truth about God continues to penetrate into all areas there is opposition to it on all fronts. However, in every place there is evidence that God has His people who will not compromise with wrong and falsehood regardless of the consequences. The following three letters from former members of the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement Reveal how the truth is progressing in Canada and the North-west United States.

To: The Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement West Canadian Field Committee:

I now regretfully remove myself from the membership of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement Church. Because I have found this church to be apostate. I will list a few of the many errors that the SDARM Church has fallen into.

- 1. The Bible speaks of only one God, but the SDARM states that there are three Deities co-equal, co-eternal, co-existent,... in other words there are three God's.
- The SDARM Church praises to, sings to, prays to, worships to, etc... the holy spirit through hymns. But the Spirit of Prophecy states that only the Father and the Son are worthy to receive praise, worship, honor, etc..., and only the Father and Son are to be exalted (YI, July, 7, 1898, .002) not the holy spirit. No Prophet, Apostle, Evangelist, Person, or even Christ himself sang to, praised to, or in any other way addressed the holy spirit. Paul says in 1 Timothy 5:21 "I Charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." Where is the holy spirit in this passage if he is the third God?
- 3. The SDARM Church would have us accept one of these ideas concerning the holy spirit.
- a) That the holy spirit has a body with parts. (The holy spirit is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible as having a separate form or body from the Father and the Son.)
 - b) Or to take the spiritualistic view that

the holy spirit is a person without a body, that it is an invisible being like a Ghost floating around in space (how can you have a person without a body?). The holy spirit is the life, power, energy, etc.. from the Father and the Son which becomes personality in those that receive it.

- 4. The Spirit of Prophecy states that there are only two divine beings. The SDARM Church states that there are three deities. PP. p.36 .002 says "Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that *none but Christ*, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will."
- 5. The SDARM Church states that Christ raised himself from the dead, but the Bible clearly states that God raised Christ from the dead (30 verses found).
- 6. The SDARM church states that Christ did not really become the Son of God until his incarnation. When we say that we make God a liar (God can never lie) for then God did not have a Son to send, so how could God send his Son do die for us? We say that God sent his only begotten Son to die for us, and then we turn around and say that Jesus was not really the Son of God, and that he did not really die.
- 7. The SDARM Church would not allow our Pioneers to be members of the Church today holding the views that they held concerning the Godhead.

And so I see that the Church has made her decision to turn away her heart from the truth. "For this peoples heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matthew 13:15). The Spirit of Prophecy has somewhat to say about this passage. "Christ said of the Jews, "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed." Thus it is with some men who are connected with the great and important interests in our institutions. I have been shown that the Jewish nation were not brought suddenly into their condition of thought and practise. From generation to generation they were working on false theories, carrying out principles that were opposed to the truth, and combining with their religion, thoughts and plans that were the product of human minds: human inventions were made supreme. (PH080 25,26).

Because of her attitude that she has taken toward her members who just look into the subject of the Godhead, and disfellowshiping (Excommunicating or commending the soul to the devil) those who believe like our pioneers James White, Joseph Bates, J.N. Andrews, J.N. Loughborough, Uriah Smith, etc... believed. It is for this reason that I see that the SDARM Church has unfortunately made her decision for the wrong.

With Concern Jonathon Sims

March13th,2001 Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement, West Canadian Field Conference.

I herewith disassociate myself from the fellowship of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement and ask that my name be removed from their books.

In order to make my calling and election sure it has been necessary to search the Scriptures daily examining myself to see whether I'm still in the faith. It is, after all, vital that we prove by the Scriptures the condition of our spiritual health, without which we cannot intelligently ask for the glorious things we need nor be capable of standing fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospels. By so doing, I have come to see that the main foundational pillar of that Gospel, the faith once delivered unto the saints has slowly, systematically, and stealthfully been removed, and replaced by a perverted gospel by some who departed from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

Many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the

Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested. But it is impossible for Satan to hold under his power one soul who honestly desires at whatever cost to know the truth. If any man will do His (Christ's) will, he shall know of the doctrine. It thus requires separation from every organization and movement of men which refuse to know the truth, that I be not partaker of their sins, and receive not of their plagues.

It is my opinion that the SDARM leadership are demonstrating that they will not adhere to the original foundational message, the cost is too high. This need not be particularized further for God is aware of their apostacy and their inexcusable sin of disfellowshipping believers, and shunning others much like Diotrephes of old But they need not wait to do that to me, even though my voluntary withdrawal plays into their hands, for Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

But I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ....for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The Just shall live by faith" And Just as the 1888 message of Christ Our Righteousness and Justification By Faith was rejected by the then and every subsequent Seventh Day Adventist church leadership, it was also followed by all SDARM conference brethren, the significance of which must not be underestimated.

The 1914 expulsion of the heroic defenders for truth that led to the official organization in 1925 of the SDARM, still stands as a monument for freedom of religious conviction, and so it should. But few fail to realize the fatal mistake, that while they left behind the sin of not transgressing the sixth commandment, they unwittingly took with them the sin of transgressing the first, by reorganizing themselves along the same lines as the very body that disfellowshipped them, despite the incessant pleading of Sister White and others in the years leading up to, and especially after, 1888.

Acceptance of Justification By Faith would have automatically led to abandoning the papal hierarchical system of church government, for the one which God gave the Adventist pioneers at the beginning. Such a structure the SDARM pioneers also failed to return to, and by keeping the manmade system of "rule or ruin," was preserved seed of the erroneous concept of the three-in-one god that inevitably surfaced, which Romanists acknowledge as

the mystery of the trinity being the central doctrine of the Catholic faith, upon which are based all the other teachings of their church.

God also has a main foundational pillar and it is wonderful to have been led into its truth, but sad to have discovered the universal deception of its alteration to where the Holy Spirit is placed as the third being in the Godhead which also destroys the Sonship of Christ, setting up another as the one mediator between God and men, in place of the man Christ Jesus. Early Writings pages 54 - 56 describes the horrifying result of such heresy. Indeed, the Omega of deady heresy. Yes, Satan the devil is now being worshipped, prayed to, and sung to in increasingly larger circles, having successfully set himself up as that third being, masquerading as the Holy Spirit, but we are not ignorant of his devices.

It is easy to understand why Sister White trembled for our people.

How much more could be written, but to what avail? Corporate repentance is unheard of, although we can still hope. I'm particularly sensitive now having been in two apostate churches: The Worldwide Church of God, and SDARM. Never again, now that the solid immovable platform upon which Adventism was based has thankfully been revealed to me. No more striving after men, but God only in Jesus Christ through their Holy Spirit, not as a third being as such, but as representative of their character and attributes. What freedom! And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free!

My prayers are with you and yes, also with the SDARM but that they turn toward the blessed light before it is too late.

With love in the name of Jesus, Michael Nickson

June 2, 2001 SDARM Buckley Church

For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed. Isaiah 9:16

It is with much sadness that this letter is composed. Also feeling a keen awareness of what this step means, and the resulting consequences.

I had hoped that in Christian spirit, and Berean attitude, that a harmonizing of the Godhead subject matter could be attained to. One needs to be acutely conscious of the danger posed by pride of opinion or preconceived ideas, either of which can result in putting a "slant," or a "spin," on a passage in order to force it to fit our understanding or purpose. This is reasoning from the desired conclusion, which, in this case, has far worse consequences than a wrong answer. It is arrogantly telling God what His Word means. All I had ever asked for is a harmonization of all relative material to the subject, but none ever were willing to do so, nor able to do so who seek to support the doctrine of three coequal, coeternal deities. In this very doctrine there is a clear denial of our Advent roots, of the 144 thousand, and the sealing. To be sealed means a "settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved." (4BC 1161.6) If they were settled into the truth, "both intellectually and spiritually, so that they could not be moved", but taught gross error in the fundamental doctrine of who God is. How is it that they could be sealed, or settled into the truth? How could Christ have come shortly thereafter when they were so wrong? And why are we still here today? Presently those who teach totally opposite to what the pioneers taught, and put out of the church those who believe as did the pioneers, are denying our very roots. Also they deny that God was directing in the establishment of the pillars, and in the prophetic gift of Ellen White. If they taught error for truth, for the first fifty years, and she did not correct the so called false doctrine of non trinitarianism, but began in 1898 to make statements to correct a misunderstanding, or false doctrine of the Godhead, then just as verily they make her a false prophet. We must "consider the time, place, and circumstance," of all she has written, and find a harmony in it all. We must go back to the original setting of all statements that seem to indicate otherwise from all the host of statements that differ from the few that seem to support three coequal, coeternal deities. Not by a mere surface examination, or reasoning from the desired conclusion.

"The past fifty years have not dimmed one jot or principle of our faith as we received the great and wonderful evidence that were made certain to us in 1844 after the passing of the time....Not a word is changed or denied. That which the Holy Spirit testified to as truth after the passing of the time in our great disappointment, is the solid foundation of truth. Pillars of truth were revealed, and we ac-

cepted the foundation principles that have made us what we are – Seventh-day Adventists, Keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus." EG White, 1905, Special Testimonies, Series B, p.57,58

The leadership tells us that the pioneers were wrong when dealing with this subject of the Godhead. Note what Ellen White stated in the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, May 25 1905, or CW p.28 "God has given me light regarding our periodicals. What is it?—He has said that the dead are to speak. How?—Their works shall follow them. We are to repeat the words of the pioneers in our work, who know what it cost to search for the truth as for hidden treasure, and who labored to lay the foundation of our work. They moved forward step by step under the influence of the Spirit of God. One by one these pioneers are passing away. The word given me is, Let that which these men have written in the past be reproduced....Not long ago I took up a copy of the Bible Echo. As I looked it through, I saw an article by Elder Haskell and one by Elder Corliss. As I laid the paper down, I said, These articles must be reproduced. There is truth and power in them. Men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Let the truths that are the foundation of our faith be kept before the people. Some will depart from

the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. They talk science, and the enemy comes in and gives them an abundance of science; but it is not the science of salvation. It is not the science of humility, of consecration, of the sanctification of the Spirit. We are now to understand what the pillars of our faith are, the truths that have made us as a people what we are, leading us on step by step.....In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?"

Much is said at times about the alpha of apostasies. But interestingly I have never heard a position taken on what the Omega of deadly heresy comprised of. The alpha dealt with the personality and presence of God. The Omega being related to the alpha, which Ellen White saw would soon follow, must necessarily be of the same nature as the alpha. This is fulfilled in the teaching of the Godhead, incorporated into the church soon after Ellen White

died. Leroy Froom being a chief instrument in championing this cause. And He is hailed even by the Reform as one of authority, and to quote in defense of this Godhead heresy that has been fed to the sheeple, by leadership.

I have been shocked and dismayed at the lack of honesty, outright lies, perversion of the truth and defamation of character of those who only wanted to be honest, and who believed as the pioneers taught. I have not been able to recognize the Spirit of Christ in what is taking place in the Reform leadership. And if the Spirit of Christ is not present, then I must ask myself, what am I doing here? I believe this to be high treason against the government of God, for which all will give account in the day of God....

Therefore with only such a brief explanation of reasons for the removing of my support to the Reform Movement, I ask my name to be removed from your membership rolls, and a confirmation letter to be sent to myself acknowledging that my request has been granted.

Regretfully yours Stephen Noyes



CAMPMEETING NOTICE AND SCHEDULE

As announced in our previous issue Our annual campmeeting will be from August 1-6. This campmeeting will be held at the beautiful Crystal Springs campsite which is about one mile from Buff Bay in Portland.

Our meetings will begin on the evening

of August 1 and will continue until midday, of August 6 when we will have our final session. Once again we are asking that you indicate as early as possible your intention to attend. There is an abundance of space at the campsite, but since cabin space is limited, those who register late will have to take a tent for sleeping or sleep in one of the public areas. The fee is (Jam) \$750.00 (US -\$17.00)

Our theme for this year is, "So Great a Salvation."

TIME	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sabbath	Sunday	Monday
6.30 AM	Arrival	David Wilson	Neville Morris	Wayne Suther.	L. Russell	Arthan Wright
7.30 AM	Arrival	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
10.00	Arrival	Willis Smith	Willis Smith	Willis Smith	Willis Smith	Health Forum
12.00 PM	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
3.00 PM	Arrival	Neville Morris	Arthan Wright	H. Williams	Colin Gyles	Departure
5.00 PM	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	
7.00 PM	David Clayton	Ben Vela	Ben Vela	Ben Vela	David Clayton	

AS I SEE IT

By Wayne Sutherland

Since January 2001, the government's proposal for a system in which Saturdays and Sundays will be treated as normal work days, (flexi week), has raised much discussions. Some church leaders suggest that such a plan will "affect worship, break down moral and spiritual life, destroy family life and diminish opportunities for recreation and renewal," (The Daily Observer April 17). On the other hand, others say that the plan is an excellent idea and should be implemented, because of the benefits that Jamaican Industries would receive.

For a better understanding of what is this flexi workweek. "The government wants to introduce, by mid-year, a flexible work week where all seven days of the week would be ordinary work days. In addition, workers would be required to work 40 hours per week over any number of days before qualifying for overtime pay and work on Saturdays or Sundays would no longer attract premium pay rates," (The Daily Observer April 17). The main goals to be achieved are: increased employment; increased production and increased productivity and workers effectiveness. (The Daily Observer April 17).

As I see it, be it a flexi workweek or a Sunday law, God's true people will be affected. Presently, Sabbath keepers are affected. Many are being refused employment not from a lack of the qualification(s) and or the skill(s) but

from the fact that they are Sabbath keepers, (Saturday, main day of worship). Therefore, this opposition to a flexi workweek is not to protect Saturday, Sabbath worshipers but to protect the desecration of Sunday worshiping, not to protect the Lord's Sabbath but to protect 'man's Sabbath'. When the Sunday laws are enforced will majority of Sunday worshipers object this law? As I see it, I think not.

As I see it, be it a flexi workweek or not, a majority of families will continue to be destroyed, morality will continue to fall, spiritual life style will not get better, only the few faithful will be strengthen from this proposal and its implementation. This is as I see it.

Open Face

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