

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Before we open God's word this morning I'd like to say something about the sermon I sent out in August titled "Jesus Said, I AM" Part 1. Just a couple days before I was going to send out that month's sermon my computer with all my sermon notes crashed and there was no way to get it fixed in time, so I had to scramble to find something else to send out. And that wasn't the only problem I had, my recorder also stopped working and there was no way to burn a master CD and then make copies to send out, so what to do. Well, I did a sermon several years ago dealing with the subject I originally wanted to present about Jesus' true identity, so I made copies of that old CD so I'd have something to send out for that month, otherwise you would have received nothing.

Well, the reason I'm telling you all this is because at the beginning of August's sermon, the one I recorded many years ago, I mentioned if anyone had any specific ideas or requests about a certain subject you'd like me to present, to let me know and I'd be glad to dig in to it to see what I could find. Well, I got quite a few suggestions that I won't be able to present, because I've learned something since I recorded that sermon many years ago. I have to speak about the things the Lord lays on my heart, and to follow someone else's suggestions just doesn't work for me, so I hope those of you who sent me various ideas won't be too disappointed. If my equipment had been working I would have edited that part out, but I couldn't, so I apologize to those of you who went to the trouble of sending me your ideas and suggestions, but the Holy Spirit has got to dictate what I present each month in order for the message to reach its mark.

This morning I'd like to talk about something that many professed Christians, and I'd say most, do not think affects their salvation at all, but not only will it affect their salvation in a big way, but it's a main principle of the Bible, and it's brought out in **Galatians 6:7, 8**, but before we read let's pray.

Notice what Paul says, "Be not deceived (**don't be fooled**); God is not mocked (**in other words, don't try to laugh off His warnings**): for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

And so, we must not deceive ourselves brothers and sisters, because no one makes a fool of God. We are going to harvest exactly what we plant. If we plant in the field of our natural desires, we will gather the harvest of death, but if we plant in the field of the Spirit, we will gather the harvest of eternal life, it's just that simple. If people would consider that they are making their own harvest, it seems they would be more careful of what seeds they sow.

There are many examples of cause and effect that could be cited. For example: as the wind speed increases, a sail boat moves faster. If I'm driving 75 mph in a school zone and there's a

police car present, I'm going to get a hefty ticket. If I'm taking a Sabbath walk without an umbrella and it starts raining, I'm going to get wet. If I lay down on a railroad track and a train comes along I'm going to die. There's no way to get around cause and effect, it's as sure as the fact that the sun will come up in the morning.

Cause and effect is a combination of action and reaction. God wants us to know that if we do thus and so, there's going to be a certain result that we can bank on, and unless we do things differently, there's no escaping the sure results that will follow. To believe, like many do today, that we can sin and not receive the wages of sin, is to pretend that there's no such thing as cause and effect. That's why Paul says, "Be not deceived." We cannot stop the negative results of cause and effect from happening, but the good news is, once it happens God can make it better if we acknowledge that we have transgressed this most basic Bible principle. This is also why the false teaching of salvation in sin and the related teaching of once saved always saved are dangerous doctrines.

The omega apostasy is in full swing within Adventism today brothers and sisters, and this same error is rampant in the rest of Christianity as well. And what is the omega apostasy? It's the outgrowth of the alpha apostasy that began within the Seventh-day Adventist Church just like the prophet said would come and would be of "a most startling nature." And what was the alpha apostasy? In a nut shell it's the pantheistic theory put forth by Doctor Kellogg in his book *Living Temple* that God lives in everything, even the sinner. But Sister White makes it perfectly clear in *Sermons and Talks, page 343*, and it's appropriately title "Beware", that "God does not live in the sinner. The Word declares that He abides only in the hearts of those who love Him and do righteousness. God does not abide in the heart of the sinner; it is the enemy who abides there." Is that clear? How can it be any clearer? And how startling would the pioneers of our faith be if they could be resurrected to see how this teaching has taken hold in Adventism.

Friends, if the enemy abides in the sinner, Jesus cannot also abide there, it's just that simple, because Jesus and the enemy do not cohabit. That's why Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters." One or the other abides in the heart of every individual, but never, never at the same time. That's why **1 John 3:8-10** says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil", and "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" and that's how you can tell who are "the children of God" and who are "the children of the devil." This is not complicated or hard to figure out! And yet the majority is fooled by this big lie of the devil. How can that be? It's because people don't want to believe that they are in a lost condition with every little sin they commit. They have what I call a revolving door religion of sinning and repenting, and if things don't change, the door will never stop going around and they will never enter the building where there is freedom from sin and thus gain entrance into the heavenly Canaan.

I remember years ago reading a book written by Marvin Moore, who used to be the editor of *Signs of the Times*, and maybe he still is, I don't know, but his book, which was endorsed by

the denomination, and still continues to be sold in all the ABC's, is titled *Crisis of the End Time*. And believe me, the teaching in this book, and the teaching of others like him, is what has caused a crisis of the end time for Seventh-day Adventists and has gone a long way in developing the alpha into the omega apostasy.

The cause in this instance is the false teaching about the nature of sin, and the effect is the liberal, progressive attitude we see in Adventism today. Anyway, in his book he states that we are not lost or saved by every little sin we commit, but that we remain in a saving relationship with Jesus during this up and down process, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

By the way, is there any such thing as a little sin? What size sin will it take to keep you out of the Kingdom of God? What size sin will it take to separate your soul from God? Is it just big sins that Jesus makes atonement for? Was it because of just big sins that Jesus sacrificed His life? I think you can see how ridiculous this becomes when we try to separate sin into little and big categories. All sin, no matter what kind, will cause our eternal ruin unless we begin to understand the reality of the law of cause and effect. If we can be in a saving relationship with Jesus even while we continue to commit "little" sins, then who's going to stop? Who's going to gain the victory with a belief like that? No one, that's right! There would be no reason to. And haven't we already been told that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? So what kind of decisions can we expect to make as we consider our own sins?

And besides, who gets to decide which sins are little and which are big? If left up to us you can be sure that the sin that so easily besets us, or the sin we're slow to give up, will be classified as a small sin, don't you think? And the sins of others, no matter how small, will become the big ones.

In ***Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, page 311*** it says, "Adam and Eve suffered the terrible consequences of disobeying the express command of God. They might have reasoned: This is a very small sin, and will never be taken into account. But God treated the matter as a fearful evil, and the woe of their transgression will be felt through all time."

Men like Marvin Moore have twisted God's word around to say the exact opposite of what it really teaches, and that's the work of the devil. That was his object in the Garden when he told Eve she would not surely die if she disobeyed God, when God said she would. But I have to thank Mr. Moore, because it was the errors in his book that helped to open my eyes many years ago to the new theology teaching of salvation in sin and helped me decide that I could no longer support a church that employs such people. Oh, I went through the "proper channels" before I decided to leave in order to help the brethren see this false teaching and its consequences, but to no avail, and why should I have been surprised, because the prophet said things were only going to continue to get worse as the omega apostasy developed.

You can read that in ***Special Testimonies, Series B, Volume 7, page 57***. In fact, let me read it to

you in case you don't have access to it, and remember, this is in the context of the alpha omega apostasy that was to develop within the church and not just a general statement that applies to Christianity as a whole, it's very specific. Here's what it says, "One thing it is certain is soon to be realized (**and it was 26 years ago when I began to realize what I'm about to read next**) "One thing it is certain is soon to be realized,—the great apostasy, which is developing and increasing and waxing stronger, and will continue to do so until the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout."

So dear friends, don't expect things to get better. Don't expect to see the church make an about face, because things are only going to get worse. And knowing that, why would we want to support it, but that's exactly what many are doing as they continue to put their tithes into the offering basket each Sabbath, which will in turn help men like Marvin Moore to prosper each month as they receive their paychecks and continue to add to the pile of books of a new order that have been written over the past many years. I could go on, but I think you get the point, at least I hope so.

At this point maybe it would be a good idea to go over a few texts of Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy quotes that will very clearly expose the omega apostasy. I could literally keep you here all day reading what inspiration says about it, because there are a multitude of statements, but obviously we don't have the time, so I'll read you a few choice ones.

Let's begin with **Isaiah 59:1, 2**, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear (**praise the Lord for that**): but your iniquities (**have done what?**) have separated between you and your God, and your sins have (**done what?**) hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Can anyone honestly claim that when we have iniquity that we're not really separated from God, and even though we sin He still hears us? I don't think so, but that's what men like Marvin Moore would have you believe.

Romans 6:16, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Is it fair to say that when we sin we are serving the devil and obeying him? Obviously; right? And if we are serving him, we have to be in a lost condition during that time, because it says sin is unto death.

John 8:34, "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." And we just read that all sin is unto death. And again, Jesus said you can't serve two masters. He also told the people, "Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" It's ridiculous to say Jesus is our master and at the same time be the servant of sin.

2Peter 2:19, "While they (**false teachers**) promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."

Is it fair to say that when we are overcome by the temptations of the devil and commit sin that we are in bondage to him? And if we are in bondage to him are we not in a lost condition?

James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." I think most people would agree that coveting would be a little sin compared to murder, and yet the Bible says no matter which commandment we violate we are guilty of all, because all sin, even the littler ones, brings guilt that will end in death if not confessed and forsaken.

Now let's turn to the Spirit of Prophecy and let the prophet put a magnifying glass on this subject. **Review and Herald July 12, 1887**, "Just as soon as we separate ourselves from God by sin, which is the transgression of His law, Satan takes control of our minds." And if Satan is in control of our mind, can it be possible that we are still saved? No!

Selected Messages, book 1, page 213, "There is no safety nor repose nor justification in transgression of the law. Man cannot hope to stand innocent before God, and at peace with Him through the merits of Christ, while he continues in sin."

Same book **page 115**, "I must speak the truth to all. Those who have accepted the light from God's Word are never, never to leave an impression upon human minds that God will serve with their sins."

Again, same book **page 366**, "But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul."

Review and Herald, June 8, 1886, "God will not be trifled with. . . God is a sin-hating God; and those who will encourage the sinner, saying, It is well with thee, God will curse." Now that's pretty serious, isn't it? That's why we read earlier that we are never, never to leave an impression upon human minds that God will serve with their sins.

Sons and Daughters of God, page 288, "God will not make the slightest compromise with sin. If He could have done this, Christ need not have come to our world to suffer and die."

Review and Herald, December 24, 1889, "Every day that you remain in sin, you are in Satan's ranks; and should you sicken and die without repentance, you would be lost."

Signs of the Times, June 19, 1884, "Let none deceive themselves with the belief that God will pardon and bless them while they are trampling upon one of His requirements. The willful commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit, and separates the soul

from God.”

Desire of Ages, page 313, “If one sin is cherished in the soul, or one wrong practice retained in the life, the whole being is contaminated.”

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, page 51, “It is not the greatness of the act of disobedience that constitutes sin, but the fact of variance from God's expressed will in the least particular; for this shows that there is yet communion between the soul and sin.”

Selected Messages, book 1, page 218, “Not one of those ten precepts can be broken without disloyalty to the God of heaven. The least deviation from its requirements, by neglect or willful transgression, is sin, and every sin exposes the sinner to the wrath of God.”

Faith and Works, page 35, “God does not give us up because of our sins. **(Does that mean we're saved in sin? Let's read on)** We may make mistakes and grieve His Spirit, but when we repent and come to Him with contrite hearts, He will not turn us away.” Praise God! I told you earlier that there is hope, but that hope can only be realized if we repent and come to Christ. And why do we need to come to Him? Because our iniquities have separated us from Him, and our sins have hid His face from us that He will not hear, but He will always hear the cry for help.

In **1 John 5:12** it says, “He that has the Son has life.” Now help me out here. If it's true that God lives in the sinner, like Kellogg taught and like Marvin Moore and many others are teaching today, then wouldn't every person who has ever accepted Christ have eternal life, regardless of the little sins they keep committing? And if that's all the apostle John wrote in this verse, then we might be able to make a case for Mr. Moore's teaching, but the verse continues on, doesn't it? It also says, “And he that has not the Son of God has not life.” This brings us right back to **1 John 3:6** where John says, “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.” If we don't continually abide we don't have the Son, and thus we don't have life. Every little sin is proof that we don't have the Son when we commit those little sins. This idea that Christ lives in the sinner just doesn't hold water no matter how the Scriptures are twisted to make it seem like it does.

The majority of Christians today, and an ever increasing number of Seventh-day Adventists believe that just because they have accepted Christ as their Savior and remain in good and regular standing in the church, the things they sow have nothing to do with their eternal destiny, but as we read a few minutes ago, we are going to gather to ourselves exactly what we plant. You can't plant cucumber seeds and expect to harvest zucchini, and it's the same in the spiritual realm. You can't live according to what your sinful nature wants you to do and expect to be rewarded with eternal life, the law of cause and effect prohibits it.

In the book ***Education, page 108***, notice how this goes right along with the Scripture we already read, “By the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unvarying certainty. The

reaping testifies to the sowing. Here no pretense is tolerated. . . in nature there can be no deception. And in the highest sense this is true also in the spiritual realm. . . The harvest of life is character, and it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come. The harvest is a reproduction of the seed sown. Every seed yields fruit after its kind.” And so, we see how cause and effect is a Biblical principle.

And here's another quote from the same book on **page 146**, “No truth does the Bible more clearly teach than that what we do (**or we could say what we sow**) is the result of what we are. . . Terrible is this truth, and deeply should it be impressed. Every deed reacts upon the doer. Never a human being but may recognize, in the evils that curse his life, fruitage of his own sowing.” (**And then these encouraging words**) “Yet even thus we are not without hope.” And we'll talk about this hope before we're done, because there is also a positive side to cause and effect.

So what are these two statements telling us? They are telling us in no uncertain terms that just as when you plant a kernel of corn and get a corn plant, just so if we sow to the flesh we will of the flesh reap corruption, even if you have once had a born again experience.

I was talking to a man one day and he was trying to convince me that once you've been born again you can't be unborn, meaning that once you've been born again you can't be lost, and I said, you're right, you can't be unborn, but you can die spiritually after having once received life in Christ, and that's exactly what happens to those who continue to sin when God has given us a way out of this viscous and destructive cycle.

Inspiration clearly teaches that when we sin we are in a lost condition at that point, and if that's the case, then we must be born again, again. Does that make sense? The born again experience must take place every time you sin, because sin kills; sin destroys your connection with God, and whenever this happens Jesus no longer abides, therefore we must be born again, again.

In **1 Corinthian 15:31** the apostle Paul said, “I die (**how often?**) daily.” That means he had a new conversion every day, and so must we. Day by day the work of overcoming must go forward. Every day we are to resist temptation, and gain the victory over selfishness. Many Christians think that the born again experience is a once in a lifetime experience, but we must die to the selfish desires of our fallen flesh every single day, and every moment throughout the day, and even if we don't give in to sin we must have this daily experience or we will sin, because without Christ we can do nothing to keep ourselves from sin. And so regardless, there must be a daily commitment to serve Christ and not our fallen flesh.

The wise man was very succinct in **Proverbs 26:2** when he said, “The curse causeless shall not come.” In other words, God's curse cannot affect you unless you've done something to deserve it. Now I'm not talking about every bad thing that may happen to us, because

sometimes bad things just happen, but I'm talking about curses that God specifically says will happen if we ignore His warnings. "The curse causeless shall not come", and this goes for both physical and spiritual health.

Notice also what David wrote in **Psalm 9:16**, "The LORD is known by the judgment which he executes: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." Or we could say, "The LORD has revealed himself by his righteous judgments, and the wicked are trapped by the evil they have sown.

You see, God had a good reason to put the law of cause and effect into motion, and we can know that He's the One who did it by observing the outcome of this law as a result of our actions. The message of Christ will always include an understanding of cause and effect. God's curses don't just happen, they happen for a reason, and the results are predictable, because the Lord has told us beforehand what those results will be.

In **Matthew 7:2** Jesus said, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

I heard a story years ago about a baker and a man who made butter, and they used to make an equal exchange of a one pound tub of butter for a one pound loaf of bread. Well, one day the man who made the butter came to the man who made the bread with his loaf in his hand and said, "I think you've been cheating me, because this loaf of bread weighs less than a pound." Then the baker took his loaf of bread and put it on one side of the scales and the man's unused tub of butter on the other, and guess what? They were of equal weight. So you see, it was the man who made the butter who was the real cheater, because the baker always weighed his bread against the tub of butter the other man gave him. Jesus said, "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." In other words, we are going to be judged according to what we have actually done and not simply by our profession, and the harvest will testify to the seed sown.

Jesus illustrated this in **Matthew 7:20-23**; notice what He said there, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Many people get frustrated over the truth of cause and effect and wish it wasn't so, and it seems that only a few are willing to bear responsibility for their own life and its outcome, because the carnal heart will take almost any measure to place the responsibility of its failings on something outside itself, but in the end the Bible says "Every knee shall bow" to this most basic truth of cause and effect and eventually acknowledge that it has been true, whether they like it or not.

Every person is going to receive the harvest of the evil they've planted, and we've all planted some of that, haven't we? Unless, that is, we repent of our evil deeds and become sanctified by obedience to the truth. Cause and effect has always been in operation in our world, and it always will be. In fact, it was in operation in heaven before this world was ever created, because the law of cause and effect resulted in Lucifer and his angels being cast out into this earth where cause and effect continues on still. But, the effect of our sins don't have to be our harvest, that's the good news!

Even though we have sowed to the flesh, we don't have to reap corruption. We can choose to follow Jesus and reap the harvest of eternal life by walking the straight and narrow path, or we can choose to walk down the broad road to perdition. Those who teach that you can remain in a saving relationship with Jesus even while you commit a little sin now and then are trying to convince you that you can walk the straight and narrow path and the road to perdition at the same time, but that is absolutely impossible. We are going one way or the other, and if we don't quit going up and down and back and forth, we will eventually go down, because we can only play that game so long before the Holy Spirit stops speaking to our conscience, and once that happens, we have sinned against the Holy Spirit, and once we've sinned against the Holy Spirit, God's recovery efforts to bring us back to the Father's house can no longer be accomplished; at that point it's over and we are then marked for eternal destruction. And so I implore you to understand clearly that sin kills, and all sin, no matter how big or small will bring the law of cause and effect into fruition in your life, the fulfillment of which you won't want to meet when the judgment sits and the books are opened. And yet, as we read earlier, there is hope and this doesn't have to be our end, because ample provision has been made for you to be victorious in the battle with your fallen flesh.

Now let me ask you something in closing. Have you ever wanted God to do something, but you realized you couldn't make Him do it? And why can't we make Him? Because He is sovereign and we're not in control of His actions, except, that is, in one area. God has promised in His Word that we can bring Him to action if we meet certain conditions. We must do something to set God into motion in our behalf. If we have sinned we must not resist the Holy Spirit's attempt to bring us to repentance, and then we must acknowledge that we have sinned and have enough faith to believe that we will be forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. And not only will God forgive and cleanse, but He will supply the power to keep us from falling back into sin once He has pulled us out.

Only God can undo the law of cause and effect which necessitates that we reap a harvest of eternal corruption because of sin and turn it into a harvest of eternal life. He's just waiting for us to ask Him to do it, so why keep Him waiting? There's nothing more He would like to do than to create in us a new heart that is inclined to obey; to take out the stony heart, which is a stubborn heart, and give us a heart of flesh, which is an obedient and loving heart. If that's what you want more than anything else, it's yours for the asking. How about we ask Him now?