

THE TEACHINGS OF MORRIS VENDEN

Harvest Inspiration Discoveries Lecture Series

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INTRODUCTION-A SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES

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INTRODUCTION – A SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES

I-A TIME FOR TRUTH

Here are some eternal truths that stand out in contra-distinction to the teachings of Morris Venden:

1- God, by His Holy Spirit, moves upon men to do kindly, unselfish acts, even before they are converted. And the good and right things that they choose to do after conversion are also prompted by the Spirit of God.

2-Every unselfish thought, word and act of men, when done for a worthy objective, is pleasing to God.

3-Sin is always offensive to God. He cannot countenance intentional ("known") sin, nor can He cover the individual with his Righteousness who is indulging cherished sin.

4-Men cannot be saved while retaining or clinging to known or cherished sins.

5-Sanctification is based on daily re-conversions (renewed justifications), but it also includes more than Justification.

6-Sanctification also includes self-control and obedience through the enabling grace of Christ. This is done through a strengthening of the human will by the Holy Spirit, moment by moment, as we depend upon God for strength and help. That which we could not do outside of Christ, we can now do in Christ and this is to conscientiously resist the wrong and choose the right, even though it may be painful to thus choose a better way. This choosing the right and refusing to do the wrong is a distinct act of our choice, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, so that it can be carried through to successful completion.

7-Before we chose Christ, our will was in slavery to Satan and sin. But in accepting Christ and remaining with Him our wills are set free from that bondage. In Christ, we are now perfectly free to choose that which we shall do. We can choose to remain with Christ and do the right. And we are free at any moment to leave Him for the indulgence of selfishness and sin, and with that choice, a temporary or permanent return to bondage, if that is what we desire. But in our bondage, be it long or short, we can again cry to Christ for release (deliverance). The freedom of the will to choose sin or right living is pivotal in the entire experience of the Christian. Not understanding the freedom of the will, and thus not forcefully exercising it in the right direction can result in eternal ruin.

8-It is never wrong to obey God or to try to do so. Every effort to obey God will benefit and help the individual himself, and those around him. It matters not whether he be a Christian or a worldling.

9-If you know of anyone who is trying to do the right, please do nothing to discourage him. And you do well not to make fun of such people behind their backs. It were better that a millstone were hung around your neck, than that you thus cause one of these little ones to stumble.

For the angels of God are continually seeking to guide these precious souls toward the hand of Jesus. Do not ridicule the righteous and do not mock right doing. And, please, do not excuse sin and wrong doing as though it were acceptable in God's plan to save men. And never hint that God desires anyone to remain in his sins for even an extra moment. Sin is a terrible tragedy, a state of rebellion, that God wants every soul to leave at once, by fleeing to Christ for overcoming strength. While it is called today, come to yourself and return to your wonderful Father, that He may forgive and heal, hold and empower you to henceforth live a clean life.

10-And, please, do not tell people that claiming Bible promises, quoting Scripture, singing songs to Jesus, studying God's Word, and asking Jesus for help are "gimmicks" that are worthless in resisting and overcoming sin!

11-A final generation will keep the commandments of God but it will be done by an act of their own free wills, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Strength of will to do good is a noble quality. Never ridicule it as "Phariseeism," "legalism," or "Laodiceanism."

12-When a man sets his will to obey God, he does it under the direct conviction of the Holy Spirit. Satan will never encourage anyone to try to resist sin or obey God. It would appear that for one to speak against this sincere act of the soul under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is bordering on the sin against the Holy Spirit. He is attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan.

13- All who will not plead with God, and resolutely choose the right, but instead prefer to accept the error that God will do it for them and even "in them," but apart from their own persistent decisions will be lost. All who enter Heaven's gates will in this life have chosen the right, at the cost of friends, applause, power, and position.

14- The cooperation of the human with the divine is a key principle in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. But this cooperation involves far more than coming to Christ. It also includes fighting temptation, choosing the right, upholding standards, and obeying all the laws of God. And many, many times it will appear to yield unpleasant consequences if we do resolutely stay by our resolve to keep our will on the side of God's will and deliberately choose the right and resist the wrong.

15- Only Seventh-day Adventism has the Sanctuary Message. For only Adventism teaches that the highest levels of obedience are to be chosen and lived by the remnant people of God. They are to be a spectacle to men and to angels. But the secret is the Sanctuary Message. For it is through the empowering intercession of Christ, their High Priest in the Sanctuary above, that they can be thus strengthened in their wills to obey God in every particular. (But do not suppose that they are to keep quiet on this secret for the Message of Christ's mediation in the Sanctuary in Heaven lies at the heart of the Third Angel's Message-read "Early Writings," 254-256).

16-We are personally held responsible for every sin we commit. This includes sins performed after initial conversion.

17-A Final Crisis is coming to all the world and the Church will feel its effects to the full. This crisis is literal and is carefully explained in the book "Great Controversy." There is a Mark of the Beast and a Seal of God. And there is a fearful warning by the Third Angel against accepting the errors of the Beast. And those who have a nominal awareness of the Advent Message, and yet who play down, ignore, or spiritualize away the truths of "Great Controversy" in regard to this Crisis, and the dangerous agencies of Satan responsible for it, such as Roman Catholicism, Apostate Protestantism and Spiritualism, will not be prepared for what is just ahead.

18-It IS in our power to hasten the coming of Jesus by putting away sin and developing a character like that of our Lord. In His strength, we can and must prepare for the solemn events that are soon to come on all the earth.

19- The teaching that the will of man is predestined to failure in obeying God's commandments and that those who accept Christ are not thereafter responsible for their sins is both foreign to historic Adventism and devastating to it. It is a two pronged error that will cause many people to be lost. Seventh-day Adventists should not preach or publish such soul destroying errors. They should refuse to listen to such errors, they should openly oppose such errors and they should not employ those who teach such errors.

II-ONE WHO HAS PLED WITH VENDEN

The following is taken from a telephone conversation with an individual who is well-known in the denomination. This individual has spoken at length with Morris Venden on a number of occasions, but without success. You will find this referred to in this conversation. In order to safeguard denominational employment, the identify of this person won't be shown.

"I have deeply appreciated the work of Elder Venden to try and help the people. But as I have traveled and spoken in camp meetings and local churches across America, I have found that there are very definite after-effects in what he is presenting.

I have spoken to many, many people who have read his books and are faced with personal difficulties as a result. His teachings leave people saved in known, ongoing, deliberate sin. He leaves them justified in sin. This is Elder Venden's concept of sanctification, as he presents it.

As long as you are studying and praying, and "in fellowship with Christ," you are being saved, even though you may have cherished sins in your life. This is his teaching.

I called [by phone] a person in the --- --- [A highly placed office of denominational work]. I asked him if he had read these books. He said that he had "casually looked at them." I explained what he is teaching, and --- was shocked but the teachings are there.

Venden's sanctification idea, totally by faith, is really dangerous. He teaches that we can't do anything about sin except by study and prayer. And God does it all, totally, with out your will. If you use your will, it is legalism. And that Is sin. It becomes sin to resist sin!

I have spoken to many people all across America. And have found that this teaching leaves you helpless when temptation arises. [Venden teaches that you cannot use your will when tempted in order to resist sin]. You can only use it to study and pray. You must let God take care of temptation and sin, for you cannot do anything about either one yourself.

But Jesus used His will every moment to resist sin and stay with God, and we must also. For He is our Example. I have asked Morris Venden, "Then I can use my effort of will to submit to God, and that is all right?"

"Yes," he said "that is all right."

"But I cannot use my will to resist temptation?"

"No, he replied; "that is legalism! You cannot, you must not, try to use you will to resist temptation. To do so is legalism."

What Venden is teaching is directly opposed to the truth that we must resist sin in the strength of Christ in this life and that we can successfully resist sin in the strength of Christ in this life.

His message fits beautifully into the Laodicean experience. People have told me: "I know I couldn't do it, and now God will do it for me some day." "I don't have to try today. God is going to do it later on, some day later." "Oh, I have such a strong relief after reading Morris Venden's books. I have been trying to fight sin and now I don't need to. God is going to take care of it in my life."

But the Bible teaches, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." [Ezekiel 18:20] While Morris Venden is teaching that the soul will be saved in sin.

Every false platform says: "You can be saved in sin." Ask any teacher of a new doctrine: "Are you still in Christ while sinning?" If he says "Yes," then he is on the wrong platform. And Venden is on this wrong platform!

He says that I don't have to resist sin, but as long as I study and pray, I am in Christ anyway even though I continue sinning all this time. His teaching is a perfect complement to Ford's. People tell me that Venden is going to bring the young people out of Ford teaching, the truth is that he is taking them there. He is presenting a compromise between historic Adventism and "new theology" that can appeal to all. If successful, he will end up uniting everyone on a platform that most can accept, live in sin and be saved.

And yet strangely enough, his teaching is mixed up with statements that the remnant will overcome sin and keep the commandments. This attracts the faithful who believe in genuine Adventism. It sounds good and it doesn't sound like "new theology" but how is this "overcoming" to be done? That is the question. And Venden tells his listeners and readers that it is only done by letting Christ do it. When we are in Christ, the Holy Spirit gets rid of the sins eventually when He sees that it is best to do so. Till then we just wait on Him to do it for us.

He teaches that we can live in sin and be safe. Satan is not your master, he says. You are now in Christ, and He will take away your sins in His own good time.

He says that we need to obey God, but then he adds that we cannot do anything about it. He teaches that obedience is possible, but only as God gives it. There is nothing for us to do except to study, pray and witness.

Until then, we are to continue in our sins. If God sees that He can gently take away your cherished sins, then He will do it. But until He can quietly, magically remove them without effort on your part, just be patient. That's the patience!! Of the saints. Rest from your works, he says. The works that are of value with God, he teaches, are those of submitting to Christ and reading, praying and witnessing. Doing good is all right, resisting sin and temptation is doing bad. It IS legalism and you may be lost if you keep it up. It is an unprofitable work of the flesh, and we need to repent of all such works.

I have talked and pled with him over this. I have spent many hours with him. But I cannot get through to him. He is adamant on his position and will not budge. There are a number of us who are greatly concerned. But we don't know what to do. The leaders won't listen to us. We've tried talking with them. They say they are not theologians and that Venden is helping people. If only he would unite the Spirit of Prophecy truths about sin and obedience with his message, instead of twisting them to make them fit into his preconceptions. He quotes a lot of Spirit of Prophecy in his books, but this misleads people into thinking that all is well when it is not.

In one of his sermons he tells the story of how he likes a certain kind of ice cream. He craves it, he says. If he walks by an ice cream parlor and knows that it is in there, what is he to do? "I might as well go on in and have it, to resist it would be legalism," he tells the people.

Using your will, an act of will, to resist sin is legalism, he teaches. But what a terrible danger when we cut off the involvement of choice, decision, will, in the warfare against sin!

The truth is that we must yield ourselves to God and then in His Strength put to death those temptations to wrongdoing. I have spoken with a number of church members who have confided in me that they are powerless against temptation. When it comes along, they always give in. I ask them if they have been reading Venden's books. "Why, yes," they say, "how did you know?"

Perhaps most unfortunate of all, so many of our people are too busy to take time to learn what is taking place. Few people are thinking through all this, even fewer seem to even care."

End of conversation--

III-ELDER VENDEN ON "SIN"

The statement below was prepared by one holding a doctorate who lives in the central states. His brief analysis approaches the problem from yet another angle, and thus helps us see the entire picture more clearly.

Morris Venden considers the following statements to be errors:

1. The main issue in sin is what you do.
2. We are not sinful until we sin.
3. If we stopped sinning we would no longer be sinful.

The following statements he considers to be true:

1. Everyone is sinful, whether or not he sins.
2. We are sinful until Jesus comes.

3. God does not hold us responsible for being sinful.
4. We sin because we are sinful, we are not sinful because we sin.
5. Sin is not what we do, it is what we are.
6. Sins are what we do as a result of what we are.
7. Sin results in the transgression of the law.

Here are replies to these errors:

1. He says that this is false: "The main issue in sin is what you do." But this statement is true, for the main issue IS what you do. It is whether or not you and I will keep the commandments. It is whether we will sin or not sin.

"Keeping the commandments of God" is an action, an activity; it is not just a Bible phrase. It is not just believing that we should not sin and "Letting God take care of it for us;" it is personally resisting sin and not doing it. "Blessed are they that DO His commandments." (Revelation 22:14) "The DOERS of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2: 13)

The first four commandments reveal our duty to God, and the last six show our duty to our fellow men. Each one of the Ten Commandments represents an activity. "The covenant which He commanded you to PERFORM, even Ten Commandments." (Deuteronomy 4: 12-13) "If ye KEEP My commandments." (John 15:10) Additional examples could be given (Christ acted to fulfill the law [Matthew 5: 17] ; "whosoever shall do and teach them" [Matthew 5:19]; walking after the Spirit fulfills the law [Romans 8:4]; keeping the commandments is the whole duty of man [Ecclesiastes 12: 13].)

The central issue in the crisis at the end of time is this: Is it possible for us to do what God asks us to do, is it possible for us to keep His commandments, as Revelation 14:12 predicts that we shall do? And this is the central issue in Elder Venden's error on sin.

But consider these passages:

We can render obedience to His law (OA 24).

The law lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above the temptations that lead to sin (1 SM 233).

By His perfect obedience He [Christ] has made it possible for every human being to obey His commandments (COL 312).

"Christ is a living witness that the law can be kept. It is not that men cannot keep the law, but that they will not" (RH, May 28 1901).

"He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that He can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him an entrance into the kingdom of God" (RH, March 10, 1904).

2. Venden says that this is false: "We are not sinful until we sin." But it is a correct statement, nevertheless. We were born sinful, that is, inherited sinful tendencies; but we are not sinners until we personally commit sin.

3. He says that this is false, also: "If we stopped sinning, we would no longer be sinful" But he is in error on this point, too.

The Bible fact is that when we stop sinning and keep all of God's commandments, we are no longer sinning, even though we are still sinners(past tense), even though we still retain a sinful nature, or bent toward sin.

"Everyone who by faith keep's God's commandments, will reach a condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before His transgression" (ST, July 30, 1902; 6 BC 1118).

"Through cooperation with divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character" (AA 531).

"Perfection of character is attainable by everyone who strives for it" (ISM 212).

The 144,000 are "without fault [faultless] before God (GC 649), and are called "living saints" (EW 15).

Here are several erroneous statements which Elder Venden believes to be true:

1. He teaches that "Everyone is sinful whether they sin or not." This is incorrect and contradicts the points given in the above several paragraphs (under the heading, "If we stopped sinning, we would no longer be sinful"). The truth is that we must become new creatures in Christ and overcome every fault (MH 492), for through faith in Christ we can correct these faults (AA 564).

2. Venden teaches that "God does not hold us responsible for being born sinful" This is true, but He holds us responsible for remaining in the sins we have chosen. Let us not try to escape from the responsibility for our sins! Let us be done with them.

"In what consisted the strength of the assault made upon Adam which caused his fall? It was not indwelling sin, for God made Adam after His own character, pure and upright. There were no corrupt principles in the first Adam, no corrupt propensities or tendencies to evil. Adam was as faultless as the angels before God's throne." (1 BC 1083)

"Obedience to all the commandments of God was the condition of eating of the tree of life. Obedience through Jesus Christ gives to man perfection of character, and a right to that tree of life." (1 BC 1086)

"As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death. But Christ steps in and passes over the ground where Adam fell, enduring every test in man's behalf. He redeems Adam's disgraceful failure and fall by coming forth from the trial untarnished. This places man on vantage ground with God. It places him where, through accepting Christ as His Saviour, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Thus he becomes connected with God and Christ." (6BC 1074)

"You cannot bring up your children as you should without divine help, for the fallen nature of Adam always strives for the mastery." (AH 205)

"Satan will bring in every kind of theory to pervert the truth. The work will go hard, for since the fall of Adam it has been the fashion of the world to sin." (6T 129-130)

3. Venden teaches that "We sin because we are sinful, we are not sinful because we sin." Much of this may be true, but Adam did not sin because he was sinful and sufficient provision has been made for us not to remain in our sins.

Our evil propensities must be controlled (CG 42).

An enlightened intellect must control our animal propensities (MYP 237).

Both inherited and cultivated tendencies to wrong can be overcome (MH 176).

Through the plan of redemption, God has provided means for subduing every evil trait (ISM 82).

Christ's perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess if they will be in subjection to God as He was (OA 664).

4. Venden teaches that "Sin is not what we do, it is what we are." Such a concept is false. Too much evidence of Augustine's Original Sin error is to be found in Venden's view of sin.

5. Venden believes that "Sins are what we do as a result of what we are." This may be partly true, but it is a half truth. Both of the above statements (numbers 3 and 4) imply that we cannot do otherwise than to sin. But recall again 7BC 943, where we are told that there is no need to retain even one sinful propensity, and MYP 81, where we are told that we can have strength to overcome as He overcame. Read all of these passages for yourself.

The central theme of the above statements by Venden appears to be this:

Sin is a condition of the organism and not an activity of the organism. In other words, sin is what we are and not what we do. But such a teaching is the basis of the false doctrine of Original Sin. As soon as we say that sin is what we are, then our inherent tendency to sin renders sin inevitable in our lives. The two become identical. The tendency to sin becomes the same as the act of sin itself.

It is true that we have inherited sinfulness from Adam. But sinful tendencies are not sin. The suggestion that man is born a sinner leads us directly to the Roman Catholic doctrine of Infant Baptism, whereby it was assumed that one could wash away the infant's inherited sin by means of sprinkling, so he might have a sinless start in life.

The teaching of inherited sin also leads to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. If man inherits sin from Adam, then Christ, born as a man, must have inherited sin and thus must have been born a sinner also. In order to avoid this logical conclusion, and keep Christ's life sinless (as in fact it was), we must declare that Mary, the mother of Christ; did not, in some way, pass sinful human nature on to Christ. Thus we see that if man had Original Sin, then Christ could not have partaken of our nature and still be sinless. Thus He could not really have been tempted in all points as we are. It would be necessary for Him, therefore; to have been able to keep the law with a strength or power not available to the rest of us.

All this results from this error. The obvious conclusion of this error is that we need not keep the law of God, because Christ kept it for us with a superior power. This error also eliminates our own responsibility for the specific acts of sin that we commit, for why should we be responsible for them since we have no power available to us to eliminate them from our life. Our sins are indeed excusable, and Christ becomes an inadequate Saviour. Sin becomes excusable.

Adam and Eve sinned with a sinless nature. The plan of salvation is based upon the real truth that a human being with a sinful nature can indeed live a sinless life on this earth, for he can do it with empowered help from God.

The doctrine of Original Sin rules out the possibility of a total victory over sin by any human being in this present life. In contrast, the Spirit of Prophecy maintains that sin can be completely eradicated and now. Elder Venden says that the remnant will keep the commandments of God, but he explains it in such a way as to teach that we will continue to remain in our sins without being able to resist them. Then, when probation has closed, it would be forever too late for those who had been taught that they could not and should not resist sin. Venden reflects the Roman Catholic doctrine of Original Sin, and this is the error upon which the doctrinal edifice of Brinsmead and Ford are built.

Here are a number of Spirit of Prophecy references that refute vendén's teachings:

WE MUST COOPERATE WITH CHRIST IN THE WORK OF SALVATION

In our endeavor to obtain salvation we must cooperate with divine agencies. There is a certain work that we must engage in, certain tasks that we must perform in order to place ourselves in harmony with the divine so that Christ can do for us that which He is willing and waiting to impart to us.

God has created us free moral agents. This means that He respects our will, our desires, and the choices that we make. He does not interfere with them, set them aside or override them if we are intent upon having our own way. He allows us to act out our desires wherever they may lead unless we pray that His will rather than ours be done in our lives. This means that God's interaction with our will is secondary. That is, it takes place only if the primacy of our desires acquiesces in God's will for us. He will lead us if we allow Him to lead us and place our lives in His hands. There exists a divine principle of cooperation between us and God which is stated as follows:

"While God was working in Daniel and his companions 'to will and to do of His good pleasure,' they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking, of the divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be obtained. Human effort avails nothing' without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do. But never as a substitute for our effort." Prophets and Kings" 486-487.

1. "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." 6 Testimonies, 372.'

2. "We must make more earnest decided efforts, if we would have the Lord Jesus abide with us as our counselor and helper." 1 Selected Messages, 319.

3. The Lord does not propose to do for us either the willing or the doing. This is our proper work. As soon as we earnestly enter upon the work, God's grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. Our souls are to be aroused to cooperate: The Holy Spirit, works the human agent to work out our own salvation. This is the practical lesson the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us. The whole work of the Christian is comprised in willing and doing." Testimonies to Ministers, 240, 241.

4. "Let no man present the idea that man has little, or nothing to do in the great work of overcoming; for God does nothing without man's cooperation." 1 Selected Messages, 381."

5. "Let no man say that our works have nothing to do with our rank and position before God . . . Effort and labor are required on the part of the receiver of God's grace." 1 Selected Messages, 381.'

6. "Earthly blessings cannot be obtained without toil, and can we expect that spiritual and heavenly blessings will come without effort on our part?" 1 Selected Messages, 359.

7. "Can man be saved in doing nothing? Never, never. He must be a co-laborer with Christ. He cannot save himself. 'We are laborers together with God.'" Matthew 16:24.

8. "Some say that Christ had borne all the burden, all the suffering, all the self-denial, and they are willing to let Him bear it. They say that there is nothing for them to do but believe; but Christ says:

'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.' " Matthew 16:24.

GOOD WORKS ARE NECESSARY THROUGHOUT OUR SANCTIFICATION

In the exercise of faith we must faithfully work to bring forth fruit. This is indicated in the following statements:

1. **"We are to do all we can on our part to fight the good fight of faith. We are to wrestle, to labor, to strive, to organize to enter in at the straight gate. In one way we are thrown upon our own energies; we are to strive earnestly to be zealous and to repent, to cleanse our hands and purify our hearts from every defilement. . The Bible teaches that everything regarding our salvation (all phases) depends upon our own course of action. If we perish, the responsibility rests wholly upon ourselves. If we accept God's terms, we may lay hold on eternal life . . Faith and works go hand in hand; they act harmoniously in the work of overcoming. Works without faith is dead; faith without works is dead."** Faith and Works, 48. "

2. **"It is an error to believe that since by grace alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption (sanctification and glorification)."** Steps to Christ, 60.

3. **"He who is trying to reach heaven (glorification) by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience. But his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure."** 1 Selected Messages, 364.

4. "Some say that Christ has borne all the burden, all the suffering, all the self-denial, and they are willing to let Him bear it. They say that there is nothing for them to do but believe; but Christ says: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Matthew 16:24.

5. "If you say 'I am saved' and disregard the commandments of God, you will be eternally lost." 1 Selected Messages, 318.

6. **"When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up the deficiency, with His own divine merit."** Faith and Works, 50.

7. "Can a man be saved (sanctified) in doing nothing? Never, never. He must be a colaborer with Christ. He cannot save himself. "We are laborers together with God." 1 Corinthians 3:9.

8. "Earthly blessings cannot be obtained without toil, and can we expect that spiritual and heavenly blessings will come without effort on our part?" 1 Selected Messages, 359.

9. "When we have prayed for something we are to do our best to have it come to pass." 4 Testimonies, 115.

10. **"Those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed."** 1 Selected Messages, 336.

11. "Engaging in the struggle here below--work out your own salvation--strain every muscle and train every faculty:" Review and Herald April, 28, 1910.

12. **"We should not wait for God to do for us what we can do for ourselves."** My Life Today, 119.

13. "We hear a great deal about faith, but we need to hear a great deal more about works. Jesus says: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." 1 Selected Messages, 397.

14. "Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Through faith the Holy Spirit works in the heart to create holiness therein; but this cannot be done unless the human agent will work with Christ." 1 Selected Messages, 374. .

15. **"Apart from Christ no one can do good works. Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended."** 1 Selected Messages, 373.

16. "Although the good works of man are of no more value without faith in Jesus than was the offering of Cain, yet covered with the merit of Christ they testify to the worthiness of the doer to inherit eternal life (glorification)." 1 Selected Messages, 382.

17. "The condition of eternal life (glorification) is now what it has always been. Perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness." Steps to Christ, 62.

18. "The Lord will receive the sinner when he repents and forsakes his sins so that he can work with his efforts in seeking perfection of character (sanctification)" 5 Testimonies, 631.

19. "Faith and works are two oars which are to be used equally." Welfare Ministry, 316.

GOOD WORKS ARE NECESSARY IN SANCTIFICATION

Bearing fruit means practicing the truths of God in our own lives so that others may obtain the benefits of our justification and sanctification, and are helped toward their own justification or salvation. Sanctification means to believe the truth and to practice it (My Life Today, 261).

Unless the life-giving truths of God's word are faithfully carried out in the life, no man can see the kingdom of heaven (glorification) (faith and Works. 32).

The works that we should do are the works in which the Holy Spirit is our guide and helper. They should be works in which the Holy Spirit cooperates with us. "Man cannot be saved (sanctified) without obedience, but his works should not be of himself. Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure, ' (1 Selected Messages, 364).

The word 'saved' here means sanctified because obedience to all of the commandments comes during sanctification. Education, 7.

So we find that there are conditions to our receiving justification and sanctification and the righteousness of Christ. . While good works will not even save one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works' (1 Selected Messages, 377).

While good works will not even save one soul' means in justification, and 'it is impossible for even one soul to be saved' means sanctification. Works of faith are involved in obeying God's law, for 'obedience to the law of God is sanctification' (Faith and Works, 85). By obedience the truth will sanctify the soul and will help us overcome all weakness of character.

"It is the work of conversion (which here means justification) and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them in accord with the principles of His law (Great Controversy, 461).

Sanctification is a progressive work. It is not attained in an hour, or a day, and then maintained without any special effort on our part (2 Testimonies 472).

Continual growth in grace takes effort, and can be achieved only by daily conformity to God (4 Testimonies, 299).

Even with Christ living within us through His Holy Spirit such conformity is not automatic. It takes earnest, decided effort on our part if we would have the Lord Jesus abide with us as counsellor and helper (1 Selected Messages, 319).

The reason for this is that God has given us freedom of choice and a will. He never overrides these against our will. So the initiative in staying with Christ resides in us. God never forces the will. -Great Controversy, 591.

RIGHT-DOING BY FAITH RETAINS OUR JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

An individual who has been justified will now do good works in order to develop the perfection of his character, his sanctification. When we spoke of an individual not being saved by works we were referring to his initial contact with Christ or his justification. After an individual has been justified he must become sanctified. This means that he must develop his character unto higher and ever higher levels of perfection or sanctification. Hence the works which he does during sanctification are works which not only sanctify him, but these same works also maintain his justification or justify him. This is the reason why the Bible speaks of persons being justified by their works, while it also speaks of individuals not being justified by works. This means that only justified persons, only sanctified persons, only believers who have placed their faith in Christ can be justified by works. It means that the works which sanctify also justify, and that the works which justify also sanctify. This principle is made clear in the following statements:

1. "In order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience through active living faith that works by love and purifies the soul:-1 Selected Messages, 366.
 2. "The Christian cannot maintain sanctification without special effort on his part:-2 Testimonies 472.
 3. "We must make earnest decided efforts if we would have the Lord Jesus abide with us as our counsellor and helper." 1 Selected Messages, 319.
 4. "Righteousness is obedience to the law. The sinner is incapable of rendering it . . He can attain it only through faith. God places the obedience of the Son to the sinner's account and pardons and justifies the repentant sinner and treats him as though he were righteous. . When we do our best He becomes our righteousness.
 5. "Conversion (sanctification) may be viewed as a daily experience.
 6. "Genuine faith will be manifested in good 'works for good works are the fruit of faith. . The faith that does not produce good works does not justify the soul. . Where faith is good works appear." 1 Selected Messages, 39.
 7. "Faith will never save (sanctify and glorify) you unless it is justified by works." 2 Testimonies, 159.
- "Christ came to the earth, taking humanity and standing as man's representative, to show in the controversy with Satan that man, as God created him, connected with the Father and the Son, could obey every divine requirement:" 7 Bible Commentary 926.

"Conversion brings man into a new relation with God." Our High Calling 215.

"When a man is converted, when he comes back to his allegiance to God, he then places himself in a right relation to Him, . . . whereby he will regain the moral image of his Maker." Review and Herald March 1, 1887.

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear. Isaiah 59 :2.

"In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Him our sinful nature. Review and Herald Dec. 15, 1896.

"He [Judas] . . . did not become transformed, and converted through connection with the True Vine. This dry sapling adhered not to the Vine until it grew into a fruitful, living branch. He revealed that he was the graft that did not bear fruit,-the graft that did not, fiber by fiber and vein by vein, become knit with the Vine, and partake of its life." Sons and Daughters of God 291.

"A mere profession of godliness is worthless." Sons and Daughters of God 297. "like Judas, we may hold the truth in righteousness." Signs of the Times June 5, 1884.

"Repentance for sin is the first fruits of the working of the Holy Spirit in the Life." 6 Bible Commentary 1068.

"If you are right with God today, you are ready if Christ should come today." In Heavenly Places 227.

"A knowledge of Christ will avail nothing unless we become like Him in character, bearing the same likeness, and representing His Spirit to the world. Christ is of no value to us unless He is formed within, the hope of glory. If we do not know Him as our personal Saviour, a theoretical knowledge will do us no good." That I May Know Him 107.

"It is through the tangible ingredients of relationship Bible study, prayer, and Christian witness--that we enter into relationship with Him and that we continue to abide in Him, as well. What will be the result? We will experience so close a relationship with Him that Jesus describes it as dwelling in Him, and He in us (See John 17:20-23)." "Ministry" magazine March, 1982, page 9.

"The Three Tangibles: Paul says in Philippians 2:12, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. " How do you work out your own salvation? What is your part? What can you do? Three things. The study of the Bible and spending time in prayer are the first two. The third is Christian witness. " To Know God 67..

"The purpose of the daily relationship with Christ is communication. If you maintain regular communication, you will have a relationship. " To Know God 52.

" . . . Spending time together. It's just that simple. " To Know God 46..

"A mere assent to this union while the affections are not detached from the world, its pleasures and its dissipations, only emboldens the heart in disobedience." 5 Testimonies 232. "To claim union with Christ (one which is not genuine) hardens the heart in disobedience and self-confidence." 5 Testimonies 48..

"The hope which had been so precious to them lost its attractions; for the specious delusions of Satan almost wholly extinguished the light of salvation through the merits of a crucified Saviour, and men were led to

seek to make an atonement through works of their own,-by fasts and penances, and through the payment of money to the church. It was more agreeable to the natural heart thus to seek justification than to seek it through repentance and faith, through belief in, and obedience to, the truth. Review and Herald Nov. 22,1892.

"The author of the book positively asserts that "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." To Know God 40,101.

"if you continue the relationship with Jesus, sooner or later your sin is going to go. That's the way it works. That's the only way it works-" To Know God, 94.

"Those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part to overcome sin, will be disappointed." Maranatha, 227.

IV-THE BOTTOM LINE

Here is the conclusion: Morris Venden is championing overcoming and perfection of character, but the means to that end is by letting God do the overcoming and perfecting, without any effort on your part. And the result is that many who buy this new method are going to remain in their sins. And that is unfortunate.

We mention the cigarette habit as but one example of the fallacy of this new theory. Only those who miraculously have the desire for the habit taken from them will be able to overcome this problem, if Venden's view is correct.

Other examples could be cited, such as the conquest of bad temper, or eating too much or the wrong kinds of food. Venden's theology teaches day-by-day salvation in sin, and says that, if we will patiently stick with his way, it will ultimately gain for us perfection of character. Do you dare wait till later to put away your sins? I say you had better plead with God for empowerment to actively resist and overcome them now!

Do you want to be tied to your sinful habits when the National Sunday Law is passed and the Mark and Seal begins to be affixed? Do you want to be living with the "patience of the saints" with your sins when your name comes up in judgment in the Sanctuary above? At such a time in history as this, when the great Day of Judgment is just upon us, are we to teach or accept the teaching that we do not need to immediately put away our sins?

The ramifications of this terrible theory go on and on. Morris Venden writes in code. And this is why it has been difficult for many to grasp his objective. You may be interested in how the code was cracked.

I will tell you.

It was done by people who personally asked Venden pointed questions. They could not figure out where he was headed and exactly what he meant. So they interviewed him personally. And he gave them the key to the code. One young man found himself puzzled by Venden's Carolina Conference campmeeting presentations, so he went to him privately and asked him what he meant.

"The way you seem to be coming through to me is, that a Christian is not supposed to resist sin through any effort of his will at all. If the removal of sin does not come about easily through the Holy Spirit, then the Christian must wait for the Holy Spirit to do it; is that right?" Venden's reply: "Any effort put into overcoming sin by the Christian is legalism."

In explaining the code, Venden had explained his concepts. The young man then turned to Venden's books and found the errors clearly stated therein. He now stands in opposition to the current Carolina

Conference promotion to place a copy of Venden's "How to Make Christianity Real" in every Adventist home in North and South Carolina.

Another individual spent many, many hours with Venden discussing his concepts. And the time spent spanned several years. The result was a very clear view of Venden's beliefs. This denominational worker's statements made over the phone are recorded in this present discussion.

Then there was the individual who teaches at the University of Nebraska, in Lincoln, Nebraska. He has been exposed to Venden's teachings for quite some time now. Sitting in his classes, he has heard Venden repeatedly explain his positions. But ironically, this individual told me that it was because of a different aspect of the problem that aroused him to action. (He is currently appealing to the conference president for help.) We have here been discussing the Venden view on how to deal with sin, but this church member in Lincoln, Nebraska, was aroused to action by Venden's view of sin itself!

We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that the basic definition of sin is to be found in 1 John 3:4. "Sin 'is the transgression of the law." But Morris sees sin as "separation from God." (**But Isaiah 59:2 is speaking of separation from God as an effect of sin, and not as the sin itself or the cause of the sin.**) With this new definition of sin in mind, one can easily see why Venden can believe us safe when, after having had our study and prayer for the morning, we dare to journey through the day's activities without resisting temptation and known sins. We don't need to resist temptation because sin is really only "separation from God," and having had our prayer and study for the day we are now with God!

V-A QUESTION TO PARENTS

I am a parent of teenagers. I want my children saved in the kingdom of heaven. I want them to live clean, honest, good lives. I want them to serve Jesus Christ all their lives. I am told in the Spirit of Prophecy that one temptation yielded to can lead to years of regret and a lifetime of repentance.

I am writing to people who are parents of teenagers, who have been parents of teenagers, or who will be parents of teenagers someday.

If your teenage daughter came to you and said she was going to date a boy she likes very much that night, would you tell her to be very careful, keep hands off, and resist temptation to wrong indulgences, lest it cause tragedy that could ruin her for a lifetime?

Or would you follow the pattern of moral guidance laid down in Morris Venden's books and tapes?

Would you tell your daughter that people who try to be righteous are only trying to escape from God-
that exterior morality is worthless-

that if she tries to resist temptation that night, it will only show that she is still unconverted-

that people who concern themselves with right-doing are classed by God as laodiceans-

that she should not try to be a "good liver"-

that to resist sin only proves that she is still backslidden from Christ-

that a deliberate and willful act of avoiding sin is just another way to try to earn her way to heaven-

for she will only be motivated by legalism and is only trying to make a good impression on others-

for attempted morality is no better than immorality in God's eyes-

that it would only provide evidence that she is on a works program and needs a new birth-

that to consciously avoid or resist temptation that evening would constitute evidence that she is not under the Holy Spirit's control and would be little more than a shallow act of morality-

for avoiding sin has value only in a law court and keeping you out of jail and that eventuality probably would not result from what you might do tonight-

that to stifle temptation would prove you to be a mere moralist and motivated by self-conceit and egotism-

for resisting sin is nothing more than an effort to glorify yourself instead of God-

for to consciously resist sin would be sin as far as God is concerned, for it would be a deliberate choice or act of the will, and therefore could not come from a relationship with Christ-

and would therefore be an act of self-righteousness that you would have to repent of afterward-

that you might as well go ahead and do it for you will not be able to resist it anyway for no one else can either-

for, indeed, it would establish the fact that you are on a works trip, living by righteousness by works, obviously separated from God, and you will ultimately lose out on heaven if you continue to stubbornly use your own willpower in the resistance of sin-

for sin should never be determinedly resisted; instead you should wait for God to make the way easy for you and to give you spontaneous obedience-

and until then you might as well indulge passion, for Calvary has provided no other solution to the sin problem-

for to actively fight sin and temptation and try to live a pure life in harmony with the laws of God could result in your later receiving the Mark of the Beast, the mark of trying to have a righteousness based on right-doing instead of yielding-

for that is the error of the Beast and his Image-

for you must prepare now for the coming crisis, for the issue will be salvation by a close, daily relationship with Christ by faith alone vs. attempting to obey laws and standards and moral codes by an effort of the will.