

THE TEACHINGS OF MORRIS VENDEN

HARVEST INSPIRATION DISCOVERIES LECTURE SERIES

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CHAPTER NINE- EVEN WORSE DANGERS TO AVOID IN OVERCOMING

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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 NINE- EVEN WORSE DANGERS TO AVOID IN OVERCOMING

RIGHTEOUSNESS AS AN ESCAPE

WHAT WE HAVE TO SURRENDER

"We have to surrender the idea that we can attain righteousness apart from Jesus! The devil likes to have us work on our righteousness as a substitute for knowing Jesus. And it is possible for some to give up their evil tempers as an escape from giving up themselves to God! This is a dead-end street, because the strong who are able to do right externally become proud, while the weak who are only able to fail miserably become discouraged." MCR, 125.

LEGALISTS

THE END OF WORKING

"There is bad news for legalists in this passage [Romans 10:4: "Christ is the end [Greek: "purposeu or "objective: "termination"] of the law of righteousness" because they will never attain to righteousness by working on it, no matter how hard they work. But there is also good news for legalists, because they don't have to keep wearing themselves out with fruitless effort. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone that believeth. And that's good news, especially for legalists!"

"It's the legalist who has been working the hardest on trying to gain salvation. And the words of Christ's friendly invitation, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11: 28), can be the best news the legalist has ever heard when their meaning finally comes clear. It is good news to hear and accept that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." GN, 55, 56.

THE BLACK AND THE RED LEGALISTS

"This can get a little tricky, because there are two different kinds of legalists. There are the black legalists and the scarlet legalists. We might call them the rigid legalists and the liberal legalists. By the black legalist, I mean the one who has the black suit, black tie, black shoes, black socks, and a long face! He finds his security in the standards of the church that he upholds, and he judges everyone else who falls short of his achievements. (From his viewpoint, practically everyone else does fall short, by the way!) He's the Pharisee, and his outward performance is well controlled."

"The scarlet legalist is described in Revelation, the woman who is clothed in scarlet and adorned with jewels, etc. This type of legalist is reacting against the old guard form of legalism. This person wears jewelry and makeup, goes to the movies, is not particular in regard to Sabbath observance, and takes real pride in the fact that she is no longer legalistic. But both kinds of legalists are deceived. They are as legalistic as ever, but just afflicted with different forms of the disease." GN,54.

DEFEAT

DEFEATED BECAUSE WE DIDN'T LET GOD DO IT

"The reason we have met with defeat in our 'duty and deliberate obedience' approach is because we don't believe God will do it for us. Sure, it is an effectual blow to our pride, but God's plan of salvation has no room for man's pride." SBF,67.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

RULES, REGULATIONS AND LAWS

"Then where should I be placing my will and my willpower? Toward working on the rules, regulations, and laws for salvation? Toward the fight of sin? No." SBF, 74.

DANGER IN DIVIDING TIME

"Dividing my time between the fight of sin and the fight of faith is not God's plan for me. It must be all of my effort directed toward the fight of faith. That's where the battle really is." SBF, 76.

CHILD TRAINING

DANGER OF TEACHING CHILDREN GOOD HABITS

"Then someone else inquires, 'Doesn't God ever use righteousness by works to lead to righteousness by faith?' Has He ever done it? Do you think He does now? Somehow we've read quotes from Ellen G. White out of context and come up with the idea that parents should teach their children righteousness by habit, which will keep them out of jail long enough to enable them to find Christ when they're older. Haven't you heard the concept or variations of it? We've been eminently successful on this."

"Let's 'face it, Laodicea has done a bang-up job here. And what have been the results? Are the young people able to understand righteousness through Jesus, faith, and surrender? No. It hasn't opened the door any wider for faith and experience with Christ. Often they can't even see Christ at all. Tired of being moral only externally, they leave the church." SBF, 60,61.

[It seems unbelievable that such concepts can be printed in books published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. How can it be possible that our publishing houses will print such erroneous sentiments? Our homes, schools and Sabbath schools are trying to instill godly sentiments in the minds of our young and Venden declares it very dangerous to do such a thing! What have we come to when Adventist college pastors will preach such garbage and our publishing houses will print it! Is there no one to stand up and put a stop to these atheistic sentiments?]

THE MORALITY MOLD HURTS OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

"I have talked with young people completely incapable of fathoming what salvation through faith in Christ alone really means, because they are so steeped and brainwashed into their mold of morality and external goodness. Righteousness by faith sounds like some strange language to them. And as a result they apparently cannot understand the real relationship with God until they are almost in college, and often not even then. It's too bad." SBF, 61.

[It is well known that these books authored by Morris Venden are based on the sermons he gives in the pulpit to college students (he has been senior college pastor for a number of years now) or at camp meetings and weeks of prayer across the country. What you are reading is what he is teaching our youth all over North America. There was a time when Adventism tended to emphasize morality and standards (doctrine) more than Christ, now Venden in reaction wants to exalt the "righteousness of Christ" and leave out the morality and standards, or, lacking that, to ridicule them to death.]

FASTING

FOOLISH TO FAST

"Jesus said, 'This kind doesn't come out except by prayer and fasting.' But Jesus, who cast the demon out, hadn't been fasting, so far as we know. It's easy to take a literal interpretation of this and think that somehow God in heaven will look down and say, 'If these people will go without eating for a period of time and beg Me to help them, I will be impressed and will move in their behalf.' No, not at all. This doesn't line up with what Jesus said about God being willing to give good gifts to His children. You don't earn power over the demons by going without eating, by doing penance, by effort, or by struggling. So what did Jesus mean? The prayer and fasting that Jesus had been involved in included a continuing relationship with His Father." DD, 10-11.

[MY RESPONSE]

[His teachings make of none effect the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. You who labor in the cause of God and see no souls brought to the knowledge of the truth, no churches raised up and organized, should change your manner of labor. You should fast and pray. You should lay the matter before your brethren, and solicit their counsel and prayers, lest you be self-deceived, and, what is more, deceive others also. {GW92 265.3}

I then saw Brother Edson that he must gird on the whole armor and stand in readiness to go, for a journey was before him, and that souls needed help and that Jesus' work was almost finished in the sanctuary, and that we must work while the day lasts, and when Satan comes up with his power to oppress us we must have faith in God and beat him back, and if we could not get the victory we should fast and pray and we should surely get the victory and triumph over Satan. {6MR 250.4}

Many who profess godliness do not inquire into the reason of Christ's long period of fasting and suffering in the wilderness. His anguish was not so much from enduring the pangs of hunger as from his sense of the fearful result of the indulgence of appetite and passion upon the race. He knew that appetite would be man's idol, and would lead him to forget God, and would stand directly in the way of his salvation. {RH, September 1, 1874 par. 3}

The Lord will not remove from his people every occasion to doubt; but he will give sufficient light and evidence to encourage faith and confidence; and if they walk as Christ, the light of the world, leads the way, they will not step aside into the paths of doubt and unbelief. When declension and danger threaten the church, there will be more praying, more fasting, by the faithful few, and the Lord will answer the prayers offered to him in sincerity, and at the same time he will come forth as an avenger because of the guiltiness of the evil-workers. He will be a protector; for he will "avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them." {RH, December 11, 1888 par. 3}

It is the desire of my heart that you shall know the power of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have an all-sufficient Helper. He understands our weakness and our needs. Let there be fasting and prayer. Let self be humbled. Let the heart be cleansed from all impurity. Confess your sins, and plead with God day and night for the victory, and you will walk in the light as Christ is in the light.

Ellen G. White.

{RH, March 23, 1905 par. 14} END MY RESPONSE]

WASTING TIME

WASTING TIME TRYING TO SIN NOT

"We have been wasting time and energy trying to sin not, when the time and effort and energy is supposed to go toward abiding in Him. Do you follow at all?" ROE, 105.

FANATICISM

WHAT IS A FANATIC?

"I've heard several definitions of a fanatic. Someone who has lost his purpose but doubled his efforts." 2 AUC CM.

WEARINESS

TOO TIRING

"Best thing to do is to spend time on eating, not growing. Put the attention on faith. Obedience is the fruit of faith. The devil has tried to get us to work on trying to be good instead of trying to know Jesus, and in the process of trying to be good, some of us have gotten so tired. So tired that we hardly had enough strength left to get to know Jesus." 3 AUC CM.

WEARING OUT OUR LIVES

"Sometimes we think there are many things we have to do in living the Christian life, and we wear out our lives trying to accomplish them." SBF, 67.

THE FEW VALUES IN NOT SINNING

THERE ARE BENEFITS: NO JAIL OR EARTHLY GUILT

"Now someone is sure to ask if it is wrong to be 'good' if he doesn't really feel like it. Many young people have raised the question. 'Theoretically we understand the concept of salvation and relationship through faith in Christ,' they explain. 'But if we've been forcing ourselves to do what's right, then for the sake of salvation through faith in Christ alone, hadn't we better stop being good so that "grace may abound" in our lives? What are we supposed to do while our faith is growing to the ideal point of constant natural obedience? If we try hard to keep obeying deliberately, will that ruin everything? Or if we feel like committing fornication or adultery, would it be just as well to go ahead, then?'

"Although being good by not being externally bad is not being good as far as God is concerned, there's no question that man considers it as good. If I feel like killing someone, but manage to restrain myself from doing it, I will have some real benefits. I'll keep out of jail, and I won't have the guilt of a murder on my hands. (But I'll probably give myself credit for having enough willpower to control my actions.) Certainly morality has all kinds of advantages as far as man and the law view it. But external goodness contains no real righteousness as far as God is concerned. In fact, it can even make one feel secure apart from God." SBF, 50.

OBEDIENCE ONLY IMPRESSES HUMAN LAW COURTS

"The fight of sin is not where the battle really is regardless of whether I've been seemingly 'successful' or not, because the only way I can ever succeed in it is externally, outwardly, and that means nothing in God's book. Of course it impresses the courts of the land, it works with the traffic signals and police on the highways, and it keeps me out of jail, but it does not count for Christianity or for salvation." SBF, 73.

NOTE: FOR ANY REFERENCES NOTED, GO TO MAIN DOCUMENT