

# Self and the Sin-Master

by F.T. Wright

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There has been needed for a very long time a clear statement setting forth the differences between self and the sin-master. Too many folk have looked upon them as being the same thing, but this is a mistake. They are two different powers, and these differences must be understood by every person who is seeking to gain an entrance through the pearly gates.

Self must die before the old man can be put away, for it is the very nature of self to cling to the old man of sin.

It is also the truth that...

**The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 947:**

As long as Satan reigns we shall have self to subdue, besetments to overcome and there is no stopping place.

Therefore, even after the initial death to self followed by the death of the old carnal mind, we still have to battle with the problem of self.

Finally, there is the need to understand the role of self in the heavenly kingdom. God had to denounce self when He was called upon to make the sacrifice of Christ to save perishing humanity. It was not easy for Him to win that battle. The law of life for heaven is the law of self-renouncing love. Therefore the sinless beings also have to fight their battles to ensure that the mighty powers in themselves do not interpose between them and the true ways of God.

We cannot emphasize too earnestly the need to be clear on this subject for every one of us has a self to deal with while ever we are intelligent and free individuals. All of us are possessed of personal desires, involvements and the like and all these are a definite problem when the call of God comes to us.

But if they are understood, then we can know how to cope with them.

There is a great deal written in the writings of Ellen White on the subject of self. Repeatedly and with emphasis the necessity of understanding the nature of this problem, of getting the victory over it and of maintaining that victory, is reiterated. The problem of self is recognized in these writings as being one of fearful consequence to every person seeking to gain the treasures of eternal life. It is made clear that nobody, who does not have the victory over self, will be able to gain a personal living experience in the things of God and will therefore finally end up in the lake of fire.

Satan is fully conscious of this. Knowing, as he does, that those who cherish self will perish with him, he ever works to keep self as the most important factor in every life. In this, of course, he will be tragically successful while ever the seeker for eternal life is unaware of the problem confronting him. Therefore it is of paramount importance that every person becomes acutely aware of just what self is and of the way in which it can be overcome.

Yet, despite the importance of accurately understanding this matter, we find that very few today have such a true knowledge. Rather, self is generally confused as being something else. In our experience, we have found again and again, that people have considered self and the sin-master to be the same thing. This is a serious mistake. It is the purpose of this study to show that they are not the same thing; to make clear the distinctions between the two: self on the one hand, and the sin-master (otherwise called the old man, the carnal mind, the stony heart, symbolized by the leprosy of sin) on the other hand. We shall seek to clarify the nature and roles of each of these great problems.

The reason for many people failing to see a clear distinction between the sin-master and self, is found, no doubt, in

some striking similarities between the two. For instance, Ellen White writes:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 181**

We can receive of heaven's light only as we are willing to be emptied of self.

**The Desire of Ages, p. 280**

Man must be emptied of self before he can be, in the fullest sense, a believer in Jesus. When self is renounced, then the Lord can make man a new creature.

**Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 143**

We cannot retain self and yet enter the kingdom of God. If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the denunciation of self and the reception of the mind of Christ.

In a comment on the life of John the Baptist, she writes:

**The Desire of Ages, p. 180**

The soul of the prophet, emptied of self, was filled with the light of the divine.

Shortly afterwards a comparison is made between his experience and ours.

**The Desire of Ages, p. 181**

So with the followers of Christ. We can receive of heaven's light only as we are willing to be emptied of self.

These few statements are but samples of many more which could be quoted along these same lines. In each of them, in one way or another, the thought is expressed that we must be emptied of self, that self must die, that self must be renounced before we can come into a living fellowship with Jesus Christ.

In like manner we know from our past study in this message that only as the carnal mind is put to death, the old man crucified, the sin-master cease to exist in us, and the leprosy of sin eradicated, can we hope to come into fellowship with Jesus Christ. In this respect then, self and the sin-master have similarity. But this similarity does not extend throughout the entire range of their natures and power and work. Our task

now is to go on to learn in what ways they are different, that they are both evil, and that both self and sin must die.

Of the two, self is the first which has to die. Its death is preliminary and prerequisite to the death of the old man. In fact, there is not an individual upon the face of the earth who will deliver up his old sinful nature to be crucified until firstly he has died to the power of self.

In a word, self encompasses all that is of personal interest and advantage to an individual. Another expression for this is "the flesh," or our "human nature."

Self is that part of us which weighs up the cost of the sacrifice, which considers the price of yielding up the old ways of life, and the old sin-master.

It is the very nature of self to cling to that which is its visible form of life support, to seek to retain that which has been its comfort, its pleasure, the gratification of its senses. Self takes the short-sighted view. It considers the value of the present and tends to reject the more enduring values of the future.

Self is a mighty power, so great that but few of this world's inhabitants have truly gained the victory over it, and, because of this, have lost their eternal life.

Perhaps nowhere in the Word of God, is the self problem and the victory over it more powerfully illustrated for us than in the life of the patriarch Abraham. A careful study of that great life will be of the utmost profit to every student of the problem of self.

As the life of Abraham is studied, some may see in this but the recital of the beginnings of the history of the Jewish people. Some may go beyond that and see in it also the personal experience of he who became a very great man of God, the father of the faithful. But the true student of the Word of God will go still further and see in the life of Abraham an object

lesson of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And that is how Paul viewed it as is made very plain in Galatians. The Book of Galatians was written to the converts in Galatia who had firstly been delivered from the bondage of legalism and formalism by the living power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then, losing their original faith, they slipped back once more into an exaggerated legalism. In seeking to make plain to them the nature of their mistake, Paul appealed to the object lessons provided in the life of Abraham as we read:

**Galatians 4**

<sup>22</sup> For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman.

<sup>23</sup> But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise.

<sup>24</sup> Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which genders to bondage, which is Agar.

<sup>25</sup> For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

<sup>26</sup> But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Paul here very distinctly relates the birth of Ishmael to the experience of a person in the bondage of sin while in turn the birth of Isaac is the symbol of the miraculous new birth experience of the true child of God. Thus Paul saw in the birth of those two boys, as the product of the actions of Abraham and Sarah, not just the history of the birth of the Jewish nation, but an object lesson of the gospel. It was just as clearly an object lesson of the gospel as was the Passover, the slaying of the lamb, the sanctuary service, or any other aspect of the old ceremonial law.

When God's call first came to Abram, he was in the land of Ur of the Chaldees. Ur of the Chaldees was at that time the very heart of sun worship which in turn is the great Babylo-

nian religion.

A point to be understood with emphasis, is that Abram possessed at this time sufficient faith to obey the directions of God to leave his native land and go into a place where he was a stranger, a foreigner, where he had no substance, no roots, no past, or anything else whatsoever. It was indeed a very great step for Abram to take and it required most certainly a renunciation of self interest for him to do so. It may be argued at this point that there was sufficient self interest in the promise of the future to cause him to recognize that this outweighed the advantages of the present. This is not to be debated here as the real crucifixion of self was to come later in the life story of Abram.

### **Genesis 12**

<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you;

<sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing:

<sup>3</sup> And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.

<sup>4</sup> So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy five years old when he departed out of Haran.

<sup>5</sup> And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

This was the call of God to Abram and his response. God called, he went. To understand the story of Abraham, with its wonderful object lessons of the gospel, it needs to be recognized that while at this point, Abram had the faith to believe God, to go out from his own land, to settle in a strange land among hostile peoples, he did not have the faith necessary to

bring forth a living son. This is proven by the fact that so many years went by between the making of the promise and its realization. He was seventy five years of age when he left Haran to go into Canaan but it was not until one hundred years of age that his faith did come to the place where he could believe in the promise of God to the point of realization as it is written,

#### **Romans 4**

<sup>18</sup> Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, "So shall your seed be."

<sup>19</sup> And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:

<sup>20</sup> He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

<sup>21</sup> And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

It was when this level of faith was reached, that Abraham received the promise and the child was born. Now inasmuch as the child of promise was a symbol of Jesus Christ Himself, then the very same faith required to bring forth Isaac, was needed to bring forth within Abraham the birth of the spiritual son Jesus Christ. The evidence is clear that when Abraham was seventy-five years old he did not have the faith.

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**Editor's Note:** Fred seems to imply here that Abraham was not born again when he left his land and kindred to follow the Lord. But there are other statements that tell us that Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness during those years of wandering.

What Fred is saying is that it is possible to follow God outwardly, without having the faith to believe He can put life where there is death inside of us. This is clear from the history of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.

The issue about when Abraham was born again was never brought up in any of Fred's other books or writings. So the reader should not be distracted by this and miss the main message.

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After settling in the land of Canaan there came the various experiences that befell Abraham and Lot. They were important days of testing, and training for the Patriarch, more so than he knew then.

Firstly there was a serious drought and Abraham went down to Egypt.

On his return, he and Lot parted, Lot going to live on the lush plains towards Sodom and Gomorrah.

Then there was the overthrow of those cities by the kings, Abraham's rescue of them and the paying of tithes and offerings to Melchizedek.

After all this, God came to renew the covenant promise.

### **Genesis 15**

<sup>1</sup> After these things the Word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Abram's reply to God revealed that he did not have the faith to believe God had the power to bring forth life where there was only death. Sarai was barren and incapable of bearing children so Abram made a proposition to God whereby the promise could be fulfilled in a different way.

### **Genesis 15**

<sup>2</sup> And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing that I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

Had Abram the faith to believe that God could and would bring forth life from the dead womb of Sarah, he would never have made this proposition to God. Therefore, the very making of this proposition is a clear revelation of the lack of faith which as yet was in the heart of this great man.

With God there is but one way for the child of promise to



be born. Therefore, he could not and he did not accept the proposition of Abram. Instead, he brought him out and specifically renewed the promise to him.

### **Genesis 15**

<sup>4</sup> And, behold, the Word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own bowels shall be your heir.

<sup>5</sup> And he brought him forth abroad, and said, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if you are able to number them:" and he said unto him, "So shall your seed be."

<sup>6</sup> And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.

Now Abram's faith apparently took one step higher. Never again did he propose that the heir should be any other than one coming from his own body. In this promise God specifically said to him,

"But he that shall come forth out of your own bowels shall be your heir...And he believed in the Lord."

So now Abram's faith reached to the place where he believed that he himself would be the father of this child, but time went on until Abram was something like eighty-five years of age and still he was not the father of the child. It was impossible for him to father a child through Sarai at this time for his faith still had not gone far enough for the miracle to be possible. While he believed that he himself would be the father of a child, he could not and did not believe that Sarai could be the mother of that child.

We have now a situation, the clear understanding of which is of great benefit and value to every student of the gospel. Abram and Sarai had the faith to believe in the Word of God to a certain point. They believed the doctrines of the Bible, that there was a Savior who was coming to save them from their sins, and in the land of promise, the eternal world. Together with this belief there was a devotion of their whole lives to the service of God. Yet, they still had within them-

selves the old nature, for they had not yet been born again. Therefore they were not, in the true sense of the word, God's children.

This situation has existed within the church ever since that time. There are people who believe the great doctrines of the Advent faith. They understand the prophecies; they know that Christ is coming again; they believe in the Sabbath; they attend church regularly; they look and long for the great day when Jesus Christ shall return. With great zeal and earnestness, they sacrifice their lives to work for God's service yet, at the same time, they still have the old carnal mind. Spiritually, they are Satan's children and not the children of God.

This situation is an exact reproduction of the one in which Abram and Sarai found themselves back at that point of time. Tragically, they did not understand their real condition. They looked upon their knowledge and acceptance of God's truth, their zeal for God and their devotion to His cause, and accepted these things as the evidence of their being in a correct standing with God.

What is the sure outworking of this situation? It will be impossible for the works of faith to appear. Instead, there will be the production of works as a substitute for faith. These works which come as a substitute for faith have all the appearance and certainly pass in the minds of those that execute them as being the works of faith.

Down through the ages there has been a long standing controversy over the relationship between faith and works. There are those who maintain that works have no place in the Christian life whatsoever, while others defend strongly the idea that without works, faith is dead. This controversy has puzzled many. In reality it is not a controversy between faith and works as such. It is a contest between the doctrine of works as a substitute for faith and faith as a substitute for works. Neither of these are the way of God. The way of God is

to have that faith which produces the works of righteousness.

In the life of Abram and Sarai, we find the same sure out-working of this situation or condition. They had a love for God, a zeal for God and a knowledge of His Word. They had the promise of God that there would be a son. But they did not have the living faith which would bring forth that son. Therefore they could not have the works which were the fruit of faith. So, what did they do? They went about to substitute works for faith. Abram and Sarai conceived the human scheme of producing a son by the marriage of Abram to Hagar the Egyptian bond woman.

In doing this they fully believed they were doing the will of God. What is more they were successful in producing a son. One can readily appreciate the delight and joy flooding the home as, at last, after all these years, this very special son, as Abram and Sarai believed Ishmael to be, had at last arrived. To them the promise of God was fulfilled. The child of promise was there. But he was not the child of promise. He was a counterfeit. This child was the product of works as a substitute for faith.

Firmly believing that nothing less than the child of faith had appeared, Abram devoted to his upbringing all the resources, abilities, talents, skills, wisdom, knowledge, strength and time at his disposal. Ishmael was the apple of his eye. Abram watched the development of the child through infancy, into childhood and finally into early youth. It was a tremendous expenditure of time, energy and resources on Abram's part. Never did any doubt cloud his mind that this was not the child of promise and as such, Abram loved Ishmael with a very deep and special love beyond that which he would devote towards any ordinary child.

Let it also be remembered that this was the child of his old age. This was the child for whom he had waited so long, year after year, year after year. This was the child of whom he de-

spaired of ever seeing come into existence. Now it had arrived and therefore this child was special to Abram in the greatest possible degree. As the child developed and grew, Abram felt assured that this child was enjoying the special blessings of God day by day.

But he was mistaken. God could not and would not accept the works which are the substitute of faith. God can only accept the child of promise, the child of faith, the works which are the fruit of faith. For God there is no other way but this.

So it was that when Ishmael was thirteen years old God again appeared to Abram

### **Genesis 17**

<sup>1</sup> And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.

<sup>2</sup> And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

<sup>3</sup> And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

<sup>4</sup> As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

<sup>5</sup> Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

<sup>6</sup> And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

<sup>7</sup> And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

<sup>8</sup> And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

As God spoke these words to Abraham he could think of them only in reference to Ishmael. He was certain that God was speaking about his dearly beloved son and was gladdened with the assurance that his plan to fulfill God's promise was

approved of God. He thought of all those years of effort and sacrifice devoted to the raising up of that son to be the child of promise. Now within himself he felt the warm glow of satisfaction that God was accepting what he had done.

But he was about to learn that God had not accepted Ishmael. Ishmael had no place in God's scheme of things. God continued by saying,

### **Genesis 17**

<sup>15</sup> And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

<sup>16</sup> And I will bless her, and give you a son also of her: yes, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

Unless we found ourselves in the same situation as Abraham did then, we would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to fully understand or appreciate the reaction through which he must have passed at that moment. Every single thing about himself would by nature reject this proposition on God's part. The whole idea was unacceptable to self. It meant that the scheme that he and Sarah had worked out to bring about the promised fulfillment, was something that God neither approved nor accepted. It meant that the thirteen years of effort and expenditure was all to be wasted, and that he had to start again from the beginning. It meant that all that was for nothing.

But in addition, and worst of all, it meant that the son whom he loved so dearly, who was flesh of his own flesh, and bone of his own bone, was not accepted of God as a child of promise. It meant that Abraham had to reject that child and replace him with another, a tiny baby for whom he had not yet learned any great affection or love. It was a tremendous test. Every fiber of his whole being, every part of himself, rose up in rejection of this.

To make matters still more trying, he did not have the faith

to even believe that another child could be born to the dead body of Sarah who was now ninety years of age. This is made clear in these words:

### **Genesis 17**

<sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

So Abraham was now in the position where God was telling him that the living child Ishmael had no part in God's plan for the redemption of the human family, while at the same time Abraham did not have faith to believe that he and Sarah at their age could bear the real child of promise. Therefore, Abraham found himself faced with the prospect of having no child at all. What made this prospect all the more terrifying to him was the fact that no child at all meant no Savior, for he fully understood that the child of promise was to be the Savior of the world, eventually.

God was asking Abraham to join with Him in the rejection of Ishmael but everything about Abraham's self cried out for the acceptance of Ishmael. Hear his agonized cry:

### **Genesis 17**

<sup>18</sup> And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before You!

We would encourage every reader to solemnly and prayerfully meditate upon all that is involved in this anguished cry from the heart of Abraham, because it is a cry which has gone up from human hearts since that time. Men begin in their personal lives, or as a movement, with living faith and achieve great things for God. Their pathway is marked by the works which are the fruit of faith. But, as time goes by and faith begins to grow dim, and they lose their grip upon God, His promises and His power, they then turn to the substitution of works for faith. The works are multiplied and the confidence of the man or the movement increases in what they have done. They firmly believe that all this is approved and ac-

cepted by God. They find in it a powerful but false assurance that they are fulfilling God's will.

Then comes the time when the living message returns, revealing to the man or the movement as the case may be, just what God revealed to Abraham. The revelation is that God does not recognize and in no sense accepts works which are the substitute for faith. As this realization is brought home to the human mind by the mighty power of the spirit, the anguished cry goes up,

"O that Ishmael might live before You!"

That is to say, the cry is,

"O that You would accept our works, O that You would approve of what we have done, O that this way might be the way of Your acceptance."

But God, just as in the days of Abraham, will not under any circumstances accept works as the substitute for faith. It is at this point that self strives for the mastery and unless self is crucified, then the human being will not give up the old son to have him replaced by the new.

Study closely the experience of Abraham to see how first of all he had to gain the victory over himself, that is, he had to conquer that powerful unwillingness to give up that which he had worked for, for so many years, in Ishmael. He had to be prepared to waste those years and to recognize that all that effort had been for nothing. He had to conquer his deep affection for that son before he could give up the son and believe and accept the new babe in the place of the teenage boy. This distinction between the conquest of self and the giving up of the son must be clearly and plainly understood in the minds of all, because, when this is understood, we will know the difference between the crucifixion of self and the crucifixion of the old man.

It was a tremendous test for Abraham. As already noted,

every fiber of his human nature, of his self, resisted the way of God in this thing. But Abraham was prepared to make the sacrifice. He did renounce every personal feeling, affection, and sense of loss. He was prepared to recognize as wasted, the thirteen years spent upon Ishmael, to throw them away, to disown that son, and, in his place, to accept a new born babe with whom he had to start all over again.

Now let the sequence of events be carefully recognized:

Firstly Abraham was faced with the demands of his self. This cried out for the retention of Ishmael. It resisted the breaking of affection, and the throwing away of all those years of sacrifice and effort. This Abraham had to overcome first of all. This was the conquest of self.

When that had been achieved then he had to send the son away.

When that had been achieved, then living faith laid hold upon the promise of God and the new son took the place of the old.

If these three steps can be clearly distinguished as being three separate stages of one's coming to God, then the distinctions between the crucifixion of self and the crucifixion of the old man whom Ishmael symbolized, will be properly understood.

To make a direct application to the experience of the average professed child of God today, we have but to go back to that time when, like Abraham, we were in Ur of the Chaldees the world. There, the living doctrines of the Bible were presented to us and, as the intellectual mind laid hold on the truths, we believed them. We heard God's call to separate from the world and we separated. We had sufficient faith to do all this, but not sufficient faith to lay hold upon the living power of God to transform our natures into the likeness of His own.



To have all this without having the living faith of Jesus which alone can bring forth the true works of faith, will inevitably result in our substituting works for faith. Such works are a clever counterfeit of the real and readily pass for the real. The performer of them is sure in his own mind that he has the real thing, and that the Lord is well pleased with what he is doing. The longer time lasts, the more devoted he becomes to these works and the more they are multiplied. In turn, the more satisfied he is that they are of God and that the Lord accepts and blesses these mighty efforts.

But then comes the time when the living truth of God comes to reveal to us that under no circumstances can God accept those works of the past. They have to be renounced. All those years have to be recognized as being wasted and we have to go right back and begin all over again. It is at this point that we cry out, "O that Ishmael might live before You!" This is the determined cry of self resisting the giving up of all that self has achieved. It is a powerful force and overcoming it, involves a great struggle.

But unless these demands of self are denied, there will never be any surrender of the old son to expulsion from the house. This denial of self is preliminary and prerequisite to the crucifixion of the sin-master. They are not the one and same thing.

It is at this point that so many have failed. The Lord has come to them with convicting power and shown them the necessity of giving up their own works: all the proud achievements of their zealous religious life. Self is closely married to these achievements for they are the assurance to self that they are eternal life. At the moment when the Lord tells us that all this must go, there is not yet the faith to see the living alternative which is the real assurance of eternal life.

Therefore the individual feels that he is about to give up the works of the flesh to have nothing take its place, simply

because the lack of living faith prevents him from seeing the alternative. It is at this point that so many of the people to whom the Spirit calls, draw back and refuse to go on. Because they will not renounce self, they cannot deliver up the old nature and likewise cannot receive the new in the place of the old. The result is the loss of all things eternal.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church today is a striking example of this problem.

In 1844 the believers had a rich and living experience. In the generations that followed, this experience was lost, and a tremendous program of works took its place.

In 1888 the living message told these people that they had to renounce the works which were a substitute for faith, and were to take hold of the living truth as it was in Christ Jesus. This was too much, and the Advent folk back there, generally speaking, refused to follow in the steps of faithful Abraham.

Today after so many years, works have been multiplied beyond computation. We know that if the church today was to accept the truth of God, all their achievements must be brought down. The medical program, built upon the drug system would have to be taken apart and a fresh start made from the beginning. So it would likewise have to be with the educational institutions, and publishing houses from which pour so many books today which are not of God or for God.

Today the Seventh-day Adventist Church would be very happy to have the new son: that is, to be filled with love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, and so on, provided they did not have to renounce the old son. Abraham would have been glad to have had Ishmael and Isaac, but he could have only one or the other. So today, there must be total renunciation of self interest before they can receive the living child of promise. All the works of the past must go. Self must be renounced and crucified to go right back to a new beginning altogether.

Self does not wish to do this. Self does not want to recognize that all the works, the sacrifice, the effort, the zeal, the expenditure, the training and education of the past has all been in a wrong direction. Rather, self wants to retain all this and have God accept it just as Cain wanted God to accept his sacrifice rather than the blood sacrifice of Abel.

Let all those who wish to come to Christ, recognize the nature of this test. Let every person recognize that we cannot have the old child of works and the new child of faith. Let self be crucified, that Christ alone might reign in the heart and then we shall see our lives vibrant and living with the true child of faith.