

THE TEACHINGS OF MORRIS VENDEN

HARVEST INSPIRATION DISCOVERIES LECTURE SERIES

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CHAPTER SEVEN- HIS VIEW ON THE RIGHT EXERCISE OF THE WILL

Table of Contents

LISTING OF VENDEN'S BOOKS-MAGAZINES-CAMPMEETING TRANSCRIPTS.....	2
<i>BOOKS INCLUDED IN THIS TOPICAL STUDY.....</i>	2
<i>MAGAZINE ARTICLES INCLUDED IN THIS TOPICAL STUDY.....</i>	2
<i>CAMPMEETING SERIES TRANSCRIPTS INCLUDED IN THIS TOPICAL STUDY</i>	3
CHAPTER SEVEN- HIS VIEW ON THE RIGHT EXERCISE OF THE WILL	4
<i>HOW THE WILL OPERATES AFTER CONVERSION</i>	4
POWER OF CHOICE: SURRENDER IS GIVING UP YOUR POWER OF CHOICE	4
WE GO TO HIM; HE DOES THE REST.....	4
<i>[MY RESPONSE:.....</i>	4
Ellen White comments as follows on this verse Luke 13:24.....	4
And what is this work we must do, which involves more than seeking?	4
<i>Elsewhere Ellen White again affirms that our part in salvation is the putting away of sin, through active cooperation with God's power</i>	4
NO VICTORY THROUGH THE WILL	5
NO CHOICE ON THE FRUIT	5
POWER OF THE WILL: ONLY APPARENT VICTORIES WITH THE BACKBONE	5
BEWARE OF THE STRONG WILLED WHO OBEY	5
WILLPOWER: GETTING RID OF SIN ENDS UP IN WORSE CONDITION	5
NO WILLPOWER LEFT OVER	5
ALL OUR WILLPOWER.....	5
DON'T BELIEVE IN YOURSELF.....	6
USE OF THE WILL: THE PROPER USE OF THE WILL,	6
ONLY ONE THING WE CAN DO	6
HE DOES IT ALL-BUT ONE THING.....	6
<i>DEVELOPING WILLPOWER.....</i>	6
AN ERROR TO DEVELOP WILLPOWER	6
SURRENDERING THE WILL-WHEN WE WILL GO ASTRAY	6
THE NATURE OF SURRENDER'	6

A PASSIVE THING.....	6
<i>[MY RESPONSE TO THE USE OF THE WILL]</i>	7
CONCLUSION	9
Excerpt from SIGNS OF THE TIMES, Nov. 14, 1892.....	9
ELLEN WHITE STATEMENTS ON EFFORT	10
<i>NO RESPONSIBILITY</i>	11
WE DO NOT HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OBEYING	11
[MY RESPONSE]	11
CRUCIFYING SELF-IT IS CRUCIFYING TO GIVE UP ON OBEYING HIM.....	11
BEARING THE CROSS--GIVING UP, NOT SIN BUT SELF	11
PEOPLE THAT DON'T WANT TO BEAR THE CROSS	11
<i>THE CHRISTIAN LIFE</i>	12
CHRISTIAN LIFE SUMMED UP IN RELATIONSHIP ONLY	12

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 Intercesspr." (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 SEVEN- HIS VIEW ON THE RIGHT EXERCISE OF THE WILL

HOW THE WILL OPERATES AFTER CONVERSION

"One of the probing questions that has frustrated Christians for years is the question of how the will operates after conversion. There have been debates and questions concerning the will, but most of the discussions have dealt with the use of the will before conversion. Very little has been done on the use of the will after conversion. One of our problems in trying to live the Christian life is that we often are found trying hard to do that which God has told us we cannot do, fight sin and the devil. And we do not put forth effort to do that which He has invited us to do, that is, seek communion with Him. This does not mean that works are unimportant, but we are talking about method. And the method of knowing God's gifts is by faith alone. As we put forth our effort to come to Jesus, and to keep coming to Jesus, He will fulfill His promise to work in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure." FTW, 193.

[Earlier Adventist speakers would base their studies on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, but the tendency now is to research out the modern theologians. And although they may have little to say about obedience in sanctification and the use of the will in sanctification, Ellen White surely has a lot to say on the topic!]

POWER OF CHOICE: SURRENDER IS GIVING UP YOUR POWER OF CHOICE

"Surrender is giving up our power of choice. 'Oh, but I'll be crippled!' Well, if God invites me to give up my power of choice, can't I leave the question of whether or not I'm going to be crippled up to Him? God invites us to surrender our will toward everything except the continuing relationship with Him." FTW, 171.

WE GO TO HIM; HE DOES THE REST

"So in the Christian experience of salvation by faith alone, we are to channel our power of choice and our willpower toward the continuing relationship of knowing God rather than directing it toward behavior. We can safely do so because when we choose the relationship, then God works in us to will (choose) and to do (behave)." SBF, 53.

[MY RESPONSE: But Jesus stated quite clearly that seeking is not enough, that we must strive also:

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24).

Ellen White comments as follows on this verse Luke 13:24

"We are to strive, to agonize, to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. It will take something more than mere seeking to enter in at the strait gate; for the gate to death is wide, and the road broad, and easy of access, and many there be that go in thereat." {RH, July 5, 1892 par. 3}

And what is this work we must do, which involves more than seeking?

"When we read that many will seek to enter in and shall not be able, then we want to understand what we shall do in order to succeed. This to us is a mournful statement, that there are those who will fail to enter in at the strait gate because they only seek to enter in, and do not strive. . . ."

"The pitying Saviour stands right by your side to help you. He would send every angel out of glory while you are struggling to overcome sin, so that Satan cannot have the victory over you. Christ . . . took man's human nature upon Him that He might come right down to man in the temptation wherewith man is beset. The pitiful Redeemer knows just how to help us in every one of our strivings." {HP 263.6}

Elsewhere Ellen White again affirms that our part in salvation is the putting away of sin, through active cooperation with God's power:

"In the work of salvation the grace of Christ is united with a willing and obedient service, on the part of man. The sincerity of our profession of love to God will be made manifest by our earnest endeavors to fulfill the requirements of His law. Those who are the servants of God will renounce all evil habits and associations. There will be constant and earnest efforts made to lift up the soul from its defilement. . . .

"We are not to be altogether passive, thinking that there has been no task allotted to those who would win immortality. No, no; God calls upon us to do our best with the powers that He has given us to put to the stretch every faculty, and exercise every ability, that we may not fail of everlasting life. That man can be saved in indolence, in inactivity, is an utter impossibility. There is a constant conflict before those who would win eternal life. Faith and works go hand in hand. That man has nothing to do but to believe, is a fallacy and a most dangerous doctrine. . . .

"You are to open the door of the heart. You are to clear away the rubbish from the portals, and throw wide the door, that the heavenly Guest may find a welcome and an entrance. Christ will not enter a heart that is defiled with sin. It is our work to put away all iniquity." {RH, October 30, 1888 par. 4}

Again we recall one of their claims: "Overcoming is God's department; it's not yours. . . . Victory isn't something that we strive for, try for, or work hard to get".

Reading the above inspired statements, we are forced to decide: Will we believe human theories, or the explicit counsel of God? **END MY RESPONSE]**

NO VICTORY THROUGH THE WILL

"An exercise of will power at that point [the point of temptation] might help me to stop from carrying out the deed, but it won't give me genuine victory because all true obedience comes from the heart." MCR, 160.

NO CHOICE ON THE FRUIT

"If we choose to abide in Him, we have no choice on the fruit. It will be the natural and spontaneous result of that abiding." TKG,110.

POWER OF THE WILL: ONLY APPARENT VICTORIES WITH THE BACKBONE

"The only thing that I can do with my backbone in handling temptations is to appear victorious on the outside." MCR, 160.

BEWARE OF THE STRONG WILLED WHO OBEY

"God wants us to surrender ourselves to Him, to give up on ourselves and on the idea that we can ever produce obedience. It was strong willed people who crucified Jesus when He was here. They were threatened by His acceptance of weak people. They didn't want to hear about surrendering themselves, giving up their will, their power of choice, to God. It is crucifying to admit that we cannot overcome sin, that we cannot obey, that we cannot produce righteousness, but that Jesus must do all of this for us" FTW, 172.

WILLPOWER: GETTING RID OF SIN ENDS UP IN WORSE CONDITION

"Whenever a person tries to push out sin by his own backbone and will power, he is going to end up in a worse condition than before. He may or may not go back to rock music. But he may go into deep pride because of his accomplishments. And pride is the worst of all sins. So, you see, the question of surrender can be very tricky if we think that it has to do primarily with giving up things" FTW, 169.

NO WILLPOWER LEFT OVER

"If you fight the fight of faith with all your willpower, you won't have any willpower left over for anything else!" FTW,106.

ALL OUR WILLPOWER

"If we direct all of our willpower toward seeking the faith relationship with Christ, we will have none left to fight sin and the devil. And that's how it should be, for Christ has promised to do this for us." FTW, 209.

DON'T BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

"The fight which I am to fight is "the good fight of faith," but the weapons of this warfare are not of the flesh. I do not believe in myself, and therefore I have no confidence in my own power to overcome evil." ROE, 104.

USE OF THE WILL: THE PROPER USE OF THE WILL,

"And the proper use of the will is in choosing to respond to God's knocking at the door for relationship with Him. If we will choose that, and continue to choose that, God will demonstrate in our lives more and more unto the perfect day, that He can do the willing and the doing through us concerning the fight of sin." FTW, 189."

ONLY ONE THING WE CAN DO

"I'd like to close this chapter with the premise and conclusion that it is our choice to respond to which power is going to rule over us, and that is all we can do. If the concept makes me nervous, it's simply the rebellion of my pride and ego." SBF, 33.

HE DOES IT ALL-BUT ONE THING

"It is not true that Jesus does it all, because Jesus cannot seek Himself for us. Here is where our will and our willpower and our human effort has to go toward seeking Jesus in an ongoing relationship with Him every day. He does not do it all. He cannot seek Himself for us. But Jesus has promised that if we will seek relationship with Him, He will work to keep us from falling. And what Jesus has promised, He is able to perform. He does not need my help for that. So it is very crucial in coming to the place of overcoming sin that we understand clearly the difference between the fight of faith and the fight of sin," RO E, 105."

DEVELOPING WILLPOWER

AN ERROR TO DEVELOP WILLPOWER

"There was a time that whenever I came to page 47 of 'Steps to Christ,' I would say, 'Oh, THAT again,' and go on to the rest of the book. But then it said, 'You need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will.' And at that point I thought, 'well, that's my problem all right, I need more force to my will.' And with that gross misunderstanding, I again went to work to develop more willpower. I was trying to develop will power, what we call backbone but the will is the power of choice. Will and willpower are not the same. Usually we equate willpower with discipline and grit and determination. But the power of choice is something different. It is our decision making ability to do what you've decided upon." OOF, 49, 50..

SURRENDERING THE WILL-WHEN WE WILL GO ASTRAY

"Haven't you noticed, however, that if you've experienced enough of the folly of relying on yourself and your own decisions, you don't want to ask for your power of choice back? Have you ever gone astray so much and so often in using your will and willpower on your own that you didn't want to employ it that way any more?" SBF, 53.

THE NATURE OF SURRENDER'

"Some may say, 'If I'm supposed to give up my will, that sounds as though I'm going to go through life maimed and crippled.' Some become extremely nervous at the idea. But that's exactly what surrender is all about, the submitting of our will. High achievers, capable people, brilliant performers will find it most disconcerting and even become angry at it. But surrender is giving up our power of choice to God." OOF,39.

A PASSIVE THING

"An instrument is a passive thing, but many of us fear the word passive. When we speak of the surrender of the will, ordinarily no one has any problem. But if we mention any giving up of the power of choice, people's faces cloud up." OOF, 48,49.

[MY RESPONSE TO THE USE OF THE WILL] The concept presented in the book is that the will, or power of choice, can only be used in the realm of choosing 'relationship' through Bible study and prayer. The will is not supposed to be used in the area of fighting against sin. This means that sin in behavior and actions is outside the realm in which the will is to be used. The explanation given is that Christ takes care of sins in our performance if we use our will in Bible study and prayer. (See MCR pages 119, 124, 128, 132, 142, 154, 160).

But the truth is that in order to overcome our sins in our thoughts and actions, we must use our will in these areas as well as in Bible study and prayer. It is imperative that we realize that the will is the spring of all our actions. (5 T 515). This means that the will has a most vital role in the realm of obedience and disobedience.

Notice how clearly this is described in the following;

3T 488 "The necessity for men of this generation to call to the aid the power of the will, strengthened by the grace of God, in order to withstand the temptations of Satan, and resist the least indulgence of perverted appetite is twice as great as it was several generations ago. But the present generation have less power of self-control than had those who lived then. Those who have indulged the appetite for stimulants have transmitted their depraved appetites and passions to their children, and greater moral power is required to resist intemperance in all its forms."

MCP 687 "It is our privilege, as children of God, to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. At times the masterly power of temptation seems to tax our willpower to the uttermost, and to exercise faith seems utterly contrary to all the evidences of sense or emotion; but our will must be kept on God's side."

4T 215 "You should call a determined will to your aid in the warfare against your own inclinations and propensities."

5T 675 "The question to be settled with them (those who reject the Testimonies because their sins are reprov'd by them) is, Shall I deny myself and receive as of God the Testimonies which reprove my sins, or shall I reject the Testimonies because they reprove my sins? In many cases the Testimonies are fully received, the sin and indulgence are broken off, and reformation at once commences in harmony with the light God has given. In other instances, sinful indulgences are cherished, the Testimonies are rejected, and many excuses which are untrue are offered to others as the reason for refusing to receive them. The true reason is not given. It is a lack of moral courage, a will, strengthened and controlled by the Spirit of God, to renounce hurtful habits."

On page 134 it is stated that sin is crowded out by Christ; it is not stamped out by us. It is true that we have not power to get rid of sin in our lives, and it is true in a sense that sin is crowded out by Christ, but the way that it is stated, and the context it is placed in, makes it sound like we have no direct involvement in getting rid of sin. It overlooks the fact that even though it is God's power being utilized, it is our act requiring our effort that brings victory in overcoming sin and resisting temptation.

DA 1466 "The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."

Here we see that there is a union of divine power and human effort that must take place at the point of temptation in order for victory to be gained. Yet nowhere in the book is it recognized that it is possible to put forth human efforts in the power of Christ to overcome sins. The principle of cooperation of human and divine is brought out in many instances in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Philippians 2:12, 13 "...Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

MYP 147 "When the four Hebrew youth were receiving an education for the king's court in Babylon, they did not feel that the blessing of the Lord was a substitute for the taxing effort required of them. They were diligent in study; for they discerned that their destiny depended upon their own will and action.... While these youth were working out their own salvation, God was working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. Here are revealed the conditions of success. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part. The Lord does not propose to perform for us either the willing or the doing. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort."

2T 506 "To retain pure and undefiled religion, it is necessary to be workers, persevering in effort. We must do something ourselves. No one else can do our work. None but ourselves can work out our salvation with fear and trembling. This is the very work which the Lord has left for us to do."

PP 248-249 "In order to receive God's help, man must realize his weakness and deficiency; he must apply his own mind to the great change to be wrought in himself; he must be aroused to earnest and persevering prayer and effort. Wrong habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by determined endeavor to correct these errors and to conform to right principles that the victory can be gained. Many never attain to the position that they might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted for usefulness must be trained by the severest mental and moral discipline, and **God will assist them by uniting divine power with human effort."**

There is no question but that man's efforts in his own power are of no avail, but we miss the very central issue in how to overcome if we fail to see that man's effort with God's power is abundantly able to gain the victory in fighting against sin. It should be equally clear that God's power without man's effort to overcome sin in his life will not bring victory either. Stories that we read or hear about how certain individuals who gave up fighting against sin, and then in response to their request had the desires for some particular indulgence suddenly and miraculously removed so that the indulgence became repulsive to them, are very misleading.

Satan is the one who brings strong temptations, and when it serves his purpose to remove the temptation he can readily do so. Satan can fasten individuals more firmly in his grasp by doing this in answer to their request because this leads them to expect that the way to overcome temptation is to have it removed. Then when some temptation does persist and isn't miraculously removed in answer to prayer the natural conclusion is that it must not be that important an issue, perhaps not sin at all.

To illustrate: A person has developed a habit of smoking, and wishes to quit, but is not able to successfully resist the habit he has cultivated. So he prays for God to take care of it and it instantly and spontaneously vanishes. Smoking suddenly becomes repulsive to him, he can't stand the smell of it. Later he discovers that his gambling habit is not the best for his spiritual life and he asks God to take care of that; the desire and impulsive habit that he has developed through years of yielding to temptation is again miraculously taken away. Later he learns that God's Sabbath day is the seventh day instead of the first. Should he wait to harmonize his life with what he has learned until God removes all desires and inclinations to break the Sabbath? Is he to wait until his desires and inclinations are changed before changing his actions? Satan is playing the bigger game for our lives. **If he can lead us by some experiences of this kind to expect that we will overcome sin by having the desires that we have cultivated for it suddenly removed, then he knows that down the road when we meet some major issue, that he will have us, for we will be expecting to deal with that issue the same way, and when the temptation persists we will continue giving in waiting to such a time as God would see fit (it is presumed) to take it away.**

TM 453 "Do not think that God will work a miracle to save those weak souls who cherish evil, who practice sin; or that some supernatural element will be brought into their lives, lifting them out of self into a higher sphere, where it will be comparatively easy work, without any special effort, any special fighting, without any crucifixion of self; because all who dally on Satan's ground for this to be done will perish with the evildoers,"

It is plain that God wishes our actions to be governed by our knowledge of His will, rather than by how our feeling and inclinations go. It is our privilege, through His grace, to be able to do what is right even when we don't feel like it.

The concepts in the book would deprive us of the means by which to utilize God's power for overcoming sin, while leading us to believe that we are surrendering the battle into God's hands and giving up self. Truly, is this not confusing the work of the Holy Spirit with the work of Satan?

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most devastating aspect of the concepts presented by Venden is that they minimize the practical application of God's character as revealed through His law, in our lives. At the same time God's righteousness is extolled and the requirement of perfect holiness apparently exalted. These concepts lead a person to think that he is choosing Christ, when in actuality he can be rejecting Him. And it is exceedingly difficult, and almost impossible to convince him otherwise, when once he has fully accepted this philosophy. (See Matthew 7:21). But what good is exalting the requirement of holiness if you discourage people from comparing their lives with it? In so doing you effectively obscure the only method by which it is to be obtained, while presenting a different method. This is actually a way of running away from Christ that passes as a way of seeking Him! How misleading! It only serves to make the error more difficult to recognize. We should beware of any teaching that belittles effort to keep God's law and overcome sin. This does not mean that every teaching that advises us to put effort in to good works is of God; it is only saying that every teaching that tells us not to put effort into obedience is erroneous. No matter how logical and conclusive the arguments presented in support may seem, when the conclusion is wrong the reasoning is wrong. For correct views on the topic of Sanctification, we should read the little book, THE SANCTIFIED LIFE by Ellen G. White.

We will conclude this review with a portion of an article that appeared in the early Adventist journal SIGNS OF THE TIMES, Nov. 14, 1892. The reprints do not contain the name of the author, but it is apparent that the article was written to meet the same concepts as are currently being promoted under the title of Sanctification By Faith Alone. Some additional statements on effort follow the excerpt from SIGNS.

Excerpt from SIGNS OF THE TIMES, Nov. 14, 1892

"The word of God is the only basis of faith. The counterfeit article which often passes for faith is merely human speculation; it will never profit its possessor; it rests on imaginations suggested by the arch-deceiver, and the end will be ruin, disappointment and death.

When God's word is received in the heart, it works at once, operates, governs, and controls the man. There is a danger at this point of man's thinking that when the work is wrought, he himself has done it. But let us note carefully how the work is brought about. We have just seen that faith works; and the cause of faith is the word of God. When the word--the word of God spoken through holy prophets of old--is received in the heart, it constitutes a living, acting principle. This principle is undying and all powerful, 'for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.' The gospel is conveyed to man in words—just such words as men speak; but gospel words were first spoken by God, and the one who receives these words, receives in them, and with them, the mighty life-giving power of God. He may resist this power so that it will not work effectually, but if he gladly lets the word of life operate, he will find that it works the works of God in him. And when this is true, it will not be the man who does the work, but it will be God working in him, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.'

When the rewards are given, it will be to 'every man according as his work shall be.' Rev. 22:12. The Psalmist prayed: 'Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.' Psal. 90:17. David saw that man could do nothing except God worked in and through him. And the work which God sees fit to perform through the weak frame of mortal flesh is to be established upon man; it is to be reckoned to man as though he had wrought it himself; for at the judgement the result is to be given to him for his own. It is, however, wrought in man by Christ, and when it is given to him for his own, he is rewarded for what has been wrought through him.

Let no one think for one moment that his salvation depends upon what he can do himself. If you are saved, it will be through faith on the Son of God who gave himself for you, and not alone for you, but for both you and

your sin. You cannot free yourself from one single sin, not even the stain of a sin. It requires the blood of Christ, and His blood has been given for that very purpose, that He might 'purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Titus 2:14. He accepts sinners, and if they submit themselves to him, he will cleanse them from all their sins, keep them from sinning, energize them by His Spirit, and then work in them the works of God. Christ will work in man, as God worked in Christ when He was upon the earth.

Christ totally denied any power exhibited in His life as being of Himself; and He is our example. He said: 'I can of Mine own self do nothing.' 'I have not spoken of Myself.' And again, 'The Father that dwelleth in me, He (the Father) doeth the works.' John 5:30; 12:49; 14:10. These statements are from the lips of the Saviour. Do you believe them? Do you think it possible for the servant to do what the Master did not, and that which He could not? Individually, let us accept the truth that man can do nothing, and let us believe that God will work in us that which pleases Him, even as He wrought in Christ. Then shall the works of God appear; self will die-- be crucified daily—and Christ will live within us, as he did in Paul, the hope of glory.

Mark this, there is work, yea, much work to be done, and God's way is for us to submit ourselves to Him, that He may work through us. Look at the mighty apostle Paul, for he worked in labours more abundant than all, and yet he was dead; but Christ was living in him, and by Christ were the works of Paul wrought. The only thing required of us is that we let God have His way and purpose in us. But with the evident truth that we can do nothing, and that God expects nothing of us,—the fallen mortal man,—let us not again be deceived in thinking that it is self that is trying to work when the impulse to do good is felt, and that therefore we must repress it, thinking to wait till Christ shall work in us with some irresistible power. From the point of surrender Christ stands ready to will and to work, and we should recognize both the desire to do, and the power to do, as coming from God, for He designs both to 'will' and 'work' in us effectually and mightily.

It may appear to others that we are doing, and we may deceive ourselves by thinking so, but it is not of ourselves, it is God working in us. It matters not what others may think; but if we deceive ourselves upon this point, we take credit and glory to self that belong to God, setting self in the place of God, attempting to do what God only can do, hence frustrating and defeating the purpose of God. Friends, brethren, sisters, one and all, let God work."

ELLEN WHITE STATEMENTS ON EFFORT

5T 371-372 "Our habits must be brought into conformity to the will of God. We are assured, "It is God which worketh in you," but man must do his part in controlling appetite and passion. The religious life requires the action of the mind and heart in harmony with the divine forces. No man can of himself work out his own salvation, and God cannot do this work for him without his cooperation. But when man works earnestly, God works with him, giving him power to become a son of God."

5T 345 "You may professedly believe every point of present truth, but unless you practice these truths it will avail you nothing."

MLT 99 "The child of God will not rest satisfied until he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ and sustained by His life-giving power. When he sees a weakness in his character, it is not enough to confess it again and again; he must go to work with determination and energy to overcome his defects by building up opposite traits of character. He will not shun this work because it is difficult. Untiring energy is required of the Christian; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Everyone who is sincerely striving for the victory over self will appropriate the promise, 'My grace is sufficient for thee'. Through personal effort joined with the prayer of faith the soul is trained.... It may cost a severe conflict to overcome habits which have been long indulged, but we may triumph through the grace of Christ."

4T 654 "There are few who form evil habits deliberately. By frequent repetition of wrong acts, habits are formed unconsciously, and become so firmly established that the most persistent effort is required to effect a change. We should never be slow in breaking up a sinful habit. Unless evil habits are conquered, they will conquer us, and destroy our happiness,"

MLT 104 "God calls upon every young man and young woman to renounce every evil habit, to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Jesus will help you, so that you need not remain in indolence, making no effort to correct your wrongs and improve your conduct. The sincerity of your prayers will be proved by the vigor of the effort you make to obey all of God's commandments.... Do not excuse your defects of character, but in the grace of Christ overcome them, Wrestle with the evil passions which the Word of God condemns...."

6T 410 "'Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' Mark 14:38. Watch against the stealthy approach of the enemy, watch against old habits and natural inclinations, lest they assert themselves; force them back, and watch. Watch the thoughts, watch the plans, lest they become self-centered. Watch over the souls whom Christ has purchased with His own blood, Watch for opportunities to do them good."

I believe what Morris Venden presents is not true Seventh-day Adventism. It is a Seventh-day Adventist version of the popular Protestant belief of faith without works, but it is contrary to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. I believe that those who espouse these concepts will eventually be forced to come to the point of either giving up the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy and true Seventh-day Adventism, or of recognizing the error of these concepts, and reject them. **END OF MY RESPONSE TO THE USE OF THE WILL]**

NO RESPONSIBILITY

WE DO NOT HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OBEYING

"It is of the utmost importance to realize that Jesus is not placing the responsibility of our works or our fruit bearing, upon us. While it is true that we are to bear fruit, it is also true that it is accomplished by faith alone in Him." TKG, 110.

[MY RESPONSE]

[Responsibility is closely related to control. According to Venden, mankind (with the exception of Christ who was not like man) has had no control over his moral actions, even after surrendering to Christ, since the Garden of Eden when Adam first fell. We are totally helpless in our sins and must let Him miraculously remove the temptations and smooth the way so we will easily want to obey Him and "keep His commandments." All this must be without any personal conflict or "fight" or effort on our part. We are totally powerless to resist sin, any sin that comes our way. Because we have no moral control over ourselves, this side of the Second Advent, we therefore have no responsibility for our moral actions as long as we have accepted Christ as our Saviour and remain with Him. There is a final generation that obeys God fully, it will have to come as a by-product of Divinely controlled will automation. Read again that excellent study "The Error of Original Sin," written by Elder Ralph Larson, if you wish to better understand the philosophical basis underlying this deadly error.]END OF MY RESPONSE]

CRUCIFYING SELF-IT IS CRUCIFYING TO GIVE UP ON OBEYING HIM

"It is crucifying to admit that we cannot overcome sin, that we cannot obey, that we cannot produce righteousness, but that Jesus must do all of this for us." FTW, 172.

BEARING THE CROSS--GIVING UP, NOT SIN BUT SELF

"Jesus said, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny ' What? 'himself.' Sometimes we read other things in there. Let him deny this or that or the other habit or practice or thing. I used to think that the cross was making myself not do something I really liked to do. I've heard other people say it too. 'My cross is giving up my dancing. I can't dance anymore. I sure wish I could, but that's my cross.' That is not what Jesus is talking about. No, the cross is to deny self. Let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. The cross is not refusing to do something we would like to do. It's denying ourselves." FTW, 85.

PEOPLE THAT DON'T WANT TO BEAR THE CROSS

"When we discover that we can do nothing but fall at Jesus' feet in humility and admit that we can't produce anything, then it becomes too heavy a cross to bear. But the cross is the essence of surrender, what it is all about. It involves giving up totally on self." OpF, 41;

[Venden's "cross-bearing" means being willing to stop trying to do right]

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

CHRISTIAN LIFE SUMMED UP IN RELATIONSHIP ONLY

"When we seek Jesus we learn to trust Him, this allows Him to do the work in battling the enemy that so many of us have tried with ill success. And if we will fight the fight of faith, He has promised that He will fight the fight of sin. For a long time some of us became so involved in the fight of sin we had no time or energy left for the fight of faith. Have you ever been in that trap? One of the reasons that the Christian life is so deplorably hard is because we get involved in the wrong fight, the wrong battle, and we fight the battle where the battle isn't instead of where it is. The Christian life, and salvation, is summed up in relationship only, if relationship is properly defined and understood." FTW, 84.

NOTE: FOR ANY REFERENCES NOTED, GO TO MAIN DOCUMENT