

THE TEACHINGS OF MORRIS VENDEN

HARVEST INSPIRATION DISCOVERIES LECTURE SERIES

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CHAPTER 11- PREPARING FOR HIS COMING-IS IT NECESSARY?

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LISTING OF VENDEN'S BOOKS-MAGAZINES-CAMPMEETING TRANSCRIPTS

BOOKS INCLUDED IN THIS TOPICAL STUDY

[SBF] - "Salvation by Faith and Your Will," Morris L. Venden, Southern Publishing Association, 1978, 128 pages, paperback.

[FTW] - "Faith that Works," Morris L. Venden, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980, 375 pages, hardback.

[ROE] - "The Return of Elijah," Morris L. Venden, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1982, 110 pages, paperback.

[DO] - "Defeated Demons," Morris L. Venden, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1982, 16 pages, paperback booklet.

[GN] - "Good News and Bad News About the Judgment," Morris L. Venden, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1982, 96 pages, paperback.

[TP] - "The Pillars," Morris L. Venden, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1982, 109 pages, paperback.

[MCR] - "How to Make Christianity Real," Morris Venden, Concerned Communications, 1982, 168 pages, paperback.

[OOF] - "Obedience of Faith," Morris Venden, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1983, 95 pages, paperback.

[TKG] - "To Know God," Morris Venden, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1983, 125 pages, paperback.

[NWI]- "Never Without an Intercessor." (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Assn, 1996).

I've added the review of this book at the end of this document.

MAGAZINE ARTICLES INCLUDED IN THIS TOPICAL STUDY

[TTI-1] - "Morris Venden Talks to Insight, Part 1," Morris Venden and Editor, "Insight" Magazine, May 8, 1979, pages 7-11.

[TTI-2] - "Morris Venden Talks to Insight, Part 2," Morris Venden and Editor, "Insight" Magazine, May 15, 1979, pages 6-11.

[TCT] - "The Christmas Tree," Morris L. Venden, "Adventist Review," December 24, 1981, pages 4-5.

[SAS] - "What Jesus said about sanctification," Morris L. Venden, "Ministry" Magazine, January, 1982, pages 6-7.

[SAFR] - "What Jesus said about faith and relationship," Morris L. Venden, "Ministry" Magazine, March, 1982, pages 8-9.

[SAH] - "What Jesus said about Himself," Morris L. Venden, "Ministry" Magazine, May, 1982, pages 18-19.

[JSAP] - "What Jesus said about perfection," Morris L. Venden, "Ministry" Magazine, July, 1982, pages 8-9.

[SAPJ] - "What Jesus said about a pre-Advent judgment," Morris L. Venden, "Ministry" Magazine, September, 1982, pages 14-16.

[SITP] - "What Jesus said about the prophets," Morris L. Venden, "Ministry" Magazine, November, 1982, pages 22-23.

CAMPMEETING SERIES TRANSCRIPTS INCLUDED IN THIS TOPICAL STUDY

[1-7 AUC CM] - Sermon Series at Atlantic Union Conference Campmeeting, Summer, 1979. (This was a seven-part lecture series, and each sermon is numbered: 1 AUC CM, 2 AUC CM, etc.)

Of the above materials, "Good News and Bad News About the Judgment," and "The Pillars," are among Venden's best books, for they tend to deal with doctrinal aspects on which he is more in agreement with

traditional Adventism. To these two books should be added nearly all of the August through December sections of "Faith that Works." By the end of July, Venden had covered the means of salvation and had turned to other topics. Thinking, doubtless, that his audience was smaller, he gave some unusual material in his "Insight" articles and AUC Camp meeting Series. Seven of his nine published books were issued since 1981.

CHAPTER 11- PREPARING FOR HIS COMING-IS IT NECESSARY?

WHEN WE SIN-NO CONDEMNATION IN FALLING

"Satan has triumphed time and again by getting religious people to believe that when they fall or fail, they are condemned." FTW, 192.

HASTENING HIS RETURN-WE ARE TWISTING THE STATEMENT

"However there is another problem, we have twisted that statement COL 69 :1 [COL 69, paragraph 1] around to make it appear that somehow we are going to cause Christ's coming by getting His character perfectly reproduced in us. I don't think this is what He's waiting for at all. We have done the same thing with the gospel to all the world that if we get busy and finish the work, then He will be able to come." TTI-1, 8-9.

[MY RESPONSE]

[Venden is here commenting on the "Christ's Object Lessons," 69:1 statement, which was quoted earlier in this "Insight" interview (on page 7). Here is the COL statement that Venden is here discussing: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." Read the entire page. Paragraph two is just as forthright in presenting this beautiful concept. Also notice in the above statement by Venden that taking the final message to all the world in order to hasten His coming is but another worthless idea that needs to be discarded even though Jesus Himself declared it to be so (Matthew 24:14¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.).]

Christ is saying, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" and He adds, "Go ye also into the vineyard." Matthew 20:6, 7. Why is it that many more do not respond to the call? Is it because they think themselves excused in that they do not stand in the pulpit? Let them understand that there is a large work to be done outside the pulpit by thousands of consecrated lay members. {AA 110.3}

Long has God waited for the spirit of service to take possession of the whole church so that everyone shall be working for Him according to his ability. When the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission, the whole world will soon be warned and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14. {AA 111.1}**END MY RESPONSE**

HOW THE FINAL ISSUE OF OBEDIENCE WILL BE MET

"If we consider obedience important, and if obedience or disobedience is the final question the whole world will decide, then I can do only one thing relative to that obedience, and that is to give up on myself. But only through faith and trust in the One who has the power to produce genuine righteousness will that happen." OOF, 27.

DON'T BE IMPATIENT TO OVERCOME

"Sometimes we get impatient and try to put timetables on Christian growth and victory and overcoming. But we'd better not! That's God's business; that's the Holy Spirit's work." TKG, 95.

SIN - AND JESUS TOO-JESUS STAYS WITH THOSE WITH CHERISHED SINS

"How Jesus Treated Known Sinners- Is it possible for saints to sin? Is it possible to sin and know that you are sinning, and keep doing what you are doing wrong, and still be a Christian? How does Jesus treat saints who sin? This is a practical question, and has an answer that is exciting and encouraging. He was kind to His disciples. He was patient with them. He didn't condemn them. He gave them His lessons and when they didn't learn, He continued teaching. And above all He continued fellowshiping with them. This sin, of which the disciples were guilty, was one of the worst sins, if not THE worst. It was sin, it was BAD sin. In fact, they continued in this sin the whole three years they were with Christ. They were still at it in the upper room on the night before the crucifixion. And so it qualifies as known sin, continuing sin, habitual sin, cherished sin, persistent sin, presumptuous sin, you name it. The disciples were guilty of the worst sin. At this point someone might say, 'The problem with these disciples was that they were not converted.' Don't tell me that!" TKG, 84, 86, 87,88. [Emphasis his.]

KNOWN SIN AND A CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP

"So it is possible for the growing Christian to discover that he has a known sin going on in his life and at the same time a continuing relationship with Jesus." TKG, 93.

CHERISHED SIN ONLY BECOMES DANGEROUS WHEN WE SCRAP THE RELATIONSHIP

"Now we have come to the real issue in cherished sin, presumptuous sin, highhanded sin, the kind of sin that gives dangerous ground. When we choose to scrap the relationship with Jesus or refuse the relationship with Jesus in favor of the sin, then we are in peril." TKG, 94.

[MY RESPONSE]

[When we knowingly sin we break the relationship with Jesus. Willful sin separates from God. It's impossible to have a saving relationship with Jesus when we knowingly are in rebellion against Him. The gospel has a cure for that problem and it's not continuing to sin and believe you are in a saving relationship.

There is nothing so offensive to God as sin. Instead of making void the law of God by continuing in sin, every truly converted soul will be walking in the path of humble obedience to all of God's commandments. They will search the Scriptures that they might know the truth. Who hath bewitched the impenitent, the transgressor, that sin is chosen rather than obedience? It is the power of Satan that came to Adam and Eve in Eden, the deceiving, bewitching power of the fallen angel. . . . {UL 209.5}

He condescended to this great sacrifice, not that sin in man should become a virtue, not that sin might be made righteousness. He took the steps that man is required to take in conversion. He went forward in baptism, and when He came up out of the water He kneeled down and offered up such a prayer to His Father as Heaven had never heard before. --Manuscript 25, July 14, 1887, "A Peculiar People."

The Lord is coming; the alarm must be sounded. The people who profess the truth are unready. Should their probation close now, they would be weighed in the balance, and found wanting. **Some have not made earnest efforts to overcome; they have not realized the danger of continuing in sin, and have become almost content where they are.** As I felt their peril, I longed to see them coming up out of the dark cellar of unbelief, into the upper room where there is light and happiness. I greatly regretted that we must close the meeting without seeing a deeper and more thorough work wrought in their hearts. {RH, November 13, 1883 par. 6}

There is no excuse for continuing in sin. No man is obliged to do evil, and be lost. Every one who perishes destroys his own soul. The provisions of grace are ample. Jesus is pleading in our behalf, and there is mercy for even the most guilty and sinful. Let us take hold of the strength of Jesus. He loves us with a love that is inexpressible; let us respond to that love. {ST, June 5, 1884 par. 12}

He has a kingdom prepared, not for disloyal subjects, but for His children whom He has tested and tried in a world marred and corrupted by sin. **As obedient children, we have the privilege of relationship with God.** "If children," He says, "then heirs" to an immortal inheritance. . . . Christ and His people are one (Letter 119, 1897). {6BC 1077.8}

God sent Christ into the world to redeem men from sin. Shall we not, then, accept the society of the only begotten Son of God? **The sinner is privileged to recognize Christ as his divine and adorable brother, but this relationship cannot be claimed while he continues to cherish sin.** {RH, January 26, 1897 par. 14}

Truth never brings the soul into bondage. It is turning from truth to error that brings the soul into captivity. The one who is bond up in close relationship with Christ is freed from the slavery of sin. {ST, August 22, 1900 par. 15}

It is sin, not trial and suffering, which separates God from His people and renders the soul incapable of enjoying and glorifying Him. It is sin that is destroying souls. Sin and vice exist in Sabbathkeeping families. {CG 440.3}

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. Whatever may be the ecstasies of religious feeling, Jesus cannot abide in the heart that disregards the divine law. God will honor those only who honor Him. 16 {CCh 51.4}

And Venden even makes this preposterous statement, I'll just relist the ending from the above statement, "And so it qualifies as known sin, continuing sin, habitual sin, cherished sin, persistent sin, presumptuous sin, you name it. The disciples were guilty of the worst sin. At this point someone might say, 'The problem with these disciples was that they were not converted.' Don't tell me that!" TKG, 84, 86, 87,88. [Emphasis his.]

With blinding tears he makes his way to the solitudes of the garden of Gethsemane, and there prostrates himself where he saw his Saviour's prostrate form, when the bloody sweat was forced from his pores by his great agony. Peter remembers with remorse that he was asleep when Jesus prayed during those fearful hours. His proud heart breaks, and penitential tears moisten the sods so recently stained with the bloody sweat-drops of God's dear Son. **He left that garden a converted man. He was ready then to pity the tempted. He was humbled, and could sympathize with the weak and erring. He could caution and warn the presumptuous, and was fully fitted to strengthen his brethren.** —Vol. 3, p. 416. {GW92 401.1}

Jesus sorrowfully told His disciples that all of them would be offended because of Him that night. But Peter ardently affirmed that although all others should be offended because of Him, he would not be offended. Jesus said to Peter: "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: **but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.**" Luke 22:31,32. {EW 166.1}

On the following day the apostles were brought before the council. The very men who had eagerly cried for the blood of the Just One were there. They had heard Peter deny his Lord with cursing and swearing when charged with being one of His disciples, and they hoped again to intimidate him. **But Peter had been converted, and he now saw an opportunity to remove the stain of that hasty, cowardly denial and to exalt the name which he had dishonored.** With holy boldness, and in the power of the Spirit, he fearlessly declared unto them, "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." {EW 193.2}

Christ had washed the feet of Judas first. This disciple was having his last opportunity. When the ceremony was ended, the Master said, "Ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean." These words were spoken that Judas might understand that Christ had read his secret purposes, that he was not ignorant of his wicked schemes. **This was his opportunity to confess and be converted.** The disciples did not understand his words at the time, but they were imprinted on their memory afterward, and they had something to consider in the patience, the mercy, and the forbearance of God toward the most grievously erring. {RH, June 14, 1898 par. 6} **[So Judas wasn't converted when he was in the upper room]**

During these days that Christ spent with His disciples, they gained a new experience. As they heard their beloved Master explaining the Scriptures in the light of all that had happened, **their faith in Him was fully established.** They reached the place where they could say, "I know whom I have believed." 2 Timothy 1:12. {AA 27.1}

Under the training of Christ the disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit. Under the Spirit's teaching they received the final qualification, and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent units or discordant, conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of "one accord," "of one heart and of one soul." Acts 2:46; 4:32. Christ filled their thoughts; the advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master, and men "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13. {AA 45.2}

Pentecost brought them the heavenly illumination. The truths they could not understand while Christ was with them were now unfolded. With a faith and assurance that they had never before known, they accepted the teachings of the Sacred Word. No longer was it a matter of faith with them that Christ was the Son of God. They knew that, although clothed with humanity, He was indeed the Messiah, and they told their experience to the world with a confidence which carried with it the conviction that God was with them. {AA 45.3}

Christ had bidden the first disciples love one another as He had loved them. Thus they were to bear testimony to the world that Christ was formed within, the hope of glory. "A new commandment I give unto you," He had said, "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34. At the time when these words were spoken, the disciples could not understand them; but after they had witnessed the sufferings of Christ, after His crucifixion and resurrection, and ascension to heaven, and after the Holy Spirit had rested on them at Pentecost, they had a clearer conception of the love of God and of the nature of that love which they must have for one another. Then John could say to his fellow disciples: {AA 547.1} "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." {AA 547.2} END MY RESPONSE]

PERFECTION

DANGEROUS TO TALK MUCH ABOUT IT

"Perfection can be a dangerous subject. Dwelling on the topic can itself be a discouraging and defeating work. The reason is that when we talk about perfection, our attention is almost invariably focused inward on ourselves, and that's not where the power is. The power is always outside of us. So, to deal safely with the question of perfection, it must be handled lightly, once over, and be done with it." JSAP, 8.

DON'T STUDY PERFECTIONISM

"There is a vast difference between the legitimate study of the subject of perfection and becoming involved in perfectionism. A person who is into perfectionism is one who becomes preoccupied with perfection. He thinks of little else. He focuses his attention primarily on the subject of perfection, and everybody else's as well." FTW, 362.

WRONG: SINLESS BEFORE SECOND COMING

"To begin with, we need a clear understanding of the difference between perfection and perfectionism. Here is where we need a glossary. I will hazard a definition: The person who is involved in perfectionism is the one who usually thinks of little else, the one who focuses his attention and everybody else's attention primarily on perfection. The one who believes in perfectionism is often the one who insists that the sinful nature is eradicated before Jesus comes again and that we can not only overcome but become sinless as well. I would like to disclaim any identity with perfectionism. But the doctrine of perfection is a good Bible doctrine, a solid Bible teaching, and Jesus Himself had something to say about it." JSAP, 8.

[MY RESPONSE]

[It is quite obvious from this passage that Venden has different theological definitions than we read in the Spirit of Prophecy. He is fully in favor of "perfection" and "perfection of character" and

"victory over sin" and "a full overcoming." But we read farther and we find that he does not believe in any of these concepts in the sense that they are defined in the spirit of Prophecy. Venden says that "perfectionism" includes the beliefs that we can overcome sin to the point of becoming sinless, and that it will take place before the Second Advent of Jesus. And he says that he does not believe in these ideas.

God will accept only those who are determined to aim high. He places every human agent under obligation to do his best. Moral perfection is required of all. Never should we lower the standard of righteousness in order to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong-doing. We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin. All righteous attributes of character dwell in God as a perfect, harmonious whole, and every one who receives Christ as a personal Saviour is privileged to possess these attributes. {COL 330.2}

[AND WHAT IS MORAL PERFECTION, READ THE NEXT STATEMENT]

When, through faith in Jesus Christ, man does according to the very best of his ability, and seeks to keep the way of the Lord by obedience to the Ten Commandments, the perfection of Christ is imputed to cover the transgression of the repentant and obedient soul. {FLB 85.6}

"The very image of God is to be re-produced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671).

"Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the Word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself" (*ibid.* , p. 671).

"The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. . . . Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with . . . the fullness of divine power. . . . It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. *Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church*" (*ibid.*; italics supplied).

Perfection is a vital doctrine. But it must be perceived in light of a distinction between the fallen nature Christ took upon His pure, divine nature and the carnal nature every human cultivates from infancy, a nature that Christ, our atonement, never assumed!

The complete union with God that Christ restored at His incarnation is the goal of the final atonement. But because of a carnal nature, our obedience at every step must be purified by the merits of Christ's perfect obedience and sacrifice. To this end atonement falls into three stages: (1) a full and complete atoning sacrifice at the cross followed by (2) a continual, atoning ministry in the holy place in applying the blood of His sacrifice ultimately terminated by (3) a final atonement in the Most Holy Place, which fully effects the at-one-ing sacrifice. **END MY RESPONSE]**

NOT "YOU HAVE TO BEFORE PROBATION ENDS"

" 'Perfectionism' is not a safe topic. But perfection is a Bible teaching. We cannot reach a goal that we are not aware of. Perhaps that's one reason why we are not told about it. We don't have to spend a lot of time dwelling on what we must be, but we can spend some useful, thankful hours dwelling on what we can be. There's a big difference between saying, "You have to reach this goal by the time probation closes," and saying, "God is going to lead His people to victory." There's a big difference between saying, "I must," and saying, "He can." FTW, 368. .

FOLLOW ONLY IN SERVICE

" 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me' (Matthew 19:21) I had real problems with that text for a long time, because I said, "How can a person be perfect, and then come and follow Jesus?" It seemed to me that one would have to get with Jesus first or he could never hope to be perfect. But as I took a deeper look at that text I began to see that Jesus was telling him, telling us, how to be perfect. Jesus is talking about much more than just money. Get rid of whatever you have. You may be rich in talent. Stop depending upon your talent. You may be rich in good looks and are overcome every time you look in the mirror! Get rid of your good looks. I mean, of course, get rid of your dependence upon them. Don't depend on your brains, or your education, or your social status, or anything else. Sell all that you have, in terms of depending upon it. Get rid of all the things that you depend on in any way as a substitute for depending upon Jesus. And come to Him, having given up on yourself."

"And then follow Him. What was that added for? Jesus said it in another place, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). He is talking about following Him in service." JSAP, 9.

[Don't follow Him in resisting sin and obeying God; only follow Him in helping others.]

ONLY COME-TILL THE SECOND ADVENT

"Do you realize that you are a sinner? Do you realize that you are helpless to do anything about it? And have you come to the point of giving up on ever being able to do anything about it? Then you can come to Jesus, just as you are, because those are the steps to Him. God is drawing you to Him, and you can respond, and continue to come to Him tomorrow morning and the next, until Jesus Himself comes again." TKG,41.

SAVED SINNERS

"He [Paul] was talking about the fact that apart from God we are sinful by nature and that only by the grace of God can we experience anything else. I'm thankful that it is possible to be a saved sinner. But it's important to realize that we will continue to be sinful by nature until Jesus comes again." TKG, 44.

AFTER PROBATION CLOSES

SINNERS TILL JESUS COMES

"We are sinners by nature, and will remain so until Jesus comes again. Please notice that we are sinners by birth, and that we will continue to be sinners by nature, until Jesus comes again, whether we're sinning or not." FTW, 162.

[There is a truth here, but there is also an emphasis that leads us in the direction of other statements of his that indicate that it will be all right to sin till Jesus returns.]

WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE SINNERS

"The only way a Christian can live is by faith, and only by faith, and by faith only. This is possible because of our nature. Apart from Christ we are sinners. And we will continue to be sinners until Jesus comes. This doesn't mean that we have to keep sinning. It means that we will continue to be sinners. Our only hope is in connection with Him. We know this is true because of the nature of surrender. Surrender is giving up on ourselves." 4 AUC CM.

HOW TO OBEY

"I will try to put all this in the simplest possible terms. If you enter into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and continue that relationship with Him from now until He comes again, He will do the rest. That's the simplest answer to the question of how to obey. Forgiveness is a gift, salvation is a gift, and obedience is a gift, all to be received through continuing fellowship and communion with the One who is the giver." TK6,100.101.

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

"Obedience can come only by faith, first of all, because of the nature of mankind. We are sinners. We will be sinners until Jesus comes, and sinners cannot produce obedience. Second, obedience can come only by faith, because since we are sinners and cannot produce obedience apart from God, all we can do is give up ever hoping to produce any

real obedience. The only thing we can do is surrender, give up on ourselves, submitting totally to the control of Jesus Christ." FTW, 175.

LIVE WITHOUT SINNING-BY TRUST ALONE

"So the answer to the question, 'Can anyone live without sinning?', is Yes. Jesus did. Can we, with emphasis on we? The answer is No. Romans 8:7, the sinful mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Romans 3:23, all have sinned. So we cannot live without sinning. . Can anyone live without sinning? Jesus did. Can we? No, we can't. Must we? Yes. How? The same way Jesus did, by trusting in a power above us." ROE, 95, 98. .

WE CAN'T BE SINLESS

"When we talk about overcoming sin, we are not talking about being sinless. If a person were able to stop sinning today, he would still not be sinless because of his sinful nature." ROE,99.

NOTE: FOR ANY REFERENCES NOTED, GO TO MAIN DOCUMENT