



Our Firm
FOUNDATION

Vol. 14, No. 2

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A magazine
for Christians
who desire to
be grounded
in truth.

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Man
Available**

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Jeff Wehr



THE
1844
DIFFERENCE

All Christians believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many Christians today believe that He is coming back very soon. Yet only Seventh-day Adventists understand and proclaim that Christ began a special work in the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844. This most precious truth about Jesus is what has made us "Adventists." This most precious truth is what led our pioneers to keep all of God's Ten Commandments—thus making us "Seventh-day Adventists." This most precious truth has inspired great missionary efforts, making this the "Seventh-day Adventist Movement." This most precious truth has provided us with the basis of our message—namely, the three angels' messages. See Revelation 14:6–12. This most precious truth has been the catalyst behind our Adventist lifestyle, making us among the healthiest people on the globe. This most precious truth reminds us every day that earth's probation is almost over.

This most precious truth was based upon the 2300-day prophecy found in Daniel 8:14. It was through careful study of the Bible that our pioneers knew that the 2300-day prophecy pointed to the time when the record books would be opened and the judgment process would begin. They recognized that this time prophecy would culminate in the fulfillment of the first angel's message that "the hour of his [Christ's] judgment is come." Revelation 14:7. It was the time prophecy that would set in motion the second and third angels' messages. See Revelation 14:8–12. Yes indeed, 1844 has made a difference in our world. It is the reason we exist as a church. I pray that it will continue to make a difference in my life as well as in yours.

The time is now that we must recommit our lives to our dear Saviour. "While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the [three angels'] messages of Revelation 14.

"When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. 'Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.' Malachi 3:4. Then the church which our LORD at His coming is to receive to Himself will be a 'glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Ephesians 5:27." *The Great Controversy*, 425.

It is time that we proclaim this judgment-hour message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

It is time that we proclaim this judgment-hour message to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. The grand work of the judgment has begun; Babylon has fallen; God's wrath will soon be meted out upon the disobedient. Every day people are placed in Christless graves. Let us therefore renew our commitment to spread the three angels' messages far and wide. Let us never cease our efforts until the work is finished, until everyone has heard, and finally until probation closes. Let us go forward in faith, hope, and love knowing that He has ordained this movement to exist. He is the Source of our strength and the Light of our path. We have nothing to fear except if we languish in the lethargy of Laodicea. Therefore, let us arise and shine for our redemption draweth nigh! Amen.

Jeff Wehr—Co-EDITOR

It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—EDITORS

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**God's Faithful Few
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Generation**

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Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many . . . will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24. Will *you* be among the faithful few?

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The Parable

of the Ten Virgins

Photo source: Corel

by Ellen G. White

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Matthew 25:1-13.

A special message has come to our world in the messages of the first and second angels:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to

him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Revelation 14:6-8.

Under the proclamation of these messages, the midnight cry was made, and the believers in the messages were compelled to go out from the churches because they preached the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. The whole world was to hear that message, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Here is the parable of the ten virgins.

When the ten virgins went forth to meet the bridegroom, their lamps were trimmed and burning. Five of these virgins were wise. They anticipated delay, and filled their flagons with oil, prepared for any emergency. From those flagons their lamps were supplied, and not left to go out. But five of their number had not this foresight. They made no provision for disappointment or delay.

The second call is made, and the ten virgins are still watching for the bridegroom. Hour after hour passes. Their eyes are anxiously looking for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay,

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

and the weary, watching ones fall asleep. But at midnight, at the very darkest hour, when their lamps are most needed, the cry is heard, "Behold the bridegroom cometh." The sleeping eyes are opened. Everyone is astir. They see the procession they are to join moving on, bright with torches and with music.

They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The five wise virgins trim their lamps from the oil in their flagons, and their lamps burn brightly.

"But five of them were foolish." These had made no provision wherewith to replenish their lamps, and when aroused from their slumbers they found their lights going out. Their flagons were empty.

Their first thought was to borrow of their neighbors, and they said to the wise virgins, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." But the answer comes back, "Not so; lest there be not enough for yourselves and for us. Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." And while they went to buy, the procession moved on and left them behind. The bridal train entered within the house, and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins reached the banqueting hall, an unexpected denial was given them. They were left outside in the blackness of the night. The door was shut.

All the Christian world is represented in this parable. The bride constitutes the church that is waiting for the second appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Some who have a nominal faith are not prepared for His coming. The oil of grace is not feeding their lamps, and they are not prepared to enter in to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The representation is such as to call forth our earnest study, that we may know what preparation we who are living in the last days are to make, that we may enter in and partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb. We are to accept the last message of mercy given to a fallen world: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.

There is a delay in the coming of the Bridegroom in order that all

may have an opportunity to hear the last message of mercy to a fallen world. The first and second angels' messages are all united and complete in the third: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Revelation 14:9-10.

John was shown these things in holy vision. He saw the company represented by the five wise virgins, with their lamps trimmed and burning, and he exclaimed in rapture, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Revelation 14:12-13.

Many who heard the first and second angels' messages thought they would live to see Christ coming in the clouds of heaven. Had all who claimed to believe the truth acted their part as wise virgins, the message would ere this have been proclaimed to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. But five were wise and five were foolish. The truth should have been proclaimed by the ten virgins, but only five had made the provision essential to join that company who walked in the light that had come to them. The third angel's message was needed. This proclamation was to be made. Many who went forth to meet the Bridegroom under the messages of the first and second angels, refused the third angel's message, the last testing message to be given to the world.

A similar work will be accomplished when that other angel, represented in Revelation 18, gives his message. The first, second, and third angels' messages will need to be repeated. The call will be given to the church, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." Revelation 18:4.

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean

and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. . . . Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto

heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Verses 2-5.

Take each verse of this chapter, and read it carefully, especially the last two: "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Verses 23-24.

The parable of the ten virgins was given by Christ Himself, and every specification should be carefully studied. A time will come when the door will be shut. We are represented either by the wise or the foolish virgins. We cannot now distinguish, nor have we authority to say, who are wise and who foolish. There are those who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and these appear outwardly like the wise.

Said Christ, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not

The representation is such as to call forth our earnest study, that we may know what preparation we who are living in the last days are to make.

planted, shall be rooted up. . . . Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man." Matthew 15:13, 18–20.

It is impossible for men to read the human heart, for the tares so closely resemble the wheat. It is not given to human beings to try to separate them. But the angels of God know them, for their fruits declare their character. Have they not been commissioned to counterwork the work of those who fight against the truth of God's Word? These angels will never make a mistake in gathering the wheat from among the tares.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:15–23.

This is the test. Those who are counted among the wise virgins will let their light burn in good works. There are many who will not remain at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. They have not a knowledge of His ways. Let none rest in the idea that baptism has saved them, while they give no evidence that they are conformed to the image of Christ, while they cling to their old habits, while they exert their influence on the side

of the world, and weave their fabric with the threads of worldly ideas and customs. These have not kept the oil in the vessels with their lamps. They are not ready for the Bridegroom. The oil is the holy grace that is sent from Heaven, and

When the transforming power of God works upon the hearts of men, then they are represented by the wise virgins.

there must be an inward adorning with that grace, that they may be enabled to stand when He appeareth.

The parable of the talents is given to represent the kingdom of heaven, and to show the necessity of an accurate use of the endowments that God has entrusted to us. It is of the highest importance that we understand these parables and know wherein they have any bearing upon us individually. The ten virgins are represented as watching in the evening of this earth's history. They represent the church of professed Christians. This lesson should fill our minds with serious thought, and drive us to our Bibles, the Word of the living God. It should lead us to most earnest supplication that God will lead us into all truth.

Said Christ: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and

great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:24–27.

The apostle says: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. and of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 20–25.

We must not stand in a neutral position. Our position must be one of strong and living faith. We are to rear our houses for eternity, as is represented in the parable of the hearers and the doers of the Word. Those who are superficial in their piety may be willing to take the name of Christians, but they will not comply with the conditions laid down in the Word of God. They do not conform their characters to the Word of God and to the pattern He has given. All are hearers of the Word. They comment upon that which they hear, but some, while they assent to the message sent by God to them, do not have the faith that will enable them to place the Word of God in their hearts. God knows full well that if self does not die, it will become a controlling power in the soul. When the transforming power of God works upon the hearts of men, then they are represented by the wise virgins.

There are many who profess to be the sons and daughters of God who have no connection with Him. But God sees every spot and stain that is upon the characters of those who profess to follow Him, and He will prove every soul. He says: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he

appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." Malachi 3:1-3.

God has commanded His people: "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always." Deuteronomy 11:1.

"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full." Verses 13-15.

"And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves." Verses 19-23.

"And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go

in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God: and thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly. And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day." Deuteronomy 27:1-10.

The five wise virgins represent those who have perfected a Christian character, who have washed their robes and made them white in

Christ gave His life to make it possible for all to be wise virgins, partakers of the divine nature, that they might become complete in Jesus Christ.

the blood of the Lamb. God's message to His people is: "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and re-

pent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Revelation 3:3-5.

A great price has been paid for the redemption of man, and none who are untruthful, impure, or unrighteous can enter the kingdom of heaven. If men do not make Christ their personal Saviour, and become true and pure and holy, there is only one course for the Lord to pursue. He must destroy the sinner, for evil natures cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Thus it is that sin, if not destroyed, will destroy the sinner, just as Satan designed it should.

As God made man, he was perfect, reflecting the moral image of God. He was left free to choose good or evil. If he should decide to choose the evil, he must have the evil. And man abused the high prerogative of his nature. Christ gave His life to make it possible for all to be wise virgins, partakers of the divine nature, that they might become complete in Jesus Christ, perfect, without spot, and blameless. Thus through Jesus Christ human nature was placed on vantage ground with God, before the heavenly universe and the fallen world.

But the Lord does not release men from responsibility. "Work out your own salvation," He says, "with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:12-13. Here is a co-operation of God with man and man with God. Here is encouragement for the most earnest, noble strivings. Christ declares that the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment. "What shall it profit a man," He says, "if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36-37.

Continued on page 15



ON SILENCING GOD

THE Bible opens with a God who speaks. He spoke all things into existence, and on the first day of human activity, God spoke to man and gave Him orders to follow. Man understood and learned to speak God's language, and was soon giving names to all the animals that God had made. See Genesis 2:19. Man was given dominion over them. From the beginning, God and man were in close communion.

Christ, the Son of God, came as the Word of God, teaching us that all creation is a manifestation of God's mind, which we are privileged to receive by thoughtfully pondering over every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Satan alienated man from God. Consequently, the moment man sinned, he became afraid of God, and hid himself. God met the challenge by implementing His plan of salvation, which would reconcile man to God and replace fear with love. The plan involved the Word-Made-Flesh, the Son of God, coming to earth as a Man to reveal God's love, so that men could know God's love and be reconciled to Him.

The plan of salvation involved an act on God's part, and the act must be put into words to impact the minds of men and women alienated from Him. The reconciliation God sought depended on the power of His Word to convince mankind of His love. So the crux of the solution lay in communication.

by David Lin

David Lin writes from California. He is probably best known for his book *China Letters*, a collection of his letters concerning the theological crisis in the SDA Church.

Divine Revelation

God first spoke to men orally. Due to their length of life span and good memory, the ancients needed no written records. Stories of God's dealings with men were transmitted from one generation to another by word of mouth, which may be termed "fluid" revelations from God.

However, men became forgetful, and the need for written records arose. The first written record of God's commandments to men was made by God Himself—engraved in stone and preserved in a chest called the "ark of the testament." Moses was then told by God to write the Decalogue and additional instructions in a book, called the Torah. It was the first "solidified" record of God's dealings with men. For about a thousand years, it was the recognized "Bible" of the Jews. See Nehemiah 8:1–12.

During that millennium more prophetic writings accumulated to comprise a second group of "fluid" revelations, which after the Babylonian exile were collected by Ezra and placed with the Torah to comprise the canon of the Jewish Scriptures, thus effecting a second solidification of divine revelation.

The Enemy at Work

The entrance of sin was the work of the "father of lies," who has been at work from the beginning to warp and block the messages of God to man. As God communicated with men, Satan tried to interfere, and, if possible, to silence God completely. One tactic was to harden the hearts of the Jewish leaders, making them declare the canon of Scripture closed. They held that no more writings could be added to the 39 books.

This rigid stance of the Jewish leaders was part of the reason for their rejection of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, leading eventually to the Jewish nation being finally rejected by God as His chosen people. See Matthew 21:43.

Then began a third period of fluid revelation, when the New Testament books were written. After some 200 years of fluidity,

twenty-seven manuscripts, circulating in early Christian churches, solidified into the New Testament Scriptures. This was again accompanied by an effort to silence the prophetic gift forever.

Did it mean that with the closing of the New Testament canon, God's Word was confined to the ancient documents written before the second century, and that He could no longer speak directly to His people of modern times? God has never bound Himself in this way, but Satan always tries to silence God's voice. If men will study the Bible, they will see that the Holy Spirit, which inspired the writing of the Scriptures, says that He will continue to speak to His church through the gift of prophecy. See 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11. This gift is "for the perfecting of the saints . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith." Ephesians 4:12-13. The presence and work of prophets, both men and women, in the early church are recorded in Acts 13:1; 21:9–10.

Then came an era of spiritual death when no true prophet is known to have arisen, and even fluid revelation ceased. The papal apostasy lasted 1260 years, while the suspension of the gift of prophecy was much longer—about seventeen centuries, during which time as also during Samuel's time, "there was no open vision." 1 Samuel 3:1.

The Gift Restored

Now, it would be inconsistent of God to give the gift of prophecy to His church and then to let it die off after one hundred years. No. That is not God's will. He has foretold in the Revelation that the gift of prophecy would be revived in His remnant church. In Revelation 3:14 Christ introduces Himself to the angel of the church of Laodicea, saying, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation

If men will study the Bible, they will see that the Holy Spirit, which inspired the writing of the Scriptures, says that He will continue to speak to His church through the gift of prophecy.

of God." Here the Greek word *martus* for "witness" is the stem in *marturia*, translated "testimony" in Revelation 19:10 where it says, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Christ, the Beginning of the Creation, is also Lord of the Sabbath.

So we have three texts to show that the gift of prophecy will reappear in God's church in the end time. The third text is Revelation 12:17: "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 19:10 explains, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The next step is to identify God's true church, which is called "the remnant" of the woman's seed. Revelation 12:17 says they are they "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus." Of religious bodies that keep the seventh-day Sabbath today, only Seventh-day Adventists have a prophet. Of churches which claim to have prophets, only Seventh-day Adventists keep the true Sabbath. So only one church—the Seventh-day Adventist Church—meets the terms in Revelation 12:17. We are validated by default.

No wonder the devil has raised up his agents to attack both of the marks of the true church—the seventh-day Sabbath and our prophet E. G. White [the Spirit of Prophecy]!

The "apostolic letter" of Pope John Paul II is the latest attack on the true Sabbath. To make up for his lack of scriptural authority, the pope says that the meaning of the Sabbath was transferred to Sunday, because Christians **felt** that they had the authority to do so. In paragraph 63 of "*Dies Domini*" he says,

One more significant fact regarding Ellen White calls for attention. The quantity and quality of her writings are without equal. Their homiletic value and spiritual tenor are of the highest order.

“This is why Christians, called as they are to proclaim the liberation won by the blood of Christ, felt that they had the authority to transfer the meaning of the Sabbath to the day of Resurrection.”

All the pious rhetoric that accompanies these words, plus quotations from many church fathers and councils, add up to a paltry argument against a plain “Thus saith the Lord.” The seventh-day Sabbath remains the only day sanctified by the Lord

of hosts, who wrote the Sabbath command in stone and said, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.” Psalms 89:34.

Walter Rea and his able fighters continue to attack Ellen White relentlessly. We are not afraid; God will not be silenced. Walter Rea and his associates have yet to find a prophet other than Ellen White to fulfill the prophecies of Revelation 3:14; 12:17 and 19:10. We rest assured that she fills the bill by default—she alone meets all the conditions of prophecy! No other contemporaneous man or woman begins to meet even half of them.

God began the prophetic line with Moses, and ended it with “the weakest of the weak.” Ellen White often referred to herself with these words: “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” 2 Corinthians 4:7.

The age-old objection that Adventists are trying to “canonize” the Ellen G. White writings is a stale tactic easy to foil. While not regarding her writings as an addition to the New Testament canon, we believe that God is as free to speak through a prophet today as when He spoke through Agabus and the other prophets in the first century. God refuses to be gagged by Walter Rea and his supporters despite anyone’s rabid altercations. The glorious truths of God are to

be heard by His obedient children, and He is free to choose His own mouthpiece. If modern prophet-killers insist on exhuming Ellen G. White to put her to shame, they will soon realize that they have made fools of themselves, and are finally the biggest losers.

Summary

Since God first spoke the world into existence, He has often spoken to men. He first communicated directly, and then through men and women to whom He gave the gift of prophecy. Satan has striven to silence God’s voice since the times of antiquity, and he is still active today.

Divine revelation remained in a fluid state until God wrote the Decalogue in stone and commanded Moses to write the Torah. These records comprised the first solidification of divine revelation—to be followed by another period of fluid revelation. Over 30 inspired documents collected later by Ezra were bound up with the Torah to form the Old Testament canon. It marked a second stage of solidified revelation. Satan blinded the Jews to the truths of Scripture. Though they expected Elijah and the Messiah to come, the Jewish leaders declared the Scripture canon closed. They boasted that they knew all the truth. Therefore, they rejected the new light brought by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. The tragic result was that God had to reject the Jewish nation as His chosen people.

Then a new stage of fluid revelation commenced. After the New Testament canon was closed, and the great apostasy began, the prophetic gift was suspended for many centuries. It was restored in 1844, when God raised up His remnant church to proclaim the three angels’ messages. In this church God blessed His people with a compo-

nent of the “latter rain,” manifested in the writings of the gift of prophecy.

Three prophetic texts in Revelation 3:14; 12:17; 19:10 foretell the restoration of the prophetic gift to God’s remnant church. Only the willfully blind fail to see the truth that these three texts point to the appearance of a modern prophet in the last days. Revelation 12:17 demands that this gift of prophecy be associated with a people who keep all the commandments of God.

Within the time frame of the nineteenth century, three modern prophets contend for recognition—Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy and Ellen White. The first two fail to meet the condition of Revelation 12:17 that the end-time prophet must be a commandment keeper, so Ellen White is validated by default. She also meets all other tests of a true spokesperson for God.

Conclusion

One more significant fact regarding Ellen White calls for attention. The quantity and quality of her writings are without equal. Their homiletic value and spiritual tenor are of the highest order—worthy of a writer inspired of God. The prophetic chapters of *The Great Controversy* are most valuable. These books have proved to be a veritable downpour of the “latter rain” to honest-in-heart readers.

In the days of Elijah there were three-and-a-half years of drought, prefiguring the spiritual famine of the Dark Ages. Then at the end of that period there was the sound of an “abundance of rain.” 1 Kings 18:41. This has worked out in the history of the Church. As the Dark Ages have given way to the time of the end, the remnant people, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, now appear on the stage of history. An “abundance of rain” has materialized in the voluminous writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. Seventh-day Adventists have a rich heritage of truth—far in advance of other churches—yet many of us fail to see its worth!

“Blessed are your eyes, for they see” (Matthew 13:16), says our

Lord to His remnant people. Let us cherish and study the new light shining upon us today. It is a shame that some of God's people have been deceived by Walter Rea and his associates. It is just as sad that others, who have not discarded Ellen G. White's writings, have let them collect dust on their shelves. These books are a gift from our Redeemer—spiritual armament for His people to help us

prepare for the final conflict. The time of trouble is near; we must fortify our minds with the precious truths contained in these books. They comprise an inspired applicator of God's Word—applying it in the right place at the right time to help us prepare for translation.

“ ‘Watch ye therefore . . . lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.’ Mark 13:35–36. Perilous is the condition of those who, growing

wearied of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence: ‘Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.’ Daniel 5:27.” *The Great Controversy*, 491. □

Upcoming Meetings

The Evangelism & Revival Department of Hope International presents these upcoming meetings:

Milwaukie, OR Mar. 6
Witchita Evangelical Church, Witchita Ave.

Milton-Freewater, OR . Mar. 20
Senior Center, 311 N. Main

McDonald, TN . . . Mar. 26–27
The Ruitan Club, School Street

Fontana, CA Apr. 17
First American Bapt. Church, 8282 Juniper Ave.

Eatonville, WA May 3–8
Spring Week of Prayer
Speakers: Ray DeCarlo, John Davis

Alvarado, TX May 7–9
Alvarado Senior Center, 200 N. Spears

Milton-Freewater, OR . May 15
Senior Center, 311 N. Main

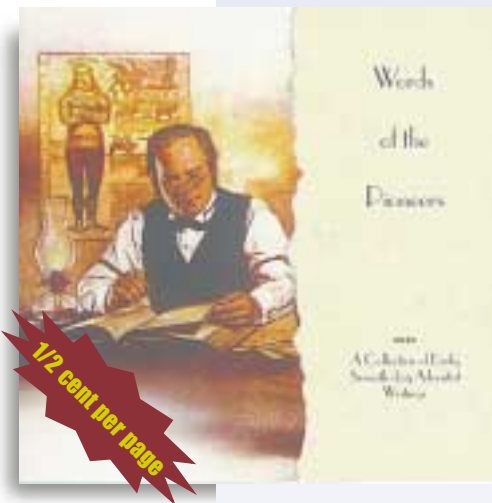
Portland, TN May 20–23
1099 Wattwood Hollow Rd.

Eatonville, WA Aug. 3–8
Hope International's
1999 Eatonville Camp Meeting

Look for our “Upcoming Meetings” announcements in future issues.

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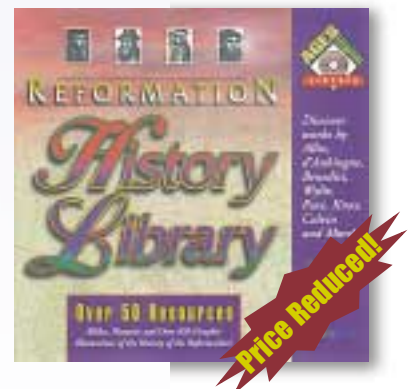
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Photo source: Corbis Images

God's Faithful Few In The Final Generation

by Ron Spear

For six thousand years now the great controversy has been in process. God has given to the human race in every generation the opportunity to prepare their lives and characters for eternity. But only a very few in every generation have been willing to be made willing to accept God's conditions of salvation—obedience to God's perfect law of liberty. It is not what man could do but those very few believed that God had the power to do it in them and they put forth every effort to enter in at the strait gate from the very narrow way that leads to the city of God and eternal life.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth

unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13-14.

"We are to strive, to agonize, to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. It will take something more than mere seeking to enter in at the strait gate; for the gate to death is wide, and the road broad, and easy of access, and many there be that go in thereat. If we would enter in at the strait gate, we must be partakers of the sufferings of Christ." *Review and Herald*, July 5, 1892.

"Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Nothing but holiness will prepare you for heaven. It is sincere, experimental piety alone that can give you a pure, elevated character and enable you to enter into the presence of God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable. The



Ron Spear, author and revivalist, is the founding editor of *Our Firm Foundation*. He has served the church as a missionary, Union Department Secretary, evangelist, pastor, and Field Secretary for the *Review and Herald*.

heavenly character must be acquired on earth, or it can never be acquired at all.

“Desires for goodness and true holiness are right so far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Good purposes are right, but will prove of no avail unless resolutely carried out. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians; but they made no earnest effort, therefore they will be weighed in the balances and found wanting. The will must be exercised in the right direction. I will be a whole-hearted Christian. I will know the length and breadth, the height and depth, of perfect love.

“Listen to the words of Jesus: ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.’ Ample provisions are made by Christ to satisfy the soul that hungers and thirsts for righteousness.” *Maranatha*, 46.

God’s conditions for salvation is holiness—perfection of character—man cannot attain to this high standard on his own by his good works. He must believe that God is willing to do in him that which is impossible for him to do without the union of the Holy Spirit’s power. Man’s part is to be made willing to be made willing to allow God to hold him in a daily relationship of justification and sanctification. See *Selected Messages*, book 1, 366, 397; Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:15–16.

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.” Philippians 2:13–14.

“The Spirit of God does not propose to do our part, either in the willing or the doing. . . . As soon as we incline our will to harmonize with God’s will, the grace

of Christ stands ready to cooperate with the human agent; but it will not be the substitute to do our work independent of our resolving and decidedly acting. Therefore it is not the abundance of

light, and evidence piled upon evidence, that will convert the soul. It is only the human agent accepting the light, arousing the energies of the will, realizing and acknowledging that which he knows is righteousness and truth, and thus cooperating with the heavenly ministrations appointed of God in the saving of the soul.

“If the sinner or the backslider settles himself in disobedience and sin, the light may flash from heaven all about him, . . . without breaking the bewitching power of falsehood and the spell of the world’s deception. . . .

“Obey not the voice of the deceiver, which is in harmony with the unsanctified will, but obey the impulse that God has given. . . . Everything is at stake. Will the human agent cooperate with the divine ‘to will and to do’? If man places his will on God’s side, fully surrendering self to God’s will, the high and holy endeavor of the human agent takes down the obstruction he himself has erected, the rubbish is cleared away from the door of the heart, the defiance barricading the soul is broken down. The door of the heart is opened and Jesus enters, to abide as a welcome guest.” *In Heavenly Places*, 27.

God has to be absolutely sure that we are safe to save. Ninety-nine percent is not acceptable with Heaven. Lucifer’s one-percent rebellion soon became a one-hundred-percent rebellion which brought war to heaven and sin into this world. Let us take courage. The thief on the cross was one

hundred percent. All rebellion was gone. He was justified and sanctified and safe to save.

“Christ died to make it possible for you to cease to sin.” *Review and Herald*, August 28, 1894.

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6.

“We have before us the highest, holiest example. In thought, word, and deed Jesus was sinless. Perfection marked all that He did. He points us to the path that He trod, saying, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’ Matthew 16:24.

“Christ unites in His person the fullness and perfection of the Godhead and the fullness and perfection of sinless humanity. He met all the temptations by which Adam was assailed, and overcame these temptations because in His humanity He relied upon divine power. This subject demands far more contemplation than it receives. Christians strike too low. They are content with a superficial spiritual experience, and therefore they have only the glimmerings of light, when . . . they might discern more clearly the wonderful perfection of Christ’s humanity, which rises far above all human greatness, all human power. Christ’s life is a revelation of what fallen human beings may become through union and fellowship with the divine nature. . . .

“Men and women frame many excuses for their proneness to sin. Sin is represented as a necessity, an evil that cannot be overcome. But sin is not a necessity. Christ lived in this world from infancy to manhood, and during that time He met and resisted all the temptations by which man is beset. He is a perfect pattern of childhood, of youth, of manhood.

“The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. . . . Let your life be knit by hidden links to the life of Jesus.” *The Faith I Live By*, 219.

Satan has brought into some of our pulpits his gospel—you are

God has to be absolutely sure that we are safe to save. Ninety-nine percent is not acceptable with Heaven.

saved in sin—the devil’s greatest lie! He has captured the world with his false gospel, which leads to the broad way and to destruction. The strait gate is the very narrow way. Only those who are willing to be made willing to obey by the power of the Holy Spirit will finally reach the gates of the city of God. The price of our salvation is obedience to known truth without a compromise.

In closing, this inspired statement from the pen of God’s last day prophet will inspire the true seeker for truth by obedience:

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Hebrews 2:10.

“Christ’s invitation to us all is a call to a life of peace and rest—a life of liberty and love, and to a rich inheritance in the future immortal life. . . . We need not be alarmed if this path of liberty is laid through conflicts and sufferings. The liberty we shall enjoy will be the more valuable because we made sacrifices to obtain it. The peace which passeth knowledge will cost us battles with the powers of darkness, struggles severe against selfishness and inward sins. . . .

“We cannot appreciate our Redeemer in the highest sense until we can see Him by the eye of faith reaching to the very depths of human wretchedness, taking upon Himself the nature of man, the capacity to suffer, and by suffering putting forth His divine power to save and lift sinners up to compan-

While we look constantly to Him whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows have burdened, we shall acquire strength to be like Him.

ionship with Himself. O why have we so little sense of sin? Why so little penitence? It is because we do not come nearer the cross of Christ. Conscience becomes hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, because we remain away from Christ. Consider the Captain of our salvation. He suffered shame for us that we might not suffer

everlasting shame and contempt. He suffered on the cross, that mercy might be granted to fallen man. God’s justice is preserved, and guilty man is pardoned. Jesus dies that the sinner might live. Shame is borne by the Son of the Highest for the sake of poor sinners, that they might be ransomed and crowned with eternal glory. . . .

“We must hide self in Jesus Christ, and let Him appear in our conversation and character as the One altogether lovely, and the chief among ten thousand. Our lives, our deportment, will testify how highly we prize Christ and the salvation He has wrought out for us at such a cost to Himself. While we look constantly to Him whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows have burdened, we shall acquire strength to be like Him. We shall bind ourselves in willing, happy, captivity to Jesus Christ.” *That I May Know Him*, 287.

This promise is for God’s faithful few in this final generation:

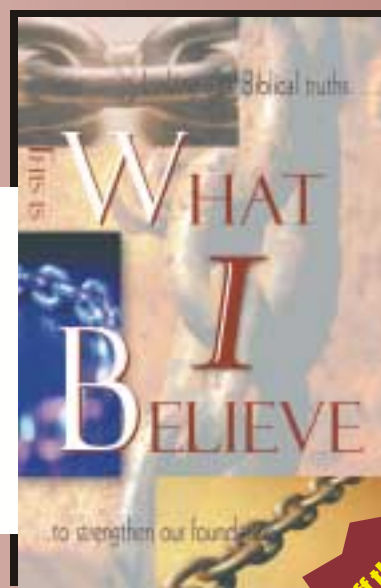
“In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 249. □

THIS IS WHAT I BELIEVE

BY RON SPEAR

In recent months Elder Ron Spear received a request to meet with a committee at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to answer questions regarding his beliefs and his manner of work in the world field. Elder Spear saw this invitation as an opportunity to share more than 20 of his convictions regarding the true gospel and how our church has in many ways followed the example of rebellious Israel of old.

Because Elder Spear supported each of his convictions with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, you too can be strengthened in your beliefs as you read this book. You will see in this book a blend of love and deep concern for God’s last-day remnant church.



Order this latest book by Ron Spear—hot off the press. **\$7.95 each.**
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Christ has made it possible for man to rise in moral value with God. By resisting all wrong, by subduing the evil temper, selfishness, and pride, he may attain to the righteousness of Christ. Man is to become one with Christ in God. Sin is degrading, and there is no place for it in heaven. It is our privilege to have the power of self-control, and if we do not have it, we reveal that sin still reigns in our mortal bodies. In Christ is all sufficiency for a self-directed life. "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me;" He says, "and he shall make peace with me." Isaiah 27:5.

The ten virgins all claim to be Christians, but five are true and five are false. All have a name, a call, a lamp, and all claim to be doing God service. All apparently watch for His appearing. All started apparently prepared, but five were wanting. Five were found surprised, dismayed, without oil, outside the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. There are many who cry peace, peace, when there is no peace. This is the most perilous belief for the human soul to entertain. Christ speaks to all who bear His name, who claim to be His followers, to eat His flesh and drink His blood, else they can have no part with Him. Be not like the foolish virgins, who take for granted that the promises of God are theirs, while they do not live as Christ has enjoined upon them. Christ teaches us that profession is nothing. "If any man will come after me," He says, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:23.

Let no one take for granted that he is saved. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. Said Christ, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:19-20.

When we stand the test of God, in the refining, purifying process, when the furnace fires consume the dross, and the true gold of a purified character appears, then we may say as did Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after. . . . This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14.

These parables were spoken after the solemn lessons given in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters of Matthew, when Christ dwelt particularly upon His second coming, and revealed things which would transpire before His second appearing in the clouds of heaven. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," Christ said, "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matthew 23:37.

In this lamentation over Jerusalem is given the assurance of protection to all who will come unto Christ. He will accept and protect them, poor, defenseless, dependent, even as the hen spreads her protecting wings over her brood. If her chickens wander from her, the hen has a peculiar call by which she warns them of peril or storm. If they will heed the danger signal, and can reach their mother's protecting wings, they find warmth and safety, for she will defend them while she has any life. She forgets herself, and will give her life in defending her helpless little flock.

What a touching figure is this! What an idea it gives us of the watchful care of Christ for all who trust in Him. Christ longed to gather Israel under His mediatorial wings. He longed to hear their voice call-

ing upon Him, and saying: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Psalm 17:5-8.

"Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. O continue thy lovingkindness

unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me." Psalm 36:5-11.

"I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings." Psalm 61:4.

But Christ could not do for Israel all that He desired to do, because they would not respond to His in-

vitations. "Ye would not," He said. Their will was stubborn and unyielding. His last words to the impenitent nation were, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matthew 23:37-39. □

Manuscript Releases, vol. 16, 267-276.

Be not like the foolish virgins, who take for granted that the promises of God are theirs, while they do not live as Christ has enjoined upon them.



Dear Reader,

We have provided this *NewsWatch* corner in order to keep you posted on headline news that relates with prophesied last-day events.

If you have a news item of interest and would like to share it with us, please send us a copy. See page 2 for our mailing address and fax number.

Federal Agencies Among Serious Stragglers in Y2K Preparations

"With roughly a year to go until 'Y2K Day,' opinions on the extent of the Year 2000 computer problem are divided.

"Some await the apocalypse; others think the problem will be merely annoying. In any case, the federal government's own outlook inspires little confidence.

"Should the most dire predictions about the problems come true, the new millennium will pack quite a wallop: phones and lights won't work, automatic tellers won't give cash, airports will close and paychecks won't show up in the mail.

"Is the one year remaining enough time to prevent Y2K problems?

"Joel Willemsen of the U.S. General Accounting Office doesn't sugarcoat his answer. 'All the government agencies will not be done on time. There will be some failures,' he says.

"'Right now as a country we do not know where we stand on water, power and telecommunications. If you don't have water, power or telecom, you can't get the job done,' he says." Rick Lockridge, *CNN*, December 29, 1998.

The Bible states that "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." Proverbs 22:3. May we as Christians be truly prudent in light of the portentous events before us.

Indulgences to Help Mark Grand Jubilee

"The Vatican today released the papal bull *Incarnationis Mysterium*, signed by Pope John Paul II, formally announcing the Grand Jubilee of 2000." *Catholic World News*, November 29, 1998. The pope states that "the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 will begin on Christmas Eve 1999" and

"will continue until the closing of the Jubilee Year on the day of . . . 6 January 2001."

Incarnationis Mysterium, Sect. 6.

Speaking of "the ecumenical character of the Jubilee" (*Ibid.*, Sect. 4), the pope declares: "May the Jubilee serve to advance mutual dialogue until the day when all of us together—Jews, Christians and Moslems—will exchange the greeting of peace in Jerusalem." *Ibid.*, Sect. 2. In the Biblical book of Revelation we are told, speaking of the powers of earth, that, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Revelation 17:13.

The pope speaks of three signs linked to the Jubilee: pilgrimage, the sign of the holy door, and indulgences [the remission of punishment still due for a sin that has been sacramentally absolved. *American Heritage Dictionary*, 694]. Are these requirements of Holy Scripture? — No, a thousand times no! "The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. See Proverbs 28:13." *Steps to Christ*, 37.

The pope also speaks of his "historic memories," referring to the year A.D. 1300 when "Pope Boniface VIII solemnly inaugu-

rated the first Jubilee in history." *Incarnationis Mysterium*, Sect. 5 (the first in papal history that is). The pope seems to have forgotten what type of man Pope Boniface was, "of whom impartial history says, 'Of all the Roman Pontiffs, Boniface has left the darkest name for craft, arrogance, ambition, even for avarice and cruelty.'" *Millers Church History*, 532.

As for the reason why Boniface instituted this first Jubilee, contrary to what Pope John Paul says—that he was responding to the wishes of the people of Rome (*Incarnationis Mysterium*, Sect. 5)—history relates that it was "to replenish the papal treasury," and as history goes on to testify: "The plan was a complete success." Large sums were gathered into the papal treasury. *The Age of Faith*, by Will Durant, 813. Inspiration, speaking of the papal power, points out that she was "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand." Revelation 17:4. Who would dispute the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is by far the wealthiest church in the world? In any case, we surely can deduce that the upcoming Jubilee will bring another large increase into the papal coffers.

These and a multitude of other events herald the soon coming of our great King Jesus Christ! May we all be ready for that magnificent and grand event is my prayer.





Philip Garber

More Church History on the Sabbath

In the following write-up from the *Berea Baptist Banner*, November 5, 1998, is given a supposed history of the Sabbath, which really refers to Sunday when the word “Sabbath” is used. The article begins as follows:

“In the year 321 A.D. Constantine made the first law enforcing the observance of the first day of the week. This law reflected the views of the Christian believers of the empire.” *Christian News*, November 30, 1998.

The first issue we must address is whether Constantine’s Sunday law actually reflected the views of Christians in the Roman Empire at that time. One question we might ask is, Was the Christianity of Constantine’s day of the pure and holy character as that which marked the days of the apostles? And to this we must answer in the negative. The apostle Paul is clear that after his death (A.D. 64–67) “grievous wolves” would come into the church of God. See Acts 20:29. Paul also spoke of

that time as the time of a great “falling away” (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3) in which the majority of the professed people of God would not receive the “love of the truth.” Verse 10. Revelation 12 speaks of the true church fleeing “into the wilderness” (verse 6) where God preserved a faithful remnant. So we can see that by the time of Constantine’s Sunday law the church had deteriorated significantly, and therefore it would not be a safe guide for determining the scriptural validity of Sunday as a day of worship.

Christian Edwardson in his book, *Facts of Faith*, 118, puts this history in a concise form:

“While Constantine’s purchased converts, and the superficial-minded multitude followed the popular church, there were many honest, God-fearing Christians, who resented this sinful compromise with paganism; and, when they saw that all their protests were useless, they withdrew to places where they could more freely follow

their conscience and bring up their children away from the contamination of the fallen church, which they looked upon as the ‘Babylon’ of Revelation 17.”

In summary, we cannot agree with the *Berea Baptist Banner* when it states that Constantine’s Sunday law reflected the views of the Christian believers of the empire, primarily because it leaves the false idea

Stories were told of supposed ancient parchments falling from heaven with warnings and threatenings against all who desecrated the Sunday.

in the mind that all Christians believed in the Sunday legislation. While we would agree that a majority of those who professed Christianity went along with Constantine’s Sunday law, there were faithful groups of believers who at that time separated from a fallen, world-loving church.

Many of these faithful Christians continued to observe the true Sabbath—even under increasing pressure from the Roman Church.

The *Berea Baptist Banner* continues as follows:

“As the years passed, the Catholic Church went to the extremes on the Sabbath, somewhat like the Pharisees in the time of Christ. This caused some of the Christians in the Dark Ages to oppose the Christian Sabbath. The Reformers went even farther away from the teaching of the New Testament on the Lord’s day. Martin Luther said the believer had a right to work, ride, or dance upon it, if he would.”

The writer of the above article is correct when he states that the Roman Church went to extremes regarding Sunday observance, which he incorrectly calls “the Sabbath.” During the Dark Ages the Roman Catholic Church, to make up for its lack of scriptural authority to enforce Sunday sacredness, fabricated many superstitious stories. Among them, stories were told of supposed ancient parchments falling from heaven with warnings and threatenings against all who desecrated the Sunday. Other stories were told of

how when people had gone out into the fields to work on Sunday they had been struck by lightning.

Our Baptist writer continues by stating that this action by the Roman Church caused some Christians to oppose the “Christian Sabbath.” In answer to the charge here leveled against these ancient Christians, let us turn to the pages of history to see what is written about the Waldenses and Albigenses of that time period. William Jones in his *History of the Church*, chapter 5, section 1, answers that accusation this way:

“Because they would not observe saints’ days, they were falsely supposed to neglect the Sabbath also, and called *Insabbatati* or *Insabbatists*.”

Another writer puts it this way, “They were called *Insabbatati*, not because they were circumcised, but because they kept the Sabbath according to the Jewish law.” *Deutsche Biographie*, article, *Goldast*, 9, 327. We can see clearly from these sources that these faithful Christians did believe in God’s holy and true Sabbath day. They did not keep the saint’s days and Sunday because they were merely inventions of Rome.

As for the allegation that “the Reformers went even farther away from the teaching of the New Testament on the Lord’s day,” let us begin by stating that the Reformers understood that the Sunday observance teaching stood upon a shaky foundation, and that there was no New Testament evidence to prove that it should be kept as the Sabbath. While the Reformers

did not come to the understanding regarding our obligation to obey the fourth commandment, they clearly understood that Sundaykeeping was not to be forced upon the populace as obligatory. It would be well for the so-called reformers of our day to go back and study about how the Reformers came to their conclusions. Perhaps, we could be spared from repeating the mistakes of the Dark Ages.

The following are the closing arguments from the *Berea Baptist Banner* article entitled “More Church History on the Sabbath”:

“While Europe was surrendering her Christian Sabbath law, England and Scotland, supported by John Knox, kept the true Christian Sabbath for the world. A strong Puritan element of England sailed in the Mayflower for New England. They delayed landing and spent their first Sabbath in

trary, as we view the pages of history, we find that the Puritans of the century following Knox were the real originators of this ascetic Sundaykeeping. Consider as evidence of that fact the following source:

“The Puritans (q. v.), who, justly offended by the vices and frivolity of the times, . . . added Sundaykeeping an austerity by which neither it nor the Sabbathkeeping of the Jews had ever before been marked. This great party when predominant for a time in the reign of Charles I. [A.D. 1625–1649], availed themselves of the opportunity to maintain and spread their Sabbatarian opinions, not only in numerous treatises, but through what has proved to be the more lasting and influential means of the *Westminster Confession* and *Catechisms*.

“Chiefly through these formularies was effectually introduced into Scotland

formers, Knox, in setting forth in his *Confession of Faith* (1560) ‘the works of the First Table,’ says not a word about the Sabbath.” *Chamber Encyclopaedia* 1894, vol. 7, 9.

The writer of the *Berea Baptist Banner* then continues by building a case that the Puritans brought the Sunday-sabbath to America. Then he strongly suggests that this is what has made our nation so great. The above writer also states that they “delayed landing” so that they could keep their Sunday. The obvious implication of that writer is that, while the pilgrims had an opportunity to land, they did not do so, all in order that they might keep their Sunday-sabbath. We find here a definite misstating of the historical facts. First of all, the pilgrims first sighted land “at early dawn of the sixty-first day of their voyage” [Thursday, November 9, 1620]. And on November

11, “the Mayflower dropped her anchor at noon on a Saturday near the close of autumn.” *The Great Republic*, vol. 1, “The Landing of the Pilgrims,” by John Gorham Palfrey, 147–148. The account goes on to say that “In the afternoon, ‘fifteen or sixteen men, well armed,’ were sent on shore to reconnoitre and collect fuel.” *Ibid.*, 148. So we see that the pil-

grims first landed on the soil of the New World on Saturday, November 11. As for the Clark’s Island incident, referred to by the Baptist writer, that did not occur until late on Friday, December 8. An exploration party landed upon the island because of a storm where they



The first landing of the Pilgrims—1620

the New World on Clark’s Island. America in the main has recognized and guarded the same sacred time.”

Was John Knox really the great defender of Sunday sabbatarianism so strongly implied by the writer above? On the con-

that scrupulous abstinence from recreation as well as business on Sunday, which still distinguishes the people. For it is a mistake to suppose that either Sabbatarianism or asceticism was recommended by Knox [A.D. 1505–1572]. Agreeing with the other Re-

stayed to dry out and recoup through Sunday (December 10, 1620). The delayed landing theory falls flat on its face in light of the obvious historical facts.

Let us now look a little closer at the implication that the Pilgrims "Puritan" Sunday-sabbath has made us a great nation. First of all, we must ask ourselves the question, Was it Sundaykeeping that has exalted our nation, or was it another principle altogether? I believe that the farewell address of their pastor John Robinson, before they left Holland, contains the foundational principles that have made our nation so great. John Robinson began his farewell sermon as follows:

"Brethren, we are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether I shall live ever to see your faces more. But whether the Lord hath appointed it or not, I charge you before God and His blessed angels to follow me no farther than I have followed Christ. If

God should reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth of my ministry; for I am very confident the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy word. . . .

We conclude that if the Pilgrims were living today with the knowledge we have, they would reject Sunday worship as a "human invention" and a Roman "corruption."

"Remember your church covenant, in which you have agreed to walk in all the ways of the Lord, made or to be made known unto you. Remember your promise and covenant with

God and with one another, to receive whatever light and truth shall be made known to you from His written word; but withal, take heed, I beseech you, what you receive for truth, and compare it and weigh it with other scriptures of truth before you accept it; for it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick antichristian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.' Martyn, vol. 5, 70-71"; *The Great Controversy*, 291-292.

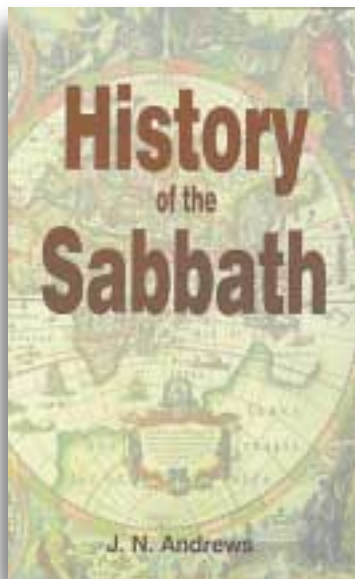
This foundational principle of the Pilgrims was their solemn covenant "to walk together in all His ways made known or to be made known to them.' J. Brown, *The Pilgrim Fathers*, 74." *The Great Controversy*, 291.

It is interesting to note that the first major workday for the newly landed pilgrims was "Monday, December 25th, which was Christmas, of course, but that made no differ-

ence to the Pilgrims . . . for they scorned Christmas as a 'human invention,' another Roman 'corruption,' a survival from heathen days." *Saints and Strangers*, George F. Willison, 160. The principle they followed was "to abandon everything that could boast of no other authority than tradition or the will of man, and to follow as far as possible the 'pure' word of God." *Chambers Encyclopaedia*, 1894, vol. 6, 488. Therefore, we conclude that if the Pilgrims were living today with the knowledge we have, they would reject Sunday worship as a "human invention" and a Roman "corruption." They would observe the true Bible Sabbath, since it is not based on human tradition, but upon the pure Word of God.

Brothers and sisters, may God keep us faithful to the principles of religious freedom that have made this nation great. □

The History of the Sabbath



by J. N. Andrews

The history of the Sabbath embraces a period of 6,000 years. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord. The acts which constituted it as such were:

- 1. the example of the Creator;**
- 2. His placing His blessing upon the day; and**
- 3. the sanctification or divine appointment of the day to a holy use.**

The Sabbath, therefore, dates from the beginning of our world's history.

It is the object of this volume to note the record of the Sabbath in secular history and show several steps by which the Sunday festival has usurped the place of this ancient Sabbath.

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— See page 2 for shipping and sales tax information. —

Study

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to Show Thyself

Approved.

Part 2

Just as we are better nourished when we don't eat too fast, I found that by reading more slowly, I did learn faster.

by Sally Hohnberger

A friend once said to me, “Slow down your studies so you can learn faster.” I thought that advice was foolishness when I first heard it. How could I ever gain all the knowledge I needed if I didn't read quickly? However, when I realized that God was asking me to slow down in this way, I decided to try it. Just as we are better nourished when we don't eat too fast, I found that by reading more slowly, I did learn faster!

Last month we looked at one color-coding system that some find useful in marking their Bibles.

This month we will look at three little disciplines that have helped me make the most of my Bible study time—to slow down and make it practical.

Next month we will finish this series by discussing how we can best benefit from topical studies.

Three Little Disciplines

The **first discipline** is to pray before and during study time for divine enlightenment. This is a discipline of recognizing our dependency upon God in order to read and interpret the Scriptures aright. Without Christ we will formulate concepts—but not necessarily *heavenly* concepts and principles. We cannot learn properly without Christ as our Teacher leading us continually.

The **second discipline** is to make a personal application through reflection upon what you have just read. This is not only after reading for an hour, but rather stopping often—at times it may be necessary to stop after each verse or sentence within that verse that strikes the conscience. Stop to let God instruct you. By slowing down in this way, you will actually learn faster and remember more.



Sally and Jim Hohnberger, of Restoration International, reside in Polebridge, Montana, and have dedicated their lives full-time to reaching all people with the practical gospel.

Stopping to reflect upon your reading for personal application to yourself and to your family today, is worth more than reading large volumes of information in a superficial, fact-gathering mode, or for the reproof of others.

God has much to say and teach us personally. We need to slow down our reading in order to allow Christ to truly lead us and be our Teacher.

I want you to know that this way of studying didn't come naturally to me. I had to deny old ways and inclinations, and so will you. My reading seemed awkward when I first stopped after each paragraph to discipline myself to slow down. To develop a new habit requires repetition before it becomes a dominating, seemingly natural habit. However, God will kindle our minds to think differently. Often at first He would ask me a question to prompt me to think the matter through logically and objectively. Peculiarities in my personality didn't like this method, but I needed this correction, instruction, and experience. My cooperation and effort is essential—though difficult at times—but the rewards of a changing life are well worth it.

To slow me down, God suggested a variety of ways to help me think about and practicalize what I had just read. Here are a few:

1—Write down meaningful quotations that have a practical application to your life.

2—Learn how to collect and organize these quotations into specific topics or categories. I had to discipline myself to brevity and a limited number of quotations. As you go over and over the gathered quotations, weed out what is repetitive, and save only the best, practical “how to” quotations on a particular topic. You can gain a balanced approach to a topic because counsel will be given from several perspectives, correcting both excesses and negligence.

3—Word studies can be helpful, depending upon your personality. For me, I found that too often I would get so deep into the multiple word studies that I would lose the overview of what I was learning. If I stayed in this type of studying exclusively, I didn't grow in my personal, practical life of walking and changing with Jesus. I found that this format of study was better done on a small scale to be effective. You will need to evaluate yourself and seek God's directions at all times for which way is most effective for your walk with Him and what hinders you.

4—Sit back in your chair and ask the Lord, “What does this mean to me today? How will the application of this method of study change me in how I relate to my spouse, children or neighbors today?” As you think about the practical application, God then will impress the thoughts upon your mind. In this way God is truly our personal Teacher.

We, as the students, must be able to discern the spirits. John says, “Try the spirits whether they are of God.” 1 John 4:1.

If the thoughts are of God, they will lead us to repentance and a turning away from self-centered or unbalanced ways. They will be full of hope that with God I can do what He is asking. They will call us to a death of self in Christ Jesus our Lord. All good things come from God.

Test all your thoughts by Isaiah 8:20: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Satan too, can suggest thoughts and concepts. If the thoughts lead to hopelessness, doubt, despair and a giving up, it is characteristic that Satan is sug-

gesting these thoughts, and they must be denied and turned away from through a connection with Christ.

5—End your study time with ten to fifteen minutes of decision-making time about how your readings today will change the way you live. What will you do differently today? Make a resolve with Christ, and *He will go with you* to see that you do what you have promised. That is a loving, caring Saviour! Yet He will not do it for you, but He will call for a continuous and conscious decision and surrender from you to keep your promise. He wants you to experience what grace can do in your flesh—how you can change your habits today through cooperation with Him. It is your effort *with Christ* that will

“What does this mean to me today? How will the application of this method of study change me in how I relate to my spouse, children or neighbors today?”

make the difference. Christianity is not supposed to be a spineless, weak religion that leaves you in Satan's snares and evil habits of life to dominate you. No, with God there is power over all weaknesses of the flesh. We haven't experienced God's power consistently because we haven't given God our all—our complete cooperation with Him—which is our privilege.

The **third discipline** is the most essential part. Now we have to enter the discipline of responding to Christ when He calls for our heart. We must learn to walk with God through the day, all day long, learning to say No to self and Yes to God amidst our daily activities.

These are all disciplines, aren't they? God honors even our timid surrender. He loves to show us His power. May God bless you as you seek to follow Christ as a Christian should! Won't you try to incorporate these disciplines into your life today? □

the Best Man Available



In his excellent book *Magnificent Disappointment*, C. Mervyn Maxwell called William Miller “the best man available,” and he was absolutely correct. Born in 1782, William Miller finally gave his heart to Jesus Christ in 1816. Concerning his conversion, he wrote, “I saw that the Bible did bring to view just such a Savior as I needed; . . . I was constrained to admit that the Scriptures must be a revelation from God; they became my delight, and in Jesus I found a friend.” *Apology and Defense*, 5.

Miller began an intense study of the Bible beginning with Genesis. He wrote, “Whenever I found any thing obscure, my practice was to compare it with all collateral passages, and by the help of Cruden[’s Concordance] I examined all the texts of Scripture. . . . Then by letting every word have its proper bearing on the subject of the text, if my view of it harmonized with every collateral passage in the Bible, it ceased to be a difficulty.” *Ibid.*, 6.

Then in 1818, Miller discovered the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” He was correct in his understanding that the 2300 days represented 2300 years. The Bible clearly supports the principle that a “day” represents a “year” in Bible prophecy. See Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6.

He was also correct about the close connection between Daniel, chapter eight, and Daniel, chapter nine. He discovered that the 2300-day prophecy began at the same time as the seventy-week prophecy [literally, 490 years] found in Daniel 9:24–27. Both time prophecies began in 457 B.C.

When he added 2300 years to 457 B.C. he concluded that this great prophecy ended in 1843. Later he corrected his calculation to 1844, when he realized that you must add one year for the year that is missing in the calendar between 1 B.C. and A.D. 1.

So what was it that was prophesied to happen in 1844? The Bible said, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; *then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*” (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.) Like so many Bible students of his day, Miller believed that the “sanctuary” in Daniel 8:14 referred to the earth. He thought to himself, “Is Jesus coming that soon to cleanse the earth with fire? Is He really coming in just twenty-five to twenty-six years?”

You might think that Miller got so excited that he went out and told all the local townfolk within the next few days. You might even imagine a man so zealous to



by Jeff Wehr

Jeff Wehr writes from Rice, Washington. He is a co-editor of *Our Firm Foundation* and regularly serves as an author and speaker for Hope International.

proclaim the soon coming of Christ that he was making plans to take this message all across America by voice and pen. Did he?—Not exactly! Five years passed by before Miller began to share with individuals here and there about the 2300-day prophecy and Christ's soon return. To be sure, Miller was no fly-by-night sensationalist or end-of-the-world fanatic. In fact, it was not until 1831 that he was willing to go public with his studies on Daniel 8:14. Imagine that! Thirteen years went by before Miller promised God that he would preach about the 2300-day prophecy. But there was one condition which Miller made: He would only preach this message if he received an invitation to do so.

Within one hour of making that promise to God, his nephew arrived on horseback with an invitation for him to present his studies to the church. Miller did not expect such an invitation. In fact, he was absolutely furious that he received that invitation. He walked off into the maple grove and wrestled with God over the situation. Finally, he submitted to God's will and presented his studies on Daniel 8:14.

Now, let me ask you a question: Who wanted William Miller to preach? Did William Miller want William Miller to preach?—No! It was God who wanted him to preach that message!

Now we must ask another important question: Why did God choose William Miller to lead out in the preaching of Daniel 8:14? I believe it was because William Miller was the best man available. We all know that Miller was wrong in his belief that Jesus would return to earth in 1844 to cleanse it with fire. But remember, none of his contemporaries were able to correct him on this particular point.

In his day, scholars and pastors were far behind Miller in their understanding of the prophecies. Many of them had nothing to say about the soon return of Jesus. Obviously, Miller was ahead of them.

Many of these pastors were post-millennialists—teaching that Christ was to come spiritually before the millennium and then physically after the millennium. They believed

that there would be a thousand years of peace on the earth before the physical return of Christ. Strangely enough, they thought that the millennium had already arrived, and they pointed to the great Bible societies and foreign missions as proof. Obviously, Miller was more right than they. He knew that the Bible said that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.” 2 Timothy 3:13. He knew that Christ was to come literally, physically, and visibly to usher in the millennium. He was correct in being a pre-millennialist.

Miller was in step with heavenly agencies when he urged people to get right with God. In fact, at first, he believed that the cleansing represented the removal of sin from the church. But as he continued his study he concluded that the cleansing referred to both the cleansing of the church from sin and the purification of the earth by fire.

He knew that the 2300-day prophecy began in 457 B.C. and ended in A.D. 1844. He knew that the 2300-day prophecy involved a judgment-hour message. Clearly, he was far ahead of his contemporaries who said nothing about the judgment to come. Therefore, he was the best man available.

However, he did make a mistake. He was wrong when he assumed that the cleansing of the sanctuary at the end of the 2300-day prophecy was the same as the cleansing of the earth by fire.

Now, we must ask the question: How did he make this mistake? William Miller knew that there was a heavenly sanctuary. In fact, on Miller's list of things or persons called “sanctuary” or “temple” in the Bible, he had “heaven” as second in a list of seven. But he dismissed any possibility that the heavenly sanctuary was in need of any cleansing. He also knew that there was no earthly temple in need of cleansing. After all, by His sacrifice Jesus had already put an end to animal sacrifices in the earthly sanctuary. Therefore, he reasoned that Daniel 8:14 must refer to the cleansing of the earth with fire.

Yet, Hebrews 9:22–23 clearly states that the heavenly sanctuary was in need of purification as was

the earthly sanctuary. “And almost all things [concerning the earthly sanctuary] are by the law [the ceremonial law] purged with blood [with animal sacrifices]; and without shedding of blood is no remission [or forgiveness of sin]. It was

therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens [the earthly sanctuary serving as a pattern of the heavenly sanctuary] should be purified with these [that is, with animal sacrifices]; but the heavenly things themselves [the heavenly sanctuary itself] with better sacrifices than these [with the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ].”

The apostle Paul declares that the earthly sanctuary was purified by animal sacrifices, and that the heavenly sanctuary will be purified with “better sacrifices.” This seems clear enough, so how did William Miller miss it?

First of all, Hebrews 9:22–23 does not say, “heavenly sanctuary” but “things in the heavens.” The passage does not say “cleansed” but “purified.” It is entirely possible that neither the Bible nor the Cruden's Concordance he was using provided a cross reference between Daniel 8:14 and Hebrews 9:22–23. But then again, let us remember that Hebrews 9:22–23 was in everybody else's Bible too, and that nobody else seemed to understand this passage either.

Another reason that Miller made his error about Christ returning to earth in 1844 was his understanding of the latter portions of Daniel's prophecies. He saw the four prophetic chapters [chapters two, seven, eight, and eleven] as parallel visions that followed a sequence of the rise and fall of nations followed by a Christ-centered climax.

For example, the image of Daniel, chapter two, made up of

By His sacrifice Jesus had already put an end to animal sacrifices in the earthly sanctuary. Therefore, Miller reasoned that Daniel 8:14 must refer to the cleansing of the earth with fire.

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four different metals, corresponded to four consecutive empires. The head of gold represented the Empire of Babylon. The silver breast and arms represented the Medes and Persians. The brass belly and thighs represented the Grecian

Empire. The legs of iron represented Rome. And the feet of iron and clay represented Europe. Then the Stone cut without human hands, which smote the image, represented Christ's second advent. This Christ-centered event represents the end of the time of the end.

In Daniel, chapter seven, we have the same empires being represented but with different symbols. In this vision Babylon is represented by a lion with eagle wings. The Medes and Persians are represented by a bear. The Grecian Empire is represented by a leopard with four heads and four wings. Rome is represented by a ferocious fourth beast with iron teeth. Europe is represented by the ten horns found on the fourth beast. The Papacy is clearly the little horn power that arose after the breakup of the Roman Empire. It was described as being a different kind of power that would speak great words against the Most High and wear out the saints of the Most High. Like chapter two, the vision ends with a Christ-centered climax. Here we find a judgment scene when the "Son of man," Jesus Christ, comes to the "Ancient of days," God the Father. The Judgment is set and the books are opened.

In Daniel, chapter eight, we have a continued repetition and enlargement of the previous visions. However, in this case, we begin with the Medes and Persians represented by a ram with two horns. Then we have Greece represented by a goat with a notable horn. Followed again by

pagan Rome and then papal Rome, both are represented by a little horn. The Christ-centered climax of Daniel, chapter eight, is the cleansing of the sanctuary at the end of the 2300-day prophecy.

In Daniel, chapters eleven and twelve, we again begin with Medo-Persia followed by Greece, Rome, and the Papacy. The Christ-centered climax in this vision is when Michael [Jesus] stands up and delivers His people. See Daniel 12:1. Then the special resurrection takes place. Those who have died in the third angel's message are raised up to stand with the 144,000 to witness the glorious return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. See Daniel 12:2.

Miller saw these four Christ-centered climatic events as being parallel. He assumed that Christ's return as the Stone that crushes the image in chapter two was the same as Jesus, the Son of man, coming to the Ancient of Days for the judgment in chapter seven, which was the same as Christ cleansing the sanctuary in chapter eight, which was the same as Michael [or Jesus] intervening to rescue His people in chapter twelve. He thought that if he could find a time prophecy for any one of these four Christ-centered events then he had a time prophecy for all four. Did he have a time prophecy? Yes indeed! It was the 2300 days of chapter eight. Therefore, he concluded that Christ as the Stone would come in 1844, that the judgment would end in 1844, that the cleansing of the earth [which he interpreted as the "sanctuary"] would be cleansed with fire at Christ's second coming in 1844, and that Christ as Michael would rescue and resurrect His people in 1844.

This all seems understandably very logical when you consider that Babylon as the head of gold in chapter two and as the lion in chapter seven are parallel in time; that Medo-Persia as the silver breast and arms, the bear, and the ram are parallel in time; that Greece as the brass belly and thighs, the four-headed leopard, and the goat are parallel in time; and that Rome as the legs of iron, the ferocious fourth beast with iron teeth, and the little horn are paral-

lel in time. If these are all parallel in time, then these Christ-centered events are parallel in time.

So what did William Miller overlook? First of all, in Daniel 7:13 the "Son of man" is not described as coming to the earth, but coming to the "Ancient of days." The question then arises: Where is the "Ancient of days," God the Father? He is in heaven. Therefore, Christ was not coming to earth, but meeting the Father in some special place in heaven.

There are only 21 words in Daniel 7:13, but think how important are the details of this verse. I do not know how Miller missed this important distinction, but then everybody else seemed to miss it also at that time. Therefore, we can conclude that William Miller was still the best man available.

These four visions are, without question, parallel; however, they are not identical in describing earth's final scenes. All four Christ-centered climaxes have to do with the time of the end, but they do not all specifically apply to the very *end* of the time of the end. Certainly Christ's coming as the Stone is the very end of the time of the end. Christ coming as Michael also describes events at the very end of the time of the end. However, when Christ as the "Son of man" comes to the "Ancient of days," although it is the time of the end, it is not yet the *end* of the time of the end. When Christ begins to cleanse the sanctuary in heaven it is the time of the end, but it is not the very end of the time of the end. Again, all four Christ-centered climatic events focus on the time of the end, but two of them [Christ as the Stone and as Michael] are focused on the very end of the time of the end, and the other two [Christ coming to the "Ancient of days" and beginning His work of cleansing the sanctuary] are focused on the beginning of the time of the end.

So what actually happened when the "Son of man" came to the "Ancient of days"? Daniel said, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning

fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9–10.

After Daniel saw four ferocious beasts representing the four consecutive world empires coming up out of the stormy sea of human activity, his attention is drawn away to behold a very different scene—namely, a heavenly scene. Daniel beholds the movement of God's glorious throne which is described as a "fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." In verses 21–22, Daniel again sees the "Ancient of days" in movement when he wrote, "I beheld, and the same horn [the Papacy] made war with the saints, and prevailed against them [describing the 1260 years of Papal persecution of God's true church]; until the Ancient of days **came**, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High." Soon after the 1260-year rule of Papal supremacy, the "Ancient of days" would **come** and the judgment would begin and prove to be in favor of the saints.

Also in this glorious judgment scene we see millions of angels ministering unto God. This reminds us of that beautiful scene described in Revelation, chapters four and five, where the angels worship God in song and adoration.

As Daniel continued to watch, he saw record books being opened, and he wrote that "the judgment was set." The judgment "was set" but it did not begin until "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him." Daniel 7:13. When Jesus was taken on a cloud of angels to where the Father had just moved His glorious throne, then the judgment began. As Jesus said, "the Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." John 5:22. It was at this glorious event that the judgment-hour message of the first angel was fulfilled, "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his [Christ's] judgment is come; and worship him that made

heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14:7.

Sister White wrote concerning this heavenly scene, "I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. . . . I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies [the Most Holy Place compartment] within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne. . . . A cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat." *Early Writings*, 54–55.

Imagine the solemnity of the moment—the magnificent music, the splendor of all those heavenly angels, the glorious throne of God, the trumpeting of those silver trumpets—as Jesus came to the Father in the Most Holy Place in heaven. It was, of course, much more glorious than our finite minds can comprehend. As Sister White wrote, that "the heavenly temple, the abiding place of the King of kings, where 'thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him' (Daniel 7:10), that temple filled with the glory of the eternal throne, where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration—no earthly structure could represent its vastness and its glory." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357.

We know that Moses made a copy here on earth of the sanctuary in heaven, but it by no means represented the "vastness" and the "glory" of that heavenly sanctuary. For example, the earthly sanctuary had two compartments, namely, the holy place (which was 30 feet long and 15 feet wide and 15 feet high) and the Most Holy Place (which was 15 feet or 10 cubits in length, height, and width). In the holy place we find the table of shewbread, the seven-branched candlestick, and the altar of incense. In the Most Holy Place we find the ark of the covenant which contained the Ten Commandments underneath the mercy seat. Above the mercy seat was the shining light of God's presence.

Now let me ask you a question: Was the glory of God's shining presence restricted to the location just above the mercy seat?—Certainly not! We know that the light of God's presence left the sanctuary whenever the children of Israel moved on

to a new location. In fact, His shining presence became a cloudy pillar of fire that guided the Israelites along the way. See Numbers 9:15–23.

The description of God's throne in the book of Ezekiel [chapters one and ten] is like unto a living throne, not a static throne. But perhaps the clearest example of the movement of God's throne is when He establishes it here on the New Earth. See Revelation 21:10–22:3.

My point is that the "Ancient of days," God the Father, moved His throne into the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary where the books were to be opened for the judgment. The "Son of man" was taken up in a cloud of angels and carried to the Father for the judgment to begin and for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary to take place.

The Most Holy Place in heaven is not 15 feet or 10 cubits in length, height, and width. It is a glorious place that can hold millions of angels! It is vast and it is glorious! It is a place distinct from the holy place in the heavenly sanctuary. As Sister White wrote, "As Christ's ministration was to consist of two great divisions, each occupying a period of time and having a distinctive place in the heavenly sanctuary, so the typical ministration consisted of two divisions, the daily and the yearly service, and to each a department of the tabernacle was devoted." *Ibid.*

The Most Holy Place in heaven is so vast that a cloud of angels escort Jesus to the Father. Three times

A cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat.

We are the heirs of the greatest movement, and the recipients of the best Bible scholarship. We do not need to be ashamed of the Great Disappointment.

in the Bible we find Jesus traveling on a cloud of angels. Each successive time that He was carried on a cloud of angels, the event became more and more glorious!

The first time we find Jesus on a cloud of angels was

when He ascended up into heaven. Luke recorded, "And when he [Jesus] had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Acts 1:9. And again, "And he [Jesus] led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Luke 24:50-51. I could imagine that the ascension of Christ involved many angels. Yet, I believe that the emphasis of Christ's ascension was not on the power and splendor of a myriad of angels accompanying Him on His way to heaven, but about a very real Jesus that the disciples had spent three-and-one-half years with in ministry. As they watched Him with whom they had walked and talked, ascend up into heaven, the One who taught them how to pray and to exercise faith in God, the One who had died for their sins, and who had loved them with an everlasting love, this same Jesus was now on His way to heaven to intercede for them. Heaven became real to them as they saw Jesus ascend with a great company of the heavenly hosts.

The next time Jesus was taken up in a cloud of angels was when the 2300-day prophecy was fulfilled in 1844. I could imagine that many more angels were involved in escorting Jesus to the Father. Thousands upon thousands carried Jesus to the "Ancient of days" to begin the work of judgment. Oh what a glorious scene that must have been!

But the most spectacular and awe-inspiring time will be when Jesus is carried by a cloud of angels on the occasion of His second advent. This time He will come with *all* the heavenly angels. Jesus said, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and *all* of the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:31-34.

Here we have the glorious appearing of Jesus at His second advent. The books have been opened; every case has been decided, and He rewards every man according to his deeds. See Revelation 22:12.

Miller and his followers longed to see their friend Jesus come in the clouds of heaven back to this earth. But this was not the event prophesied in Daniel 7:13 and Daniel 8:14. However, it will be a glorious event to be sure! It is an event that God desires everyone on earth to know about. And William Miller was the best Bible student of his day to make it known.

Miller was right when he said that the 2300-day prophecy was vitally important. He was right when he said that the 2300 days represented 2300 years. He was right when he said that the 2300-day prophecy began in 457 B.C. He was right when He said that the prophecy ended in A.D. 1844. He was right when he said that the first angel's message, concerning the judgment-hour message, could be dated in the year of 1844. He was right when he said Jesus was coming very soon. He was right in telling people to repent and to prepare for Christ's return. He was right when he said Jesus would come literally and personally. Unfortunately, he was wrong when he said Jesus was coming to the earth, rather than to the heavenly sanctuary, in 1844. But he was still the best man available.

So where does this leave us today? We are the heirs of the greatest movement, and the recipients of the best Bible scholarship. We do not need to be ashamed of the Great Disappointment—when our Advent pioneers waited for Jesus to return. Remember, they were the best Bible students of their day, and there was nobody who knew how to correct their mistakes.

We might confidently say that the Great Disappointment was indeed an "Enlightened Disappointment" that led these courageous and consecrated followers of Christ to discover the all-important work of Jesus as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. As a result God now had a people upon the earth prepared to proclaim that "the hour of his judgment is come."

This judgment-hour message holds an important and prominent place in the proclamation of the everlasting gospel. It ends when human probation ends. It will declare the results of the workings of the plan of salvation over the past 6,000 years.

In the beginning of the Christian era, the burden of the disciples was to proclaim to every nation about a crucified and risen Saviour. As Paul declared, "for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2. They did not speak about the judgment being in session. Instead, Paul spoke about the judgment to come. See Acts 24:25.

We are the generation that now must proclaim that "judgment is come." And as we draw near to the end of the end, when Jesus' work as our Mediator is almost finished, when the sheep shall soon be separated from the goats for eternity, when the last case shall soon be tried, the time has come when God's people must present the solemn truth that the "judgment is come." This is the great subject of our time! The judgment! The judgment!

How does your case stand, dear brothers and sisters? How does your neighbor's case stand? May the Lord help us regain our vision as a movement to declare this most solemn message ever given to mortals. Eternity is certainly bound up in it. Our eternal life depends upon it. □



Art: Joe Mansuetico

An attack has been made on the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary. Is there enough evidence in the Bible to support such a belief?

The Sanctuary Doctrine: Cultic Or Biblical? Part 2

THE CONDITIONS OF ETERNAL LIFE

IN A PRESUMED “contrast” between the investigative judgment and the gospel of Scripture, Dale Ratzlaff states:

“The focus of the investigative judgment is on personal deeds in order that one might be found worthy of eternal life. The good news of the gospel is that *the Father* has *already* qualified us, who believe in Christ, to share in the eternal inheritance in Christ.”¹

He goes on to denounce Ellen White’s teaching that “the people of God are to be tested and proved on the basis of the Ten Commandments.”²

Ratzlaff had best take up his argument with Jesus—not with Ellen White! It was Christ who declared to the rich young ruler, when asked about the conditions of eternal life: “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17. The Saviour gave an identical answer to the lawyer when He told the Good Samaritan story. See Luke 10:25–28. The apostle Paul agrees with Jesus:

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.” Romans 2:7–9.



by KEVIN PAULSON

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To be saved by faith is not only to experience forgiveness through faith, but also by faith to allow the Spirit's power to work within us to help us overcome all acts of sin in our lives.

In the book of Hebrews the same author writes:

“And being made perfect, he [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Hebrews 5:9.

When Ratzlaff criticizes historic Adventists for believing that “God will judge them on the basis of the Ten Commandments,”³ he is directly conflicting with God’s Word, for that is exactly what it teaches:

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” James 2:10–12.

Ratzlaff claims that just as believers living in the new covenant are no longer subject to the ceremonial law, neither are they subject to the authority of the Ten Commandments:

“Paul says that the problem with the Galatians was that they wanted to be *under the law*. It is clear from the Epistles that *the old covenant law is seen in its totality*. It includes *both* the Ten Commandments and the other laws.”⁴

However, Paul makes a very clear distinction between the obsolete ceremonial law and the still-binding moral law when he writes, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.” 1 Corinthians 7:19; see also Romans 2:25.

Ratzlaff denounces as legalism certain statements by Ellen White which speak of our words, actions, and secret motives deciding our eternal destiny.⁵ After citing these references, he asks in horror, “Who could meet this test? Whose motives are one hundred percent right all the time? . . . This is not the gospel, it is condemnation.”⁶

But again, Ratzlaff had best take up his argument with the Bible.

Solomon wrote, “Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it

be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:13–14.

And once again, the New Testament echoes the Old Testament:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Ratzlaff makes a common but unscriptural distinction when he writes:

“We must be careful not to confuse the investigative judgment with the judgment of rewards which is taught in Scripture. The investigative judgment is a salvation judgment to see who is *worthy* of eternal life. In the new covenant, . . . *salvation* judgment is based upon faith in Christ and not upon works, not even works of righteousness.”⁷

While our salvation has been purchased by the blood of Christ, the Bible is also very clear that “salvation judgment,” as Ratzlaff calls it, is based upon the outworking of our faith in Christ, shown by our righteous works or the lack thereof.

In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Christ declares to His faithful followers, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34), and then continues, “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat”—and so forth (verses 35–45). The structure of this passage makes it pointedly obvious that obedience or disobedience is what ultimately decides one’s *eternal destiny*—not merely the degree of one’s reward.

Jesus Himself declared, “That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matthew 12:36–37. Such clarity is repeated elsewhere in the Saviour’s declaration, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the command-

ments” (Matthew 19:17), and His statement concerning commandment-keeping: “This do, and thou shalt live” (Luke 10:28).

Paul too speaks of how God “will render to every man according to his deeds” (see Romans 2:6), and then he declares that those “who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality” will receive eternal life (verse 7), while those who “do not obey

the truth, but obey unrighteousness,” will experience God’s wrath (verse 8). Not the slightest distinction can be found in these verses between a “judgment of rewards” and a judgment which decides salvation.

In short, there is nothing paradoxical about the Biblical teaching of salvation by faith, and judgment according to works. In the first place, Biblical salvation is the saving of people from sin. See Matthew 1:21. The New Testament is clear that the means of saving us from sin includes sanctification as well as justification (see 2 Thessalonians 2:13)—the work of Christ *in* us as well as His work *for* us (see Titus 3:5).

To be saved by faith is not only to experience forgiveness through faith (see 1 John 2:1), but also by faith to allow the Spirit’s power to work within us to help us overcome all acts of sin in our lives (see Philippians 2:12–13).

By contrast, the works which cannot save (see Romans 3:20, 28; Galatians 2:16–17; Ephesians 2:8–9) are those originating from human beings in their unconverted state (see Romans 2:17–23). Here we discover the Bible’s easy solution to the centuries-old squabble over whether Paul and James contradicted each other. When James writes that “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24), he is describing reli-

gious activity produced by conversion, whereas Paul, when he states that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified” (Romans 3:20), is speaking of religious activity apart from conversion.

This distinction becomes evident as we observe that Paul’s illustration of the justification by works, which he condemns, is Abraham’s relationship with Hagar, which Abraham performed in his own strength and according to his own reasoning. See Galatians 4:22–24. In contrast, James’ illustration of the justification by works is Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac (see James 2:21)—an act performed by Abraham in God’s strength and in obedience to God’s command.

Either way, according to Scripture, behavior decides our destiny. The only question is, Will this behavior be motivated and empowered by God, or motivated and empowered by self?

Will Believers Be Judged?

Ratzlaff places great emphasis on the words of John 5:24: “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

Ratzlaff uses the New American Standard Version of the Bible in his book, which follows most other modern translations in rendering the word “condemnation” as “judgment.” Ratzlaff therefore maintains that this verse teaches that believers in Christ will not have to face the judgment:

“He who believes is *not* judged. . . . In other words, the truth of justification by faith is that the verdict of ‘not guilty’ has *already been given* to those who believe! And that is the good news of the gospel! And that is why true believers do not ‘come into judgment,’ because they have *already* been judged ‘in Christ.’ ”⁸

But when the Bible is allowed to be its own interpreter, it is clear that the King James Version, as well as the New International Version, are correct in using the word “condemnation” in John 5:24. (See the sidebar at the end of this article.)

There are three types of “judgment” in Scripture; any one of which

may be referred to in a given reference: 1) investigative/examination; 2) sentencing/condemnation; and 3) executive/punishment. Context and the Biblical consensus tell the difference.

We have clearly seen in both Old and New Testaments that all must appear before God’s judgment seat to have their actions evaluated, whether they be good or evil. See Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10. So when John 5:24 speaks of believers not coming “into judgment,” it is condemnation that is referred to—not examination. We have already seen Christ’s statements about our having to give an account in the judgment for “every idle word” (see Matthew 12:36–37), and that divinely-empowered commandment-keeping is the condition for receiving eternal life (see Matthew 19:17; Luke 10:25–28). Jesus certainly did not contradict Himself, nor did He contradict the apostle Paul, who declares that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 5:10.

We must also recognize that when *belief* is stated to be the condition of salvation in the New Testament (see John 3:16; Acts 16:31), this belief is never defined in contrast with the obedience belief produces. Biblical belief is not mere intellectual acknowledgment; it is the surrender of the heart and life to God’s transforming power, which is what the new birth and true obedience are all about. See John 3. Those who have this belief, which includes obedience (see John 3:36, RSV), will escape condemnation (see John 5:24).

Judged by the Scriptures

Ratzlaff’s book insists that the sanctuary doctrine has been “judged by the gospel” and found wanting. The problem is that Ratzlaff’s view of the gospel has been judged by the Scriptures and found wanting. The doctrine of salvation by justification alone; the belief that we are saved entirely by the work of Christ *for* us and not also by His work *in* us; the belief that new covenant grace makes belief the only condition of salvation rather than also obedience to the Ten Commandments; the denial of sinless perfec-

tion in this life—all these teachings represent a “gospel” foreign to the pages of the Bible. What Ratzlaff calls “the acid test”—agreement between one’s theology and the new covenant gospel of grace⁹—is notably flunked by his own “gospel” theology.

We therefore conclude that the most basic dispute of evangelicals like Ratzlaff against the sanctuary doctrine is without Biblical support. Our next article will examine other arguments by Ratzlaff against the sanctuary doctrine itself. □

REFERENCES:

- ¹ Dale Ratzlaff, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists: An Evangelical Resource/An Appeal to Seventh-day Adventist Leadership* (Sedona, AZ: Life Assurance Ministries, 1995), 260.
- ² *Ibid.*, 268.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 267.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 324 (emphasis original).
- ⁵ Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 311; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 36, quoted by Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 162, 235, 236.
- ⁶ Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 236.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 212 (emphasis original).
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 259–260 (emphasis original).
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

For Further Study

Some Bible students will be interested to know that the Greek word translated “condemnation” in John 5:24 (KJV) refers to the condemnation or punishment type of judgment in many other scriptures. A concordance will show that the same Greek word is translated in the KJV New Testament as follows:

“Damnation”: Matthew 23:33; Mark 3:29; John 5:29

“Condemnation”: John 3:19; 5:24

“Accusation”: 2 Peter 2:11; Jude 1:9

“Judgment”: Matthew 5:21–22; 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:18, 20, 36, 41–42; 23:23; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:14; 11:31–32, 42; John 5:22, 27, 30; 7:24; 8:16; 12:31; 16:8, 11; Acts 8:33; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Timothy 5:24; Hebrews 9:27; 10:27; James 2:13; 2 Peter 2:4, 9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17; Jude 1:6, 15; Revelation 14:7; 16:7; 18:10; 19:2

For the

YOUNG

at heart

Christian Dress

vs.
Worldy Fashion



Dear youth,

A disposition in you to dress according to the fashion, and to wear lace and gold and artificials for display, will not recommend to others your religion or the truth that you profess. People of discernment will look upon your attempts to beautify the external as proof of weak minds and proud hearts. Simple, plain, unpretending dress will be a recommendation to my youthful sisters. In no better way can you let your light shine to others than in your simplicity of dress and deportment. You may show to all that, in comparison with eternal things, you place a proper estimate upon the things of this life.

Now is your golden opportunity to form pure and holy characters for heaven. You cannot afford to devote these precious moments to trimming and ruffling and beautifying the external to the neglect of the inward adorning. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

God, who created everything lovely and beautiful that the eye rests upon, is a lover of the beautiful. He shows you how He estimates true beauty. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in His sight of great price. Shall we not seek earnestly to gain that which God estimates as more valuable than costly dress or pearls or gold? The

inward adorning, the grace of meekness, a spirit in harmony with the heavenly angels, will not lessen true dignity of character or make us less lovely here in this world.

Religion, pure and undefiled, ennobles its possessor. You will ever find with the true Christian a marked cheerfulness, a holy, happy confidence in God, a submission to His providences, that is refreshing to the soul. By the Christian, God's love and benevolence can be seen in every bounty he receives. The beauties in nature are a theme for contemplation. In studying the natural loveliness surrounding us, the mind is carried up through nature to the Author of all that is lovely. All the works of God are speaking to our senses, magnifying His power, exalting His wisdom. Every created thing has in it charms which interest the child of God and mold his taste to regard these precious evidences of God's love above the work of human skill. . . .

It is absence of religion that makes the path of so many professors of religion shadowy. There are those who may pass for Christians but who are unworthy of the name. They have not Christian characters. When their Christianity is put to the test, its falsity is too evident. True religion is seen in the daily deportment. The life of the Christian is characterized by earnest, unselfish working to do others good and to glorify God. His path is not dark and

gloomy.

An inspired writer has said: "But just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble."

And shall the young live vain and thoughtless lives of fashion and frivolity, dwarfing their intellect to the matter of dress and consuming their time in sensual pleasure? . . .

While you pray, dear youth, that you may not be led into temptation, remember that your work does not end with the prayer. You must then answer your own prayer as far as possible by resisting temptation, and leave that which you cannot do for yourselves for Jesus to do for you. You cannot be too guarded in your words and in your deportment, lest you invite the enemy to tempt you. Many of our youth, by their careless disregard of the warnings and reproofs given them, open the door wide for Satan to enter. With God's Word for our Guide and Jesus as our heavenly Teacher we need not be ignorant of His requirements or of Satan's devices and be overcome by his temptations. It will be no unpleasant task to be obedient to the will of God when we yield ourselves fully to be directed by His Spirit.

Testimonies, vol. 3, 376-377.

MEMORY



VERSE

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

—1 Corinthians 10:31



I received the notice that you are going to use color in the future. This I was sorry to hear because, though the magazine looks better, I can hardly read print over color due to my limited sight. Perhaps you can use the color so it doesn't become the background for printing. Thanks!

I enjoy the *Firm Foundation*; the format and detail make it a special publication. Continue to use these qualified writers to instruct each of us. Soon Jesus will come. We look for that day.

WW, Washington

We are enclosing a donation to help with the printing of *Our Firm Foundation*. Sounds great to go full-color! We appreciate the paper and the messages presented each month.

The events taking place indeed tell us that Jesus is coming soon. What a privilege we have in the messages by Ellen White!

IB, Oregon

Your monthly magazine *Our Firm Foundation* is a blessing to us! We are thankful that a friend introduced us to it. It is full of truths—God's truths. May God bless you all for your endeavors.

PD, Michigan

Thank you for the most informative *Our Firm Foundation*, which I do read and pass on to the brethren. May God continue to bless you all at Hope International as you work to save souls

that are in darkness and to prepare a people for the soon return of Jesus.

EC, Guyana

I am a lay preacher and a literature evangelist in our area of about fifty towns and villages. I have come across a booklet from your outfit entitled *Signposts of the Second Coming of Christ*. I find it to be one of the most wonderful booklets I have come across!

I would be very grateful if you will send me copies of the booklets to let me reach many people who do not understand anything about the Bible Sabbath, as the majority of the people here are Sundaykeepers.

I appreciate the good work you are doing to reach all people, nations, and tribes with the hidden treasure of the good news of the kingdom.

PA, Africa

I wish to express my sincere thanks to our heavenly Father for the great ministry you are doing. Thank you for your personal sacrifice. If only the mainstream church would return to the old-time religion.

Your books and *Our Firm Foundation* were introduced to me this year. Your books have been a great spiritual blessing to my wife and me. I use your books extensively in my talks and sermons. You have blessed my ministry and opened my eyes to many important issues.

AB, South Africa

Please renew my subscription to *Our Firm Foundation*. I don't want to miss a single issue. I like articles such as the one on the SDA Reformed Church—it was quite educational and fair. Many of us have been wondering about them.

I am unable to pay for my renewal at this time, but I am sending you a \$10 donation.

Please do not remove my name from your mailing list for any reason. I need *Our Firm Foundation*!

JR, California

I am applying for a free subscription to your magazine. I am a Seventh-day Adventist. I want your magazine to help me get insight into our faith. I hope you will give me the magazine. I am a student and have not enough money to pay for it. Thank you.

TT, Ghana

From Behind Prison Bars

I'm writing this note to let you know how much I appreciate your help with study material. I am much interested in the sanctuary subject. If you have anything on that it would be a blessing. Also, anything on Daniel and Revelation would be helpful. Anything from Ellen G. White also.

Thank you so much for your help.

GW, California

I am writing to you in hopes you might be able

to help in the study of prophecy—in the books of Daniel and Revelation. I am currently in prison and without funds, but whatever you could send me would be greatly appreciated.

A Christian brother here that is a Seventh-day Adventist has shared a lot with me about your views on the Bible, and I like very much what he teaches me. I have two books now—*The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy*. I just love reading them. I would really like a correspondence course and any other literature you can send. Thank you.

DY, California

I would like to receive your Bible study materials. In 1994 I learned about Jesus Christ and was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Then I turned away from God, and I've been in prison ever since. My grandpa told me how good your lessons are, and about the good books you send. I sure need them now as I try to find my way back to God.

VN, Louisiana

Greetings in the name of Jesus! I just ran across one of your tracts—*A Test and A Sign*. This is a very interesting concept. Do you have anything else on the Jewish Sabbath? Do you have a Bible study I could do, as I have a lot of spare time on my hands and I enjoy study.

JW, Oregon

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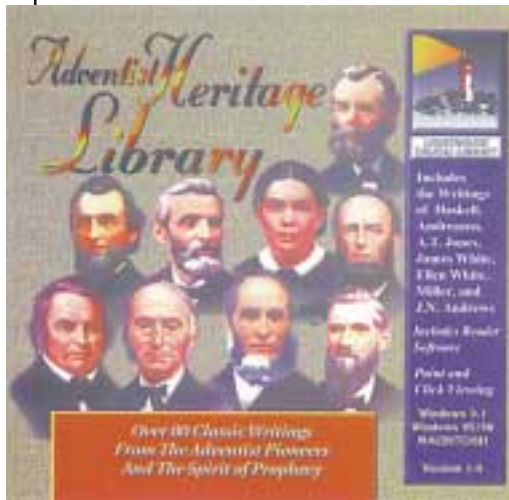
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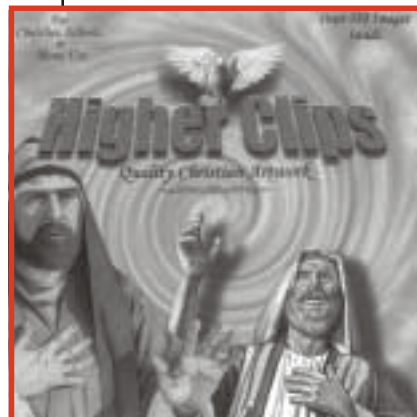
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