

Our Firm Foundation

Diligence
in the
Work of
Preparation

Volume 19, Number 3

March 2004

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary



Why Did Jesus Take Our Nature?

In the life of Jesus and in God's plan of salvation, we see that self-denial and sacrifice are required of every believer. Christ could have come as a King—surpassing all the wealth and power, all the pomp and glory of Solomon. Why did He choose to come as a peasant, poor without honor, to be a carpenter in Nazareth, a very wicked city?

Christ's heredity was of Rahab, a harlot, as well as of David and Abraham. "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Romans 1:3; 8:3. See also Hebrews 2:14, 17–18.

"Satan had pointed to Adam's sin as proof that God's law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. . . . For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation." *The Desire of Ages*, 117.

Why did Christ risk everything by placing Himself in such a difficult and dangerous position? He came not only as our substitute, but also as our example in humility, self-denial, and sacrifice, in overcoming all temptation.

"If he did not have man's nature, he could not be our example. If he was not a partaker of our nature, he could not have been tempted as

man has been. If it were not possible for him to yield to temptation, he could not be our helper. It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature." *Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890.

"As one with us, He must bear the burden of our guilt and woe. The Sinless One must feel the shame of sin. The peace lover must dwell with strife, the truth must abide with falsehood, purity with vileness. Every sin, every discord, every defiling lust that transgression had brought, was torture to His spirit.

"Alone He must tread the path; alone He must bear the burden. Upon Him who had laid off His glory and accepted the weakness of humanity the redemption of the world must rest. He saw and felt it all, but His purpose remained steadfast. Upon His arm depended the salvation of the fallen race, and He reached out His hand to grasp the hand of Omnipotent Love." *The Desire of Ages*, 111.

"Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ, notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature, the voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal." *Ibid.*, 112.

So then, we must understand that His life must be our life in self-denial, humility, faith, and sacrifice. This is what it means to be born again daily in the Spirit and to be clothed with His righteousness. See *Christ's Object Lessons*, 312.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." 1 Peter 2:21.

By accepting the Evangelical doctrine that the atonement was completed at the cross and that Jesus was born with the sinless human nature of Adam before the fall, most of our church pulpits no longer tell that Jesus is our example in overcoming all temptation and sin. Therefore, the sanctuary message is no longer relevant, and the warning message of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6–12 is no longer relevant to God's plan of salvation. We can then be saved in our sins; then character development is no longer necessary, the commandments of God cannot be kept perfectly by the power of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of Prophecy is considered an irrelevant antique of the nineteenth century; and the seventh-day Sabbath is not kept according to Isaiah 58:13. The remnant church is now entering into the final phase of the great controversy—paralyzed by our Laodicean condition which has become the Omega of apostasy. What a tragedy we have created in this crisis hour!

Shaky world economics, immorality, violence, war, famines, disease, and the destructive judgments of God—all should stir our souls. The angels of God, the Scriptures, and the Spirit of Prophecy are warning us that probation will soon close.

Friends, leaders, pastors, and laity let us now wake up before it is too late to repent.



It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days remaining for this world are few, and we must work 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.

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Our Firm Foundation is published monthly by:



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 Monday–Thursday: 8:00am–5:00pm
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Subscription Information

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United States: US \$18.75 per year
Canada and Mexico: US \$23.75 per year
Foreign (Surface Mail): US \$23.75 per year, (shipped quarterly)
Foreign (Air Mail): US \$60.00 per year
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Foreign Audio and Large Print Editions: Please inquire regarding postage.

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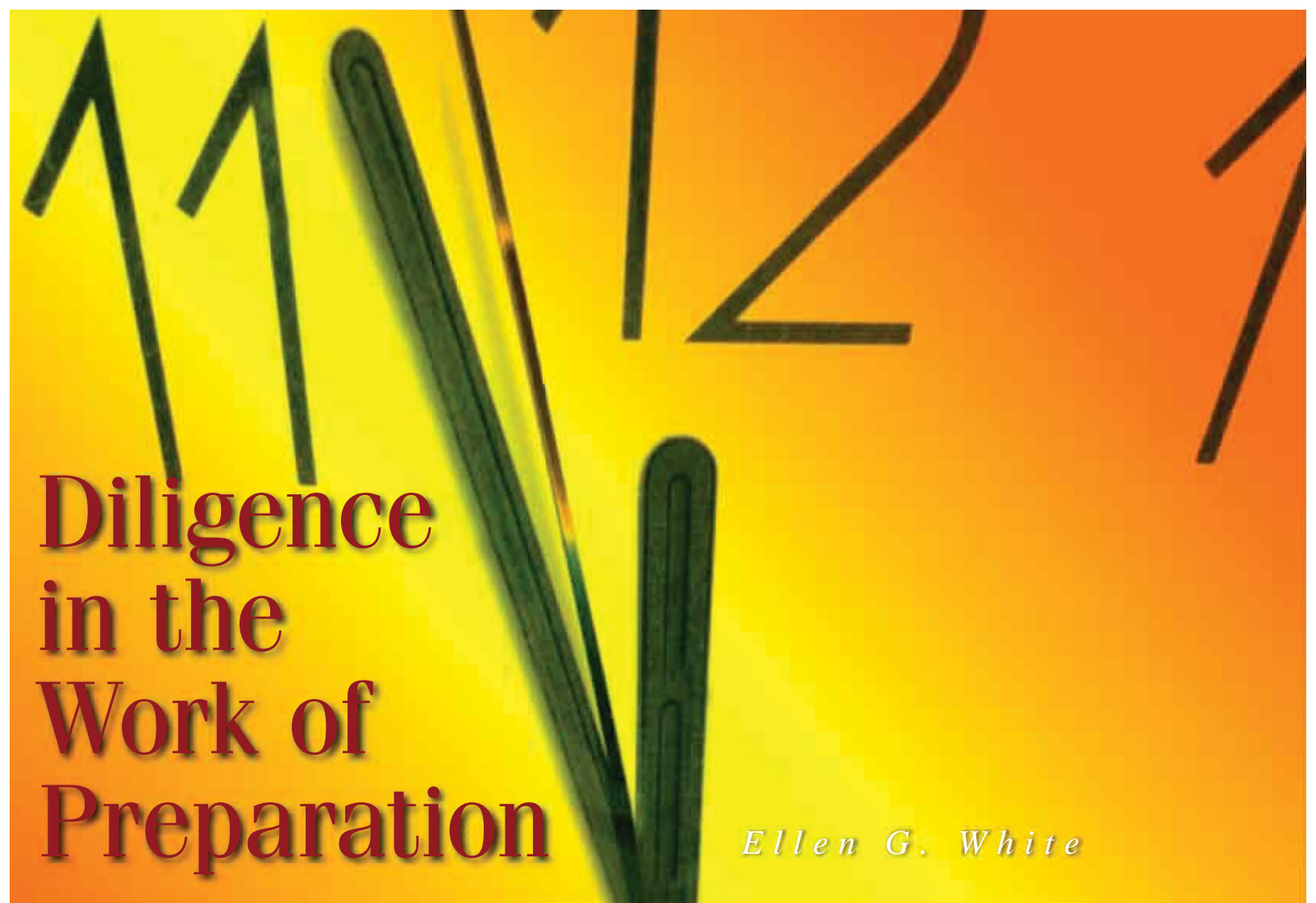
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Diligence in the Work of Preparation

Ellen G. White

The following remarks were delivered by Ellen G. White in Battle Creek, the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist church, on March 26, 1869.

I do not intend to speak long enough to weary you this afternoon. I have not strength, and should I consult my own feelings, I should not be here at all. I feel deeply for the people of God, but what to say or do to arouse them from their present lethargy, I know not. It seems that the strength of my life is nearly spent, but I shall not cease pleading with you until I fall at my post, if that is to be my fate.

The light of truth has shone in this place with great clearness. That light has been given line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. But the truth which it has been your privilege to enjoy has not been carefully cherished and carried into the practical

life. This is the reason why there is so little power among us at the present time.

There are many who inquire, Why is it that we have so little strength? Is it because heaven is sealed? Is it because there are no precious lessons in store for us? Is it because our source of strength and power is exhausted, and we can receive no more? Why is it that we are not all light in the Lord? He who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, by whose stripes we are healed, is high and lifted up, and the glory of His train fills the temple. Why is this glory withheld from us who are in a world of sin and trouble, sorrow and sadness, corruption and iniquity?

The trouble lies with ourselves. It is our iniquities which have separated us from God. It is because

we do not feel our need, because we do not hunger and thirst after righteousness, that we are not filled. The promise is that if we hunger and thirst after righteousness we shall be filled. The promise is to you, my brethren and sisters. It is to me, it is to every one of us. It is the hungering, thirsting souls who will be filled. We may come to Christ just as we are, with our weakness, our folly and imperfections, and in repentance drop at His feet, offering our petition in faith.

In spite of our errors, our continual backsliding, the voice of the long-suffering Saviour is heard inviting us, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. To the needy, the fainting, those who are weighed down with burden and care and perplexity, the invitation is, "Come." It is Christ's glory to encircle us in the arms

of His mercy and love, and bind up our wounds, to sympathize with those who need sympathy, and strengthen those who need strength. When we have been almost ready to sink, we have sent up the earnest cry, "Lord, save, or I perish," and how sweet it has been to find His hand stretched out to save. He has been to us just what He promised, a present help in every time of need.

The Lord has graciously invited all to come. When He was on earth He said to the unbelieving, obstinate Pharisees, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John 5:40. Oh, that this may never be said of us. There is life and peace and joy in Jesus Christ. He is the sinner's friend. There is power and glory and strength for us all in Him, and if we believe that this power and glory is ours, if we comply with the conditions laid down in His Word, we shall be strong in the strength of the mighty One.

"Be Ye Separate"

There are many who may well be represented by the vine that is trailing upon the ground, and entwining its tendrils about the roots and rubbish that lie in its path. To all such the message comes, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

There are conditions to meet if we would be blessed and honored and exalted by God. It is separation from the world, a refusal to touch those things which would separate our affections from God. God has the first and highest claim upon you. Set your affections upon Him and heavenly things. Your tendrils must be severed from everything earthly. You are exhorted to touch not the unclean thing, for in doing this you will yourself become unclean. It is impossible for you to

unite with those who are corrupt and still remain pure. "What fellowship . . . hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" Verses 14-15. God and Christ and the heavenly host would have man know that if he unites with the corrupt, he will become corrupt. If we are found mingling with the world, we shall share the fate of the world.

The requirements of God are set plainly before us, and the question to be settled is, Will we comply with them? Will we accept the conditions laid down in His Word—separation from the world? This is not the

elevating. Then it will be as natural for us to seek purity and holiness and separation from the world as it is for the angels of glory to execute the mission of love assigned them in saving mortals from the corrupting influence of the world.

Everyone who enters the pearly gates of the city of God will be a doer of the Word. He will be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is our privilege to realize the fullness there is in Christ, and be blessed by the provision made through Him. Ample provision has been made

It will be as natural for us to seek purity and holiness and separation from the world as it is for the angels of glory to execute the mission of love assigned them.

work of a moment or of a day. It is not accomplished by bowing at the family altar and offering up lip service, neither by public exhortation and prayer. It is a life-long work. Our consecration to God must be a living principle, interwoven with the life, and leading to self-denial and self-sacrifice. It must underlie all our thoughts and be the spring of every action. This will elevate us above the world, and separate us from its polluting influence.

All our actions are affected by our religious experience, and if this experience is founded on God, and we understand the mysteries of godliness, if we are daily receiving of the power of the world to come, and hold communion with God, and have the fellowship of the Spirit, if we are each day holding with a firmer grasp the higher life, and drawing closer and still closer to the bleeding side of the Redeemer, we shall have inwrought in us principles that are holy and

that we should be raised from the lowlands of earth, and have our affections fastened upon God and heavenly things.

Will this separation from the world in obedience to the divine command unfit us for doing the work the Lord has left us? Will it hinder us from doing good to those around us? No; the firmer hold we have on heaven, the greater will be our power of usefulness in the world. We should study to copy the Pattern, that the Spirit that dwelt in Christ may dwell in us. The Saviour was not found among the exalted and honorable of the world. He did not spend His time among those who were seeking their ease and pleasure. He went about doing good. His work was to help those who needed help, to save the lost and perishing, to lift up the bowed down, to break the yoke of oppression from those who were in bondage, to heal the afflicted, and to speak words of sympathy and

consolation to the distressed and sorrowing.

We are required to copy this Pattern. Let us be up and doing, seeking to bless the needy and comfort the distressed. The more we partake of the Spirit of Christ, the more we shall see to do for our fellow man. We shall be filled with a love for perishing souls, and shall find our delight in following the footsteps of the Majesty of heaven.

Satan's Special Work

Probation is about to close. In heaven the edict will soon go forth, "It is done." "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is

soul. He is working to remove everything of a spiritual nature from us, and in the place of the precious graces of Christ to crowd our hearts with all the evil traits of the carnal nature—hatred, evil surmising, jealousy, love of the world, love of self, love of pleasure, and pride of life. We need to be fortified against the incoming of the foe, who is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, for if we are not watchful and prayerful, these evils will enter the heart and crowd out all that is good.

Many who profess to believe the Word of God do not seem to understand the deceptive working of the enemy. They do not realize that

be granted them and that the Prince of life be crucified? Why did such blindness come upon the people? It was because they overlooked the Word of Life, because they failed to search the Scriptures.

In these last days many are weighed in the balances and found wanting, because they suffer their minds to be engrossed with things of little importance, while eternal truth is neglected. The truth of God, which would elevate, sanctify, refine, and fit us for the finishing touch of immortality, is set aside for things of minor importance. Oh, that this blindness might pass away, and men and women understand the work that Satan is accomplishing among them.

Let Your Light So Shine

Provision has been made whereby the communication between heaven and our souls may be free and open, that we may have the influence of the holy angels. We can place ourselves where rays of light and glory from the throne of God will be given us in abundance. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God as seen in the face of Jesus Christ may shine upon us, and we may stand in the position where it can be said of us, "Ye are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14.

Were it not for the communication between heaven and earth, there would be no light in the world. Like Sodom and Gomorrah all would perish beneath the wrath of an offended God. But the world is not left in darkness. The long-suffering and mercy of God is still extended to the children of men. It is His design that the divine rays of light which emanate from the throne of God shall be received in our hearts and reflected by the children of light.

The love revealed in the Saviour's life of self-denial and self-sacrifice is to be seen in the lives of His followers. We are called upon "so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John 2:6. The cause of our weak-

*Satan is at work, even among the people of God,
to cause disunion and difference of opinion.
There is biting and devouring among them,
and Satan designs that they shall
be consumed one of another.*

filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11–12. Then the last prayer for sinners will have been offered, the last tear shed, the last warning given, the last entreaty made. The sweet voice of mercy will be heard no more.

This is why Satan is making such mighty efforts to secure men and women in his snare. He has come down with great power, knowing that his time is short. His special work now is to secure professing Christians in his ranks, that he may through them allure and destroy souls. The enemy is playing the game of life for every

the end of time is near. But Satan knows it, and while men sleep he works. The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are controlling men and women. Satan is at work, even among the people of God, to cause disunion and difference of opinion. There is biting and devouring among them, and Satan designs that they shall be consumed one of another. Selfishness, corruption, and evil of every kind is taking a firm hold upon hearts.

With many the precious Word of God is neglected. A novel or a story book engages the attention and fascinates the mind. Anything that will excite the imagination is eagerly devoured, while the Word of God is set aside. Why was it that the Jewish nation rejected and turned from Christ, insisting that a robber

ness lies in our refusal to obey this command. On every side there are opportunities to work for our fellow men, not only in supplying their temporal wants, but their spiritual necessities. It is our duty to lead souls to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. It is important that we fill aright our position in the world, in society, and in the church; but we cannot do this unless we have a firm hold upon righteousness.

Our faith must reach within the veil, whither our Forerunner has for us entered. It is possible for us to take hold by faith of the eternal promises of God, but to do this we must have a faith that will not be denied, a steadfast, immovable faith, that will take hold of the realities of the unseen world.

It is our privilege to stand with the light of heaven upon us. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. It was no easier for Enoch to live a righteous life in his day than it is for us at the present time. The world in Enoch's time was no more favorable to a growth in grace and holiness than it is now, but Enoch devoted time to prayer and communion with God, and this enabled him to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is his devotion to God that fitted him for translation.

We are living amid the perils of the last days, and we must receive our strength from the same source as did Enoch. We must walk with God. A separation from the world is required of us. We cannot remain free from this pollution unless we follow the example of faithful Enoch and walk with God. But how many are slaves to the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

This is the reason why they are not partakers of the divine nature, and do not escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. They are serving and honoring self. Their constant study is, What shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed.

Many talk of sacrifice, when they do not know what sacrifice is. They have not tasted its first draught. They talk of the cross of Christ, they profess the faith, but they have had no experience in self-denial, lifting the cross and bearing it after their Lord. If they were partakers of the divine nature, the same spirit that dwelt in their Lord would dwell in them. The same tenderness and love, the same pity and compassion, would be manifested in their lives. They

reason you should have something to say to him. The light given you, you should not hide under a bushel. You are not to keep it for yourself alone. This is entirely contrary to the will of God. Let your light shine before men, is the command. Will you let it shine—by your words, your deeds?

It may be understood that you believe the Sabbath, that you believe in the Lord's soon return; but what good will that do your neighbor unless you carry this belief

It is important that we fill aright our position in the world, in society, and in the church; but we cannot do this unless we have a firm hold upon righteousness.

would not then wait to have the needy and unfortunate come to them, and be entreated to feel for their woes. It would be as natural for them to aid the needy and minister to their wants as it was for Christ to go about doing good.

Every man, woman, and youth who professes the religion of Christ should realize the responsibility resting upon them. All should feel that this is an individual work, an individual warfare, an individual preaching of Christ in the daily practice. If each would realize this, and take hold of the work, we should be mighty as an army with banners. The heavenly dove would hover over us. The Sun of Righteousness would shine upon us, and the light of the glory of God would no more be shut away from us than it was from the devoted Enoch.

The command is given us, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." It is not for you to say, I have nothing to do with my neighbor; he is buried in the world; I am not his keeper. For this very

into your daily life? You may talk of being a follower of Christ, but this will not benefit those around you unless you imitate the great Example.

It is not merely by reading or writing that you battle for your faith, but by showing your good works, by leading sinners to the Lamb of God. Your profession may be as high as heaven, but it will not save you or your fellow men unless you are a Christian. Your example will go farther toward enlightening the world than all your profession. We want the living preacher carried out in the living example. In this way your light will shine, and others, seeing your good works, will glorify your Father which is in heaven.

If You Had One More Hour of Probation

Oh, that the Lord would give us to feel as we have never felt before. If you knew that you had but one more hour of probation, you would change your course. You would not dare to stand in the position you are

in today. If you knew that probation would close in one year, you would not continue the course you are now pursuing, and yet you do not know that you will live one day longer. You have not one day to call your own. We know not how soon death may be feeling for the heart-strings of any one of us. We know

him take hold of my strength," He says, "that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." Isaiah 27:5. This is a blessed promise. Many times, when I have been discouraged and almost in despair, I have come to the Lord with this promise, and said, "Let me take hold of Thy strength, that

calls upon every one of you to take up life's burdens, and engage in the warfare as you have never done before.

A Time for Earnest Prayer

You who are gossipers, who love to speak of the faults of this one and that one, arouse, I beg of you, and look into your own hearts. Take your Bibles, and go to God in earnest prayer. Ask Him to teach you to know your own heart, to understand your weakness, your sins and follies, in the light of eternity. Ask Him to show you yourself as you stand in the sight of heaven. This is the prayer we should offer.

I would close up my instruments of music, and bowing before God, plead with Him as I had never pled before. In humility send your petition to heaven, and do not rest day or night until you can say, Hear what the Lord has done for me; until you can bear a living testimony, and tell of victories won. This is the time to sing the songs of Zion.

Jacob wrestled with the angel all night before he gained the victory. When morning broke the angel said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." But Jacob answered, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Genesis 32:26. Then his prayer was answered. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob," said the Angel, "but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God, . . . and hast prevailed." Verse 28.

We need the determined perseverance of Jacob, and the unyielding faith of Elijah. Time after time Elijah sent his servant to see if the cloud was rising, but no cloud was to be seen. At last, after seven times, the servant returned with the word, "I see a little cloud, as large as a man's hand." See 1 Kings 18:44. Did Elijah stand back and say, "I will not receive this evidence. I will wait until the heavens gather blackness"? No. He said, It is time for us to be going. He ventured all upon that token from God, and sent his

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If you think you can lay down the oars, and still make your way up stream, you are mistaken. It is only by earnest effort, by using the oars with all your might, that you can stem the current.

not how soon the axe may be laid at the root of the tree, and the sentence go forth, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke 13:7. Will you pass on in your sinful state, with envy and jealousy and hatred in your heart? While you do this, you are no more fit for heaven than Satan himself.

If you think you can lay down the oars, and still make your way up stream, you are mistaken. It is only by earnest effort, by using the oars with all your might, that you can stem the current. How many there are as weak as water, when they have a never-failing Source of strength. Heaven is ready to impart to us, that we may be mighty in God, and attain the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.


But who of you in the past year has been making progress in the way of holiness? What increase of spiritual power have you gained? Who has come off conqueror over the foe? Who has been enabled to gain one precious attainment after another, until envy, pride, malice, jealousy, and every evil stain, has been swept away, and only the graces of the Spirit remain—meekness, forbearance, gentleness, charity?

God will help us if we take hold of the help He has provided. "Let

I may make peace with Thee; and I shall make peace with Thee." And as I have laid hold of the strength of God, I have found a peace which passeth understanding.

I know that the words I speak to you are truth, and that you need them. Oh, that you would arouse, and wrench yourself from the grasp of the enemy, that you would engage in the battle of life in earnest, putting on every piece of the armor, that you may war successfully against the wily foe. Satan is already weaving his net about you, and ensnaring your soul. He does not wait for his prey to be brought to him. He goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But does he always roar? No; when it serves his purpose best, he sinks his voice to the softest whisper, and, wrapped in garments of light, appears as an angel from heaven. Men have so little knowledge of his wiles, so little understanding of the mystery of iniquity, that the enemy out-generals them almost every time.

Many who have lived under the blazing light of truth act as though they had nothing to do. They watch another playing the game of life for the soul, and stand by as though they had nothing to do but watch how the game is carried on. God



Shrimp, Status Stones, and Obedience

Joe Crews

Let me begin by giving you some interesting facts about a little marine animal—the shrimp. You might think that the shrimp is an insignificant creature, but we can find spiritual lessons throughout the book of nature. The shrimp molts, or sheds his skin six or seven times per year. Each time this occurs the shrimp places a small rock in a certain spot in his head. This stone is very, very important for the shrimp. As the shrimp is constantly being tumbled around by the waves and currents it is difficult for him to maintain a sense of direction. However, by feeling the gravitational pull on this stone, called a “status stone,”¹ he is able to keep himself swimming right side up.

A number of years ago a marine biologist performed a very interesting experiment with shrimp. He had an aquarium with twenty-three shrimp, but instead of lining the bottom of the tank with rocks, he used bits of steel. When it came time for the shrimp to molt, each shrimp picked up a piece of steel to put in his head. The scientist then brought in a powerful magnet and

put it over the top of the aquarium and immediately every one of the shrimp flipped upside down and began to swim around upside down. The tug of the magnet was stronger than the pull of gravity. Then to complete his experiment, the scientist brought another shrimp out of the ocean and put it in the tank with the others. This shrimp, of course, swam around the tank right side up.

If shrimp could talk, I can imagine that some very amusing conversations would have taken place when the final shrimp was added to the tank. I can imagine the twenty-three shrimp whispering to each other, “Look at that nut over there. What does he think he is doing? Does he think he is going to teach us how to swim?” They had no way of knowing that they were all wrong, and that the newcomer was the only one that was correct. The problem with the twenty-three shrimp was that their status stones had been tampered with and they could not tell up from down.

Each of us needs a status stone upon which we can depend. We

need the Word of God hidden in our hearts and minds to safeguard us against the deceptions of Satan. If we do not have this unfailing status stone we will be tossed to and fro, trusting in our emotions or in what we see around us, and we will certainly be taken captive by Satan at his will.

No Union Between the World and the Spirit of God

Following God’s Word is not always easy. It requires self-denial and self-sacrifice. The Bible teaches clearly that there can be no compromise and no collaboration between the world and the Spirit. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Galatians 5:17.

In Romans 8 Paul carries this thought a step farther, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. . . . Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mor-

tify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Romans 8:8, 12–17.

This principle must be clearly fixed in our minds. Those who choose to walk after the Spirit and those who choose to follow the flesh are going in two different directions. There will be no divided hearts in heaven. We cannot continue to sin and be saved.

*Any preacher whose "status stone" is straight will say exactly what Jesus said—
"Go and sin no more."*

Now we ought to mark that down friends. We hear a very strange, alien philosophy—even in Adventism—that you can keep on willfully, deliberately sinning and still have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. I tell you, that is a lie that will cause millions to be lost. And there are a lot of Seventh-day Adventists who are beginning to believe that lie.

Any preacher whose "status stone" is straight will say exactly what Jesus said—"Go and sin no more." Jesus did not say to the woman caught in adultery, "Go, and taper off on your sin." You will never read in the Bible that you are to *diminish* or *reduce* the amount of sin you commit. It says, Don't do it!

Sometimes it is a difficult message to give, but I am constrained by the Word of God that gives fearful rebukes to shepherds of the sheep who dare to alter God's clear injunctions. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law." Malachi 2:7–9.

God declares that a minister is contemptible if he diminishes His word (gives only a partial message). In my ministry I dare not teach

men that they can safely exclude one of the requirements of God. The Sabbath applies to the poor man with seven children who has worked seven days a week as much as it applies to anyone else, and the seventh commandment applies to the spouse trapped in a loveless marriage just as much as it applies to anyone else. I may feel sorry for those people, and many times I do, but I have no right to diminish God's Word or His holy requirements.

God has not given me the right to change His law. I cannot modify or adjust it to meet the personal needs of anyone, no matter the circumstances; I dare not change the "status stone" in anyone's mind. We must take something from outside

ourselves—God's Word, which contains His law—and put it in our mind so that it will be our infallible guide. See Psalms 119:11; 40:8. We cannot follow the crowd, we cannot follow our feelings, or we will be like those shrimp with steel in their heads. The Word is what God has given to me and every other watchman to proclaim, and I have no right to measure truth by any other standard.

Every person in the world will be judged by God's law and that law is a perfect reflection of God's character. In Scripture both are described using the same words. For example, in Romans 7:12 we are told, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." These same words are used to describe the character of God in 1 Peter 1:16; Nahum 1:7; and Deuteronomy 32:4. The purpose of salvation is to reproduce the character of God in fallen humanity. When this transformation takes place in our hearts we will delight in the law of God just as Jesus did.

"He Pleased God"

Jesus taught a profound truth in His well-known prayer in John 17. He prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." John 17:21.

Jesus longed for His followers to experience the unity of spirit and purpose that He had with His Father. Can you imagine the divine harmony of being one with Jesus, just as He was one with the Father? Jesus reflected the Father's character and we are to reflect His character in the same way. He was the personification of the law and so we are called to be by the grace of Christ.

Jesus said in John 8:29, "And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." In everything Jesus did He lived to please His Father. One of the modern translations of

Ephesians 5:10 reads, “Always be trying to find out what best pleases the Lord” (The Twentieth Century Translation). What a fantastic motto for every Christian!

We should strive always to live in a way that pleases God and that would certainly include being obedient to the Ten Commandments. However, that is just the first step. Even a debased sinner knows that it is wrong to kill and steal and lie.

The apostles John and Paul pointed out the next step. “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”

1 John 3:22. “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.” 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

This was the experience of Enoch. “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Hebrews 11:5.

Throughout the Bible we find instruction and lessons that show us what is pleasing to God. When we find those things in the Bible we ought to conform to them. If we truly love God and He is the object of our highest affections it will be our constant desire to please Him.

This is the experience God desires for His people. He does not ask for just an outward conforming to the letter of the law, He longs to write His law in our hearts and minds so that surrender to His will becomes the very fabric of our nature.

Abiding in Christ Produces Joy

“I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5.

The branch can only live and bear fruit as long as it is connected to the vine. If there is any separation made the life of the vine will not flow into the branch. Using this illustration, Jesus taught that unless we are constantly connected to Him we cannot bear fruit. Without Christ’s power in our lives, we cannot obey His will or do those things that please Him. We can try. We can put on an outward show. Yet it is only when we have a living, dynamic connection with the vine that we can live in a way that will please God.

should see that we have been with Jesus and that His joy is flowing out from us.

Legalists?

Many people today ridicule the truth that through divine power man can obey God’s commandments. In fact, they say that those who believe in the necessity of obedience to all of God’s commandments are legalists. What is legalism? It is trying to obey the law through your own power *without* a divine union with Jesus and in order to *earn* salvation.

The obedience of legalism is rigid and joyless; while true obedience is full of joy and real pleasure.

There are two verses, which I use often in my evangelism, and they illustrate this point very well. “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” John 15:10–11.

Do you want to be joyful? The Bible says, “Keep the commandments of God.” Many people think that God’s law is a code of restrictions that if kept will strip all the enjoyment out of life. Jesus said, If you want to have joy that is full, keep My commandments. Obedience will bring pleasures far beyond anything we can imagine in this world.

Christians should be the happiest people in the world. Our faces should be lighted up with a holy joy because deep down inside we have the very source of joy. Everyone who comes in contact with us

Let me remind you that legalism and true obedience—the obedience which flows out from love for Christ—look alike in the beginning. But there is a big difference. The obedience of one is rigid and joyless; while the obedience of the other is full of joy and real pleasure.

We need to be careful to avoid legalism, to test our motives, but there is no need to carefully consider the teachings of those who promote disobedience. If a person is willfully and deliberately disobeying God and transgressing the commandments, according to the Scriptures, that person does not even know Jesus. “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.” Matthew 7:21. (All emphasis by the author.)

No matter how much they talk about love, no matter how much they talk about Jesus, the Bible says that their religion is vain. “He that

saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4.

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not [does not transgress God's law]: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." 1 John 3:6.

Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." Today the world has a very twisted idea about love. On bumper stickers

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." John 17:21-23.

What a powerful text! Jesus said, My people are going to be just like

People will laugh at you and say, "That is legalism." Let them scoff. God's Word is clear that those who truly love God will obey His law as fruit of their love. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. . . . If a man love me, he will keep my words." John 14:21, 23.

Was Jesus promoting legalism when He commended the people that loved Him so much that they wanted to obey Him in everything? No! He called those who were striving to obey His words His mother, brothers and sisters—His closet kin.

Do not let anyone intimidate you by calling that legalism. We do not deny Christ's love, or grace, or righteousness by upholding His law. One is a reflection of the other. If you have received Jesus, you have received His law. And if you have Christ abiding in your heart you will have the principles of His law abiding in your heart, and this will be demonstrated by your conformity to His will and your obedience to that law.

Willful sin is absolutely incompatible with the righteousness of God. God does not save us to then uphold us in sin. He saves us *from* sin. He does not minister to us *in* sin, for if so, He would be a minister of sin. He is a minister of righteousness—right doing.

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Acts 5:32. The Holy Spirit does not abide in the heart of those who are disobeying Him, willfully and deliberately. This is a very strange doctrine, a fearful erroneous doctrine that has crept in among us as a people. I meet Seventh-day Adventists all the time who have the idea that they can be willfully breaking God's law and still have the peace and assurance of God in their hearts. This can never be.

God is preparing a people who will vindicate His name and His

continued on page 15...

Do you want to be closer to Jesus than His own mother and His own brothers and sisters? Then seek to obey Him, and live to please Him.

you can read, "Smile if you love Jesus," "Honk if you love Jesus" and "Wave if you love Jesus." That is not what Jesus said. If we truly love Jesus, He said that we would demonstrate our love by obeying His Law and doing those things that please Him.

A Servant of Sin or of Christ?

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John 8:31, 34.

Our works reveal who is our master. If you are serving sin, you are in the family of sin and you are not in the family of God. Jesus did not mince words when he expounded this truth in John 8. He told the Pharisees, who claimed to be the sons of Abraham, yet were seeking to take His life, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." John 8:44.

If we are truly in the family of God then we will walk in the example of Jesus, and He prayed that this experience would be ours:

me. They will be in My family, and their works will show their relationship to Me.

My Mother and Brethren

Is obedience really important? Let me share with you the strongest, most powerful words that I have found concerning obedience in the Bible. I hope you will calmly and carefully read them because they have a powerful message for our hearts. "And it was told him [Jesus] by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the Word of God, and do it." Luke 8:20-21.

What an amazing passage of Scripture! When the people came to tell Jesus that His mother and closest relatives wanted to see Him, Jesus said, Who is my mother? Who are My brethren? They are the ones who hear and do the things that I say.

Do you want to be closer to Jesus than His own mother and His own brothers and sisters? Then seek to obey Him, and live to please Him.

The Combat Zone

Ralph Larson

When I publicly defended the purity of our historic Seventh-day Adventist faith in Loma Linda, I was promptly accused of being divisive, combative, controversial, troublesome, etc. A tiny group of elders set up a meeting to discuss my case, and asked the Conference president to be present. I had to remind them that I was responsible to the Conference Committee, not to them, and that I would not submit to any “Kangaroo Court” proceedings, but that I would gladly submit to a trial before the Conference Committee.

An elder visited me in my office, and told me that I was not preaching the true gospel. This rather surprised me. In thirty years of preaching and teaching my gospel had always been regarded as true. Why was it not true in Loma Linda? The elder advised me to read the sermons of my predecessor, Elder William Lehman. There I would find the true gospel, he said. I complied, but was still puzzled. When I reported this to the elder, he said, “You need to read the writings of Dr. Edward Heppenstall.”

I readily agreed to do this. I had studied under Dr. Heppenstall in

college, and had greatly appreciated his classes. I did not know then that he had been a member of the group that had produced *Questions On Doctrine*. I was soon able to secure three books. Two of them were entirely written by Dr. Heppenstall and the third had a section written by him. The first, *Salvation Unlimited*,¹ was published in 1974, three years before my arrival in Campus Hill church. The second, *Perfection*,² was published in 1975. The third, *The Man Who Is God*,³ was published in 1977, the year in which these events were occurring.

But I did not find in them the help that I needed. Some passages in them fervently promoted the Calvinistic doctrine that Christians can not and need not stop sinning. Other passages as fervently denied it. From the many examples of self-contradiction that could be cited, I submit two:

“Sinless perfection is God’s ideal for His children. . . . *This will be realized with the return of Christ, not before.*” *Perfection*, 63. (All emphasis supplied by the author.)

“The Bible rejects every possibility of our reaching sinless perfection in this life.” *Perfection*, 73.

“The Christian should have no difficulty in rendering honor to the law by his obedience to it.” *Salvation Unlimited*, 226.

So the three books—one published in 1974 (*Salvation Unlimited*), another in 1975 (*Perfection*), and the third (*The Man Who Is God*) in 1977—were in total disagreement. It would be impossible for me to agree with all of them. I had to make a choice. I chose to agree with the book that was most loyal to our faith (*Salvation Unlimited*) and to disagree with the ones that seemed to be supporting the Calvinist doctrine of salvation in sin (*Perfection* and *The Man Who Is God*).

When Dr. Heppenstall learned that I was disagreeing with him, he was most displeased. He called and demanded that I provide a time for him to come to the Campus Hill church to defend his views. If I did not comply with his wishes, he said, he would take the matter to my Conference president, and I would be in very serious trouble.

I arranged for him to speak at a prayer meeting. I also spoke, and explained some of the reasons for my disagreement with him. Then I had reason to remember something that Walt Blehm had told me

while he was urging me to come to Campus Hill. He had said:

“Ralph, the Campus Hill pulpit is one of the three most sensitive pulpits in our church. What you preach there on Sabbath morning will be discussed at our Washington headquarters on Sunday morning.”

That didn’t mean very much to me at the time, but it proved to be true in regard to that prayer meeting. The news did not stop in Washington. It went on around the world.

And that was only the beginning. I soon had to point out to Desmond Ford that he had grossly misrepresented a statement of Ellen White and had actually reversed the obvious meaning of her words. He demanded evidence, which I readily supplied. Some were deeply offended by this.

I had to deal with a staff problem. One of my associate pastors was fervently following both Ford

This was a disappointment. If that large committee, chosen from all over the world, had been permitted to announce their findings in the *Review*, that would have made a significant and meaningful difference. But the report simply said that the question whether Christians can not and need not stop sinning was being left open for further study.

But a few weeks later Dr. Ford “came out of the closet” and launched his now well-known, open attack on our Sanctuary doctrine. He had told one of my associate pastors that ninety-five per cent of all of our church’s ministers were with him. He apparently thought that this was his time to boldly challenge the church and take control of a large part of it.

I was one of those who were requested to analyze Dr. Ford’s attack on the Sanctuary doctrine and send my findings to the General

fictitious, fake, and false. The other two were partial untruths.

I wrote all of this into a paper called a “Reply.” But then I had a problem. There was not time enough to get my “Reply” to the General Conference, and there copied and mailed out to the people who would need it at Glacier View.

What should I do? I had my secretaries make copies, and I loaded them into my suitcase and took a plane for the General Conference Session in Dallas, Texas. I would deliver them myself.

I had a list of the persons who would be on the Glacier View committee to consider the Ford problem. They were of course attending the General Conference Session. I spent most of a day locating their motel rooms and having the clerks put a copy of my “Reply” into their mail boxes. When this was done, I was ready to go home. Business meetings, board meetings, and committee meetings have always been a drag on my spirit.

But I was rooming with two minister friends, and they strongly objected. They insisted that it was my duty to stay there. I finally agreed to stay one more day to see if there was anything more for me to do.

In the morning I filled my brief case with copies of my “Reply” and went to the auditorium. It was a round building, with halls that encircled it. As I entered one hall a delegate from some far away country came up to me. “Are you Ralph Larson?” He asked.

“Yes,” I answered.

“Did you write a reply to Desmond Ford?”

“Yes.”

“Is there any way that I can get a copy? I need it badly.”

“Yes,” I said. “I have a copy for you right here.”

Then I walked a short distance and it happened again. And again. And again. So my “Reply” went home with delegates from many countries.

“What you preach there on Sabbath morning will be discussed at our Washington headquarters on Sunday morning.”

and Robert Brinsmead, and promoting their teachings. This was leading to much confusion and very severe tensions in the church.

I was summoned to Washington to be part of a committee that would examine Dr. Ford’s teaching that Christians can not and need not stop sinning. The Administration would publish our findings in the *Review*. A very clear majority of the large committee (120 persons) supported the conclusion of a sub-committee, that Dr. Ford’s opinions were not correct.

But the Administration decided to not publish this in the *Review*.

Conference. There was a General Conference Session coming up soon, and after that a special committee would meet at Glacier View to consider the Ford problem.

I did not respond to this request promptly. I was growing weary of the conflict, and thought that I had stopped enough “bullets” for a while. I would let someone else do it this time. But then my conscience started bothering me, and I finally undertook the assignment.

The results were appalling. I counted 25 separate arguments in Dr. Ford’s attack on the Sanctuary. Of these, I judged 23 to be totally

Then Attorney Lew Walton from Bakersfield, California approached me. "Ralph," he said, "If you will give me your permission, I will mail a copy of this paper to every Seventh-day Adventist minister in North America."

Of course I gave him my permission, but then a high-ranking church official who was standing by said, "Wouldn't it be better to get the approval of the President before doing that mailing?"

I innocently accepted his suggestion and gave him a copy for the President.

I should have known better. It was a tragic blunder. But I was not schooled in politics. I would learn my bitter lesson when the report came back from the President's office:

"It's a wonderful paper, but don't mail it out."

So just as the members of the world church were not permitted to receive in the *Review* a clear state-

ment of what had happened at the Washington meeting, so the ministers in North America were not permitted to receive a clear exposure of the falsehoods of Desmond Ford. That's politics.

So for me it was back to Loma Linda and more of the same. But I was growing weary of it all, and I began planning for early retirement. By accepting a reduction in my sustentation (pension) I could retire at age sixty-one and forget the endless controversies and the hassles. I began thinking in that direction.

But then something wonderful happened. I received a question from the General Conference. Would I consider going to the Philippines to teach evangelism in The Far Eastern Theological Seminary?

Would I consider it? I leaped at it!

I would teach evangelistic procedures to the ministers who came there for graduate study, then take

groups of them into cities of the Far East to conduct evangelistic meetings. That would be pure joy.

And I could walk away from the "combat zone" in Loma Linda and forget about the tensions and the controversies that were plaguing the church in America. Hallelujah!

There was a grim surprise waiting for me in the Philippines, but I was blissfully unaware of it. I went on my way rejoicing. ❀

References:

- ¹ *Salvation Unlimited: Perspectives in Righteousness by Faith*, Review and Herald, Washington, DC.
- ² *Perfection: the Impossible Possibility*, by Herbert E. Douglass, Edward Heppenstall, Hans K. LaRondelle, C. Mervyn Maxwell, Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, TN. [The authors of this book presented four perspectives on the subject of "perfection"—two that indicate that Christian perfection is impossible, and two that indicate that perfection is a possibility.]
- ³ *The Man Who Is God: A Study of the Person and Nature of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man*, Review and Herald, Washington, DC.

...continued from page 12

government—who will refute the false charges that have been brought against God by Satan in the beginning. Satan charged God with requiring obedience to a law that could not be kept. The only way that God can vindicate Himself before the universe is to produce a people, through the power of the gospel, who will be obedient to that law. A divine experiment is taking place in the lives of God's people today—a demonstration of grace and power that will utterly destroy Satan's charges.

There Is Hope for You!

As you read this you might be discouraged because you have been failing and sinning and you fear that you can never be saved. I bring you hope and encouragement. In Jesus Christ, you may claim power and deliverance from your besetting sins. God is still waiting for you to turn in true humility and repen-

tance and ask for cleansing, and He will give you His forgiveness. Christ cannot minister to you His peace while you are choosing to sin; but if you choose to turn away from your sins, He is waiting to forgive you and to welcome you into His family.

Think of the experience of Peter when he denied Jesus at the very last moments of His life. After he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing he went out into the darkness and wept. Do you know how Peter felt that day? All of us have committed grievous sins and later wept and wondered if God could ever forgive us and take us back again. But remember when the angel spoke to the women at the tomb on resurrection morning? He said, "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said." Mark 16.7. Jesus was waiting with open arms to forgive the repentant Peter and welcome him home.

If you have wandered away from God and like Peter denied Him by a life of sin, the Holy Spirit is calling you to open your heart and mind and let Him abide with you once again. He longs to give you the joy and peace that comes when we surrender ourselves completely to His will and live to please Him. Will you answer His call? ❀

References:

- ¹ This stone is put in the "statocyst," an organ of balance that exists in many invertebrates. The stone is also called a "stone of balance" or "stone of standing."

The late Joe Crews was the founder of Amazing Facts, a ministry now located in California. This article was adapted with permission from a sermon preached at a Hartland Institute camp meeting.

To purchase a recording of Joe Crews' sermon, contact Hartland Publications by calling 1-800-774-3566, and request his sermon entitled "Walk Not After the Flesh, but After the Spirit." You may also order it online at www.hartlandpublications.com.

The Study of the Testimonies

Part 2



John N. Loughborough

At the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference of 1893, John N. Loughborough, church pioneer and historian, reviewed some of the experiences which confirmed the authenticity of the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy through Ellen G. White. His sermons were transcribed and recorded in the General Conference Daily Bulletin. We here continue his series which will be concluded next month. — Editors.

My mind is impressed this morning to read again Ephesians 4:13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." In my first talk I told something about the work of the gifts in producing unity; but that is not all there is to it, for our text says "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." And here is this little work of Sister White's, *Steps to Christ*, which Brother Jones has called the "Gospel Primer" — yes, and it's a whole library — in what direction does it point? Is it not in this very direction of growing up

to the full measure of the stature of Christ?

I have here Testimony, No. 1 — a vision given November 20, 1855, in the first Seventh-day Adventist meetinghouse ever built in Battle Creek. I read from the third paragraph. "Exaltation has come into the ranks; there must be more humility. There is too much of an independence of spirit indulged in among the messengers. This must be laid aside, and there must be a drawing together of the servants of God. There has been too much of a spirit to ask, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Said the angel: 'Yea, *thou art* thy brother's keeper. Thou shouldst have a watchful care for thy brother, be interested for his welfare, and cherish a kind, loving spirit toward him. Press together, press together.'"¹ There is the very root of order among us, laid right down in that testimony; and in the second meetinghouse that was built definite steps were taken toward organization.

I want now to connect with my text another scripture found in the first chapter of first John: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we

have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Verses 1, 3, 6–7. Then how is it we are to get this true harmony and unity? Why, the text tells us that our fellowship is with Christ and the Father; so if we all have the spirit of Christ in our hearts and have fellowship with Him, there'll be no trouble about all having the same mind, and all being in unity. You remember the proposition in philosophy that "two things that are like the same thing are like each other," and it is just so here. Two minds that are like the mind of Christ will be like each other.

I have here a recent special testimony to brethren in responsible

positions, and I read on page 11 these words: "Now is the time for God's people to take up the duties that lie next [to] them. Be faithful in the little things; for on the right performance of these hang great results. Do not leave the work which needs to be done, because it appears to your judgment to be small and inconsiderable. Make up every waste place, repair the breaches as fast as they occur. . . . Let all go to work to help some one who needs help. There is a cause for the great weakness in our churches, and that cause is hard to remove. It is self. Men have none too much will, but they must have it wholly sanctified to God. They need to fall on the Rock and be broken. Self must be crucified in every one who shall enter the gates of the city of God. The fierce spirit which rises up in the hearts of some in the church when anything does not please them, is the spirit of Satan, and not the spirit of Christ.

"Is it not fully time that we return to our first love and be at peace among ourselves? We must show ourselves to be not only Bible readers, but Bible believers. If we are united to Christ, we shall be united to one another. 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' John 13:34. 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.' 'For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.' Romans 15:1, 3-5."² So then where is the working of the gifts to bring us?—"Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

I want now to read a few texts which speak more about this fullness. John 1:14, 16: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Also Ephesians 3:17-19: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and

but somehow did not grasp the real point that was in them. This means that God is clothing His Word with power. You can't separate the message from the Testimonies. Just as well try to get along without eyes or nerves or muscles in your body, as try to carry forward the message without them.

I read from Testimony, No. 8, written in 1861: "We must study the life of Christ and learn what it is to confess Him before the world. In order to confess Christ we must have Him to confess. No one can truly confess Christ unless the mind and Spirit of Christ are in him. If a form of godliness, or an acknowledgment of the truth were always a confession of Christ, we might say: Broad is the way that leadeth unto life, and many there be that

I thought I had read the Testimonies pretty thoroughly and understood what was in them, but now I begin to see things in them that I had never seen before.

depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." As we behold and contemplate the infinity of God's love to us, and grasp it and take it in, we are filled with all the fullness of God. "And he [Christ] is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church." Colossians 1:17-18. Then if we are united to that Head we are filled with his fullness.

This is what the Bible teaches; and now let us see what the Testimonies teach. I thought I had read the Testimonies pretty thoroughly and understood what was in them, but now I begin to see things in them that I had never seen before. True, I had read these things, and thought they were very good,

find it. We must understand what it is to confess Christ and wherein we deny Him. It is possible with our lips to confess Christ yet in our works deny Him. The fruits of the Spirit manifested in the life are a confession of Him."³

I stated yesterday some points of comparison between ancient prophets and prophets of our own time; but here is a point I wish to mention, concerning the difference between the true prophets and the false. With the false prophets there was always flattery, but with the true ones there was never flattery, but always reproof. So, in the Spirit of Prophecy, you would expect to find reproofs. And that is just what we do find. There have been a great many people with broken heads, people who found fault with the

Testimonies given to them because their course had been reproved, and they would talk about them and say it was not true, and perhaps before they were through talking you would see from what they said that it was true. Notice what the Lord says in Jeremiah 44:4–5: “Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods.” You see it did not say, Oh, you are a good fellow; you are just about right. Oh no, it was “Do not this abominable thing that I hate.” There is shown the character of God’s messengers.

Now how did the false prophets do their work? I turn to Jeremiah, and read in chapter 23, verses 16–17: “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you:

of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.” I used to believe this meant that these false spirits had got to acknowledge the incarnation of Christ, but I bless God there is greater light coming to us, and now I believe it means to confess that Jesus Christ has come in our flesh. That is just how we are to overcome—by Jesus Christ in our flesh, as the text says, “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” 1 John 4:4–6. Here is the contrast. They are of the world, but we are of God, and God is our strength. This is just what we find in the Testimonies all the way through.

ter would not do anything that was wrong,” and he got up in the meeting and rattled off what he called his gift of tongues. There was quite a power went with it, and quite a number sympathized with him. Along about midnight there was a loud rap at Sister White’s door, and the word came that the daughter wanted to see Sister White, for she was sick, and was afraid she was going to die. The outcome was that she confessed all that Sister White had said.

The next morning the man who claimed to talk with tongues was seen taking a hasty departure.

But some say, I never had any testimony of reproof sent to me. How is that—never had any reproof? Why, you have all had reproof. Christ said, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Revelation 2:29. Just keep your ears open, and you will get the reproof.

We say to ourselves, Oh, that testimony is for Brother J. That hits him. Yes, but quite likely it hits you too, and if it hits you it was given for you also. Some of these persons who were reproved used to try to keep their reproofs hidden from their brethren, so that it would appear that Brother and Sister White sanctioned their course. This is what first led to the publication of the Testimonies. I read from Testimony No. 14, paragraph 8:

“I have finally decided that many of these personal testimonies should be published, as they all contain more or less reproof and instruction which apply to hundreds or thousands of others in similar condition. These should have the light which God has seen fit to give which meets their cases. It is a wrong to shut it away from them by sending it to one person or to one place, where it is kept as a light under a bushel. My convictions of duty on this point have been greatly strengthened by the following dream:

We say to ourselves, Oh, that testimony is for Brother J. That hits him. Yes, but quite likely it hits you too, and if it hits you it was given for you also.

they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.” Here you see the flattery that was characteristic of their work.

I read now another text, 1 John 4:1–3: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit

At Rocky Hill, Connecticut, a circumstance occurred which brought these two opposite classes right together. A meeting was held at the home of one of our brethren, and there was a blind man there who claimed to have visions. Sister White had a vision in which she was instructed to tell this man and his wife that they should send for their daughter, who was away from home among strangers in New Britain, and have her return home right away, for she was in great danger, and that she had already taken an imprudent course. The blind man said, “Oh no, the daugh-

A grove of evergreens was presented before me. Several, including myself, were laboring among them. I was bidden to closely inspect the trees and see if they were in a flourishing condition. I observed that some were being bent and deformed by the wind, and needed to be supported by stakes. I was carefully removing the dirt from the feeble and dying trees to ascertain the cause of their condition. I discovered worms at the roots of some. Others had not been watered properly and were dying from drought. The roots of others had been crowded together to their injury. My work was to explain to the workmen the different reasons why these trees did not prosper. This was necessary from the fact that trees in other grounds were liable to be affected as these had been, and the cause of their not flourishing and how they should be cultivated and treated must be made known."⁴

Yet the Lord deals with us gently, and does not wish to expose all our faults to others, to be a hindrance to us.

I read now from Testimony No. 15, paragraph 2. It tells of a dream that Sister White had which she thus relates:

"I had dreamed that a person brought to me a web of white cloth, and bade me cut it into garments for persons of all sizes and all descriptions of character and circumstances in life. I was told to cut them out and hang them up all ready to be made when called for. I had the impression that many for whom I was required to cut garments were unworthy. . . . I felt discouraged at the amount of work before me, and stated that I had been engaged in cutting garments for others for more than twenty years, and my labors had not been appreciated, neither did I see that my work had accomplished much good. . . .

The person replied: 'Cut out the garments. That is your duty. The

loss is not yours, but mine. God sees not as man sees. He lays out the work that He would have done, and you do not know which will prosper, this or that. . . .'

I then held up my hands, caloused as they were with long use of the shears, and stated that I could but shrink at the thought of pursuing this kind of labor. The person again repeated: 'Cut out the garments. Your release has not yet come.'

With feelings of great weariness I arose to engage in the work. Before me lay new, polished shears, which I commenced using. At

took the position that no one could be saved except those who had already identified themselves with the Advent movement. Shortly after the circumstances above mentioned, Miss Harmon returned to Maine and made a second visit to Paris, where she had a reproof for such extremists. Concerning this visit, I will quote from Mrs. Truesdail, who, as we have before said, then resided in Paris:

"During Miss Harmon's visit in Paris, Maine, in the summer of 1845, I stated to her the particulars concerning a dear friend of mine, whose father had deprived

Elder Joseph Turner, who taught there was no more mercy for sinners, says of Miss Harmon's position on the subject at that time, "Instead of the visions leading them to adopt this view, it corrected those upon it who still held to it."

once my feelings of weariness and discouragement left me; the shears seemed to cut with hardly an effort on my part, and I cut out garment after garment with comparative ease."⁵

But now comes somebody and says, Oh yes, I guess it was all so, but there is a little something about this that I don't understand. It is about that teaching of Sister White's that after the time passed [on October 22, 1844], there was no more mercy for sinners. Oh, is that it? Well, bless your heart, Sister White didn't teach that. I will tell you how that teaching originated. Joseph Turner was the first one to advocate it, at South Paris, Maine, after the passing of the time; though the same idea had been held by others before the time had passed. I read from *Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, page 118: "Some of these fanatical and exclusive persons

her of attending our meetings, consequently she had not rejected light. She smilingly replied, 'God has never shown me that there is no salvation for such persons. It is those only who have had the light of truth presented to them and knowingly rejected it.' "

Elder J. N. Andrews, who resided in Paris, Maine, in 1845, and who is wholly conversant with the people there, and with that [teaching] of Elder Joseph Turner, who taught there was no more mercy for sinners, says of Miss Harmon's position on the subject at that time, "Instead of the visions leading them to adopt this view, it corrected those upon it who still held to it." To this I will add a further testimony by Mrs. Truesdail:

"Another occasion worthy of mention was a vision given in 1846, in Paris, Maine. Miss Harmon was shown that when Satan could not

prevent the honest hearted from doing their whole duty, he would exert his skill in pushing them beyond duty. One good sister had been telling the churches that God had rejected them because they had rejected the message sent from heaven to save them. Sister Harmon was shown that there was no truth in her message, as there were many in the churches who would yet embrace the truth; that the good angels would leave her (this sister) at the door of the church if she went there upon such an errand."

Yes, but didn't she get hold of that idea afterwards? No, that won't do, for our enemies, who oppose the visions, say that she taught this from the very first. The people held to these doctrines, and whenever she would go to them and associate with them and hold meetings, she was charged with advocating their views;

and this was how this shut-door objection originated. She gave Joseph Turner a testimony, saying that he was corrupt at heart. Elder Turner had announced his intention of going to Portland, Maine, but this testimony said he had no call to go to Portland, and that his character would there be manifested. Then he turned against Sister White, and made the claim that she taught there was no more mercy for sinners. But at this very time, and later, people were being converted and brought into the light through her labors. Hiram Patch and his wife were converted in Oswego, N. Y., in 1848, by a testimony concerning a man who was conducting a revival. In this testimony Brother Patch was told to wait one month and he would see the true character of this pretended revivalist, and he did see it only about two weeks later.

In 1849 Sister White had a vision about these false shepherds who professed to have a travail of soul for sinners, and yet had rejected the truth, that the time for their salvation was past; and since then people have pointed to this and said that Sister White had claimed there was no more mercy for sinners. But with those who came out into the light, and were converted at that time, you can no more shake their faith in the Testimonies than you can blot out Bunker Hill Monument⁶ with a blow of your fist. ✠

To be continued. . . .

References:

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 113–114.

² *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 1b, 11–12

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 303

⁴ *Ibid.*, 631–632

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 10–12

⁶ Located in Boston National Historical Park, Boston, Massachusetts.

...continued from page 8

messenger before him to tell Ahab that there was the sound of abundance of rain.

It is such faith as this that we want, faith that will take hold, and will not let go. Inspiration tells us that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. Heaven heard his prayer. He prayed that rain might cease, and there was no rain. Again he prayed for rain, and the rain was sent. And why should not the Lord be entreated in behalf of His people today?

Oh, that the Lord would imbue us with His Spirit. Oh, that the curtain might be rolled back, and we be made to understand the mystery of godliness. I long for God. I hunger and thirst after righteousness. As the hart pants for the water brooks, my soul pants after God. I plead with Him for His people that He may send upon us the showers of His grace.

But this is an individual work. Every man is to build over against his own house. Do not think of any one's faults but your own. Oh, con-

sider this, for here eternal interests are involved. You have nothing to do with the sins of others, but you have much to do with yourself. Act as though there was not another being in the universe but yourself and a pure and holy God.

Are You a Faithful Missionary?

All who profess to be children of God should be missionaries. You ought to be working in the Master's vineyard. To one is committed five talents, to another two, and to another one. And everyone is accountable to God for these gifts. Your talents are committed to you to be improved, and unless you trade upon these talents, unless you are faithful to your trust, your fate will be similar to that of the man who hid his Lord's money in the earth.

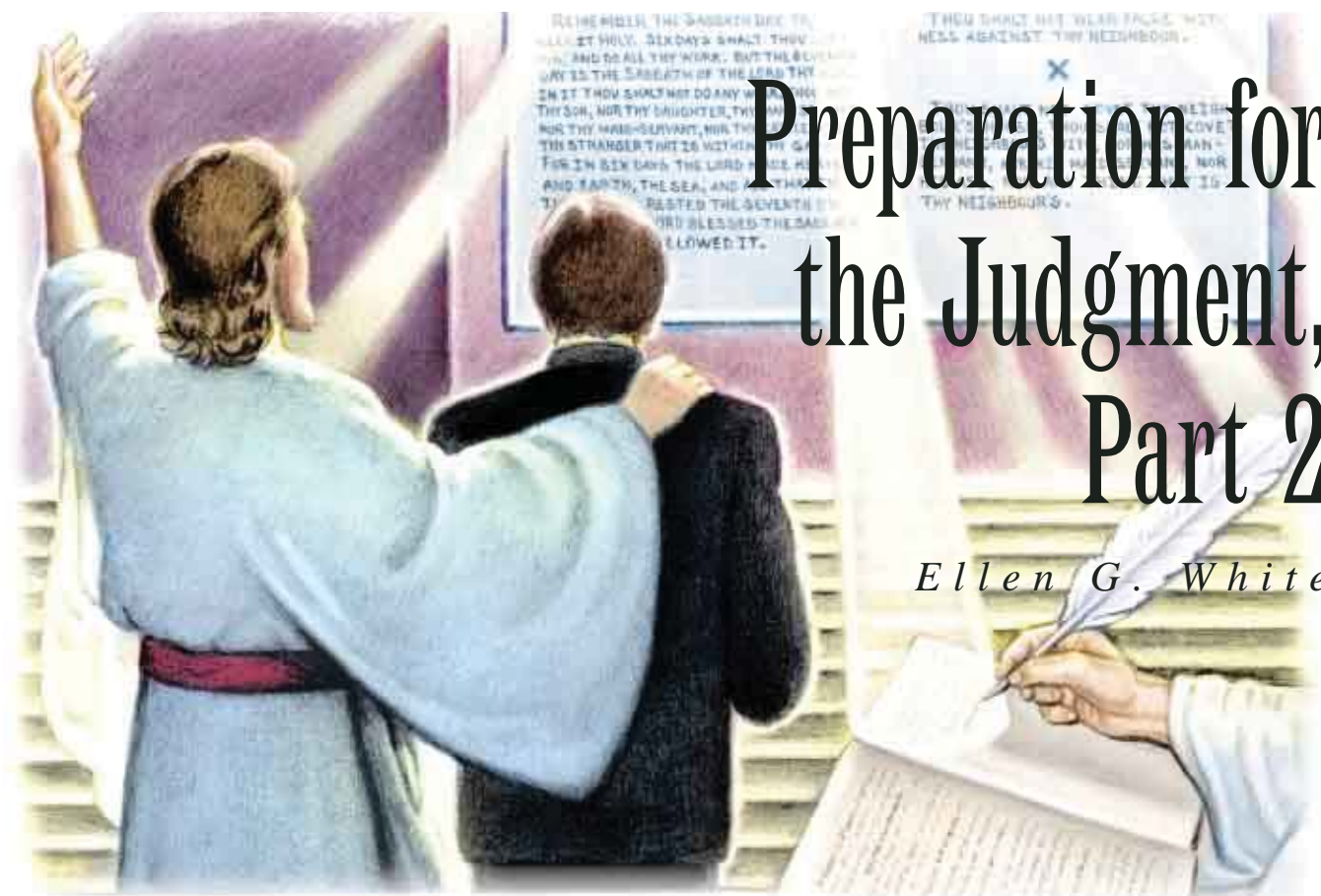
"I knew thee that thou art a hard man," said the unprofitable servant, "reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." Matthew 25:24–25. The sentence

passed upon him was, "Take ye the unprofitable servant, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." See verses 30; 22:13. This will be the portion of many professing Christians at the present day unless they arouse and work mightily to redeem the time.

God calls upon you to put all your strength into the work. You will have to render an account for the good you might have done had you been standing in a right position, but which you have failed to do. Oh, that you might see that it is time you were co-workers with Christ and the heavenly angels.

Will you awake? There are souls in your midst who are in need of help. Have you felt a burden of soul to bring them to the cross? Bear in mind that just that degree of love you have for God you will reveal for your brethren, and for sinners who are lost and undone and out of Christ. ✠

Sermons and Talks, vol. 2, 1–9.



Preparation for the Judgment, Part 2

Ellen G. White

All heaven is interested in our salvation. God's angels are in this very congregation. Could your eyes be opened, you would see not only good angels who are trying to impress hearts, but you would see also evil angels who are seeking to make of none effect the message of truth God has in mercy sent.

While we are in this world we are not safe unless our petitions are continually ascending to the God of heaven that He will keep us unspotted from the corruptions of the world. Our Saviour has told us what would be in these last days. Iniquity will abound, but the souls that are open to the influence of the Spirit of God will receive strength to withstand the corruptions of this degenerate age.

How Enoch Walked With God

Enoch walked with God three hundred years previous to his translation to heaven, and the state of the world was not then more favorable for the perfection of Christian character than it is today. And how did Enoch walk with God? He educated his mind

and heart to ever feel that he was in the presence of God, and when in perplexity his prayers would ascend to God to keep him. He refused to take any course that would offend His God. He kept the Lord continually before Him. He would pray, "Teach me Thy way, that I may not err. What is thy pleasure concerning me? What shall I do to honor Thee, my God?" Thus he was constantly shaping his way and course in accordance with God's commandments, and he had perfect confidence and trust in his heavenly Father, that He would help him. He had no thought or will of his own; it was all submerged in the will of his Father.

Now, Enoch was a representative of those who will be upon the earth when Christ shall come, who will be translated to heaven without seeing death. But be sure that if your hearts are inclined not to do God's will, not to keep the way of the Lord but to follow your own way, then you are not in harmony with the God of heaven. We want to pray with David, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

Psalm 119:18. Many close their eyes lest they shall see the truth. They do not want to see the defects in their life and character, and they are disturbed if you mention anything about God's law. In this they show that they have a human standard of their own; that their will is not the will of God. We want that you should not be deceived by Satan, the first great adversary of God's law. We want to bear in mind that God's law is the only standard by which He will judge man.

Winning Back What Adam Lost

If we are to enter heaven at last, we must bring all of heaven into this life that we can. The religion of Christ never degrades the receivers; it never brings them down upon a low level. Truth is ever elevating in its influence, lifting them up on the high platform of truth. The religion of Jesus Christ has a refining influence upon men and women. When the truth of God finds access to the heart, it commences its refining process upon the character. Men who are coarse and rough become humble, teach-

able, learning, ever learning, in the school of Christ. The mighty cleaver of truth has taken them out of the world. Then there is the work to be done for them to fit them for God's temple. They are hewed and squared and chiseled and fitted for the mansions in heaven. Those who are naturally full of self-esteem become meek and lowly; they have a change in character. In

dead were judged . . . according to their works." Revelation 20:12.

John also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, with its twelve gates and twelve foundations, coming down from God out of heaven. He was shown that city and saw the streets of transparent gold clear as crystal. Every one that goes into that city is changed and sanctified in character here in this life. The na-

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." Daniel 12:3. We want that our lives here shall be refined, ennobled, elevated, like Jesus Christ's. When Christ is formed in you the hope of glory, you will begin to lay aside your favorite sins. You will fear to offend God, and you will love His law.

Now is the opportunity for us through repentance toward God, to wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Time to Wash Our Robes

I see before me today the purchase of the blood of Christ. There is value in every soul. Said the Lord through His prophet, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Isaiah 13:12.

It is the truth of God received in the heart and practiced in the life that makes man thus precious in the sight of God. As John sees this precious company refined and purified around the throne of God, the angel inquires, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" And John answers, "Sir, thou knowest." And the angel answers, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." Revelation 7:13-15.

Now is the opportunity for us through repentance toward God, to wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb that we may stand in white raiment before the throne of God. We are to wash our robes of character, and have our names registered in the Lamb's Book of Life; and He says, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God

the beginning, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Genesis 1:26. But sin has almost obliterated the moral image of God in man. Jesus came down to our world that He might give man a living example, that he might know how to live and how to keep the way of the Lord. He was the image of the Father. His beautiful and spotless character is before man as an example for him to imitate. We must study the copy and follow Jesus Christ, then we shall bring His loveliness and beauty into our character. In doing this we are standing before God through faith, winning back by conflict with the powers of darkness the power of self-control, the love of God that Adam lost. We are through Jesus Christ living and keeping the laws of God.

Winning Souls to Jesus

When the judgment shall set, and the books be opened, and every one be judged according to the deeds done in the body, those who have imitated Christ in obedience to God's commandments, will be blessed. "And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the

tions that have kept the truth enter in to the city of God, and a voice is heard, clear and distinct, "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 the crown of immortal glory is placed upon the head of the overcomer. Then how earnest should be our work here that we may win souls to Jesus Christ. We cannot afford to devote our God-given powers to our own pleasure for one moment. We must devote our lives to our Master. You must expect to carry on this battle with self-denial and self-sacrifice. The Word of God says through His apostles, "Ye are laborers together with God." See 1 Corinthians 3:9.

Our work may seem at times to be very discouraging, but if one soul is turned from the error of his way to righteousness, there is joy in heaven. The Father and the Son rejoice in the presence of the angels. The song of triumph and victory is sung and echoed and re-echoed through the courts of heaven. Then why should we not be wise in this life, and work for the glory of God?

shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Verses 16–17.

Is Jesus Abiding in Your Heart?

We want you to live for the future immortal life, and we want you to decide, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15. Now is the time for you to give yourselves without reserve to Jesus. Be determined that you will have Christ at the loss of everything else. The very obstacles and difficulties you meet here are to strengthen your faith by overcoming these obstacles, and every victory gained is registered in the books of heaven. Every good deed you do, leading souls to walk in the way of God's commandments, is also registered in the books of heaven.

Let not the enemy deceive you. He has filled the world with his heresies. You want to plant your feet upon the Word of God; then you will be all ready to come under His rules and commandments in the kingdom of bliss. If you ever sing the song of triumph and redemption in the kingdom of God, you must first learn that song here. Is Jesus abiding in your heart? If he is, you will talk about Him. You will reveal Him in life and character. You will talk of His power and make melody to God in your heart. The sweet spirit of meekness will be cherished; self will be crucified. Purity and holiness will be developed in the character.

To See the King in His Beauty

I speak because I know what I am talking about. For more than forty years I have stood in the desk proclaiming salvation to sinners, and my heart has yearned over them. God has opened before me the glory of heaven, and I have obtained a sight of the majesty and glory of my Redeemer. I have obtained a sight of the angels in glory. I was very young when the physicians said, "You must die, you cannot live more than three

months." It was then that God gave me a sight of His glory, and said, "Go proclaim the message I give you, to the people." I started out in my weakness. I could hardly stand. I had not spoken aloud for weeks, but when I stood before the people, God's power came upon me. Voice was given me and I talked from two to three hours with clearness.

But when I had finished, my voice again was gone. I traveled for three months in this way and then the pain of the lungs ceased, and ever since I have been doing the work which the Master has given me to do. I have traveled and labored and God has given me strength to continue unto this day.

I want to say to whomsoever the glory of God has been revealed, "You will never have the least inclination to say, 'I am holy, I am sanctified.'" After my first vision of glory, I could not discern the brightest light. It was thought that my eyesight was gone, but when I again became accustomed to the things of this world I could see again. This is why I tell you never to boast, saying, "I am holy, I am sanctified," for it is the surest evidence that you know not the Scriptures or the power of God. Let God write it in His books if He will, but you should never utter it.

I have never dared to say, "I am holy, I am sinless," but whatever I have thought was the will of God, I have tried to do it with all my heart, and I have the sweet peace of God in my soul. I can commit the keeping of my soul to God as unto a faithful Creator, and know that He

will keep that which is committed to His trust. It is my meat and drink to do my Master's will.

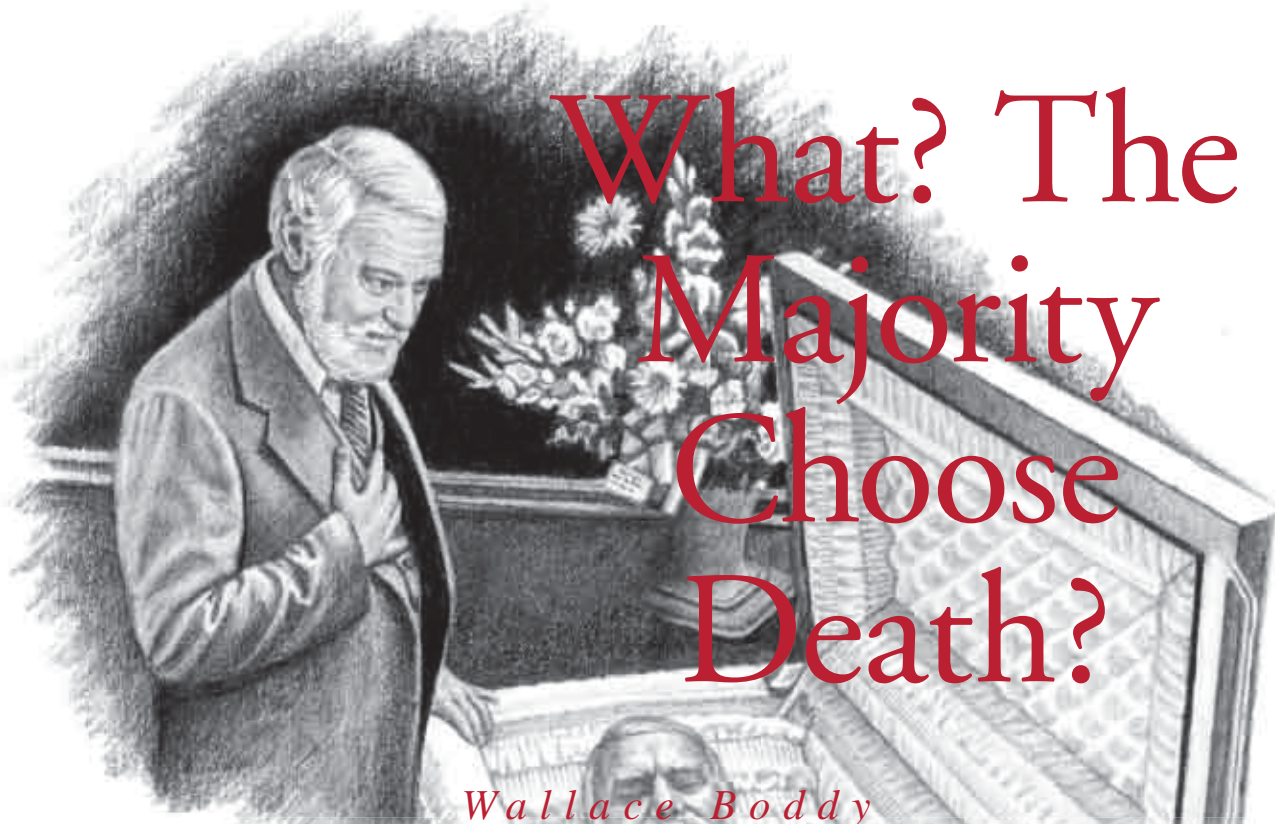
And now I present before you the cross of Calvary. If you will come to that cross in penitence, in faith, in obedience to God's commandments, you will come in the only appointed way. If you lose heaven, you lose everything. If I can only see the

Is Jesus abiding in your heart? If he is, you will talk about Him. You will reveal Him in life and character.

King in His beauty, it is all I desire. Let me listen to the sweet music of His voice, saying "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34. Who of you in this congregation shall we meet there? We want to see you crowned in the city of God. We want to see when the judgment shall sit and the books be opened, that you can stand with the glory of God shining in your countenance. If we can only have that life in the city of God we shall be eternally blessed.

I warn you, Do not place your influence against God's commandments. That law is just as Jehovah wrote it in the temple of heaven. Man may trample upon its copy here below; but the original is kept in the ark of God in heaven; and on the cover of this ark, right above that law, is the mercy seat. Jesus stands right there before that ark to mediate for man. We want you to keep God's commandments and live. Seek for immortality, and the crown of life, and then you will have heaven at last. ✠

Sermons and Talks, vol. 1, 25–38 (a sermon by Mrs. E. G. White, June 27, 1886, at Orebro, Sweden).



What? The Majority Choose Death?

Wallace Boddy

The servant of the Lord has told us in words of grief and sorrow how celestial beings in heaven and throughout the reaches of illimitable space in God's universe, express consummate amazement and stunning disappointment in those of

We have been given in the whole of all the inspired writings every iota of help and counsel a people could ever need in order to know their Creator and serve Him with faith, trust, love, and full assurance. Yet, a large majority of us will

above the simplicity of the work. They will conform to the world, cherish idols, and become spiritually dead. The humble, self-sacrificing followers of Jesus will pass on to perfection, leaving behind the indifferent and lovers of the world."

Please wake up, dear people! We are now surrounded by, deluged under, and inundated with foretold world and church events that prove, without any doubt, that *we are, right now in the sealing time.*

"Almost but not wholly saved means to be not almost but wholly lost." *Selected Messages*, book 1, 400. Will we be weighed in the balances and found wanting?" *We can be lost, dear truth-lovers. "Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians." Steps to Christ*, 48.

What horror some of the saddest words of Scripture will hold for those who fail to make their calling and election sure. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." *Jeremiah 8:20.*

The urgent counsel for our day from the pen of inspiration is: Surrender, study, pray, and "Get ready, Get ready, Get ready." *Early Writings*, 119. May God help us to prepare now. ❀

Ezekiel's question still trumpets unanswered down through the millennia, "Why will ye die, O Israel?"

earth who have been redeemed by their own Creator, who can choose eternal life, but who instead *choose death*. They profess to believe in God and His truth, but refuse to be truly converted and surrendered.

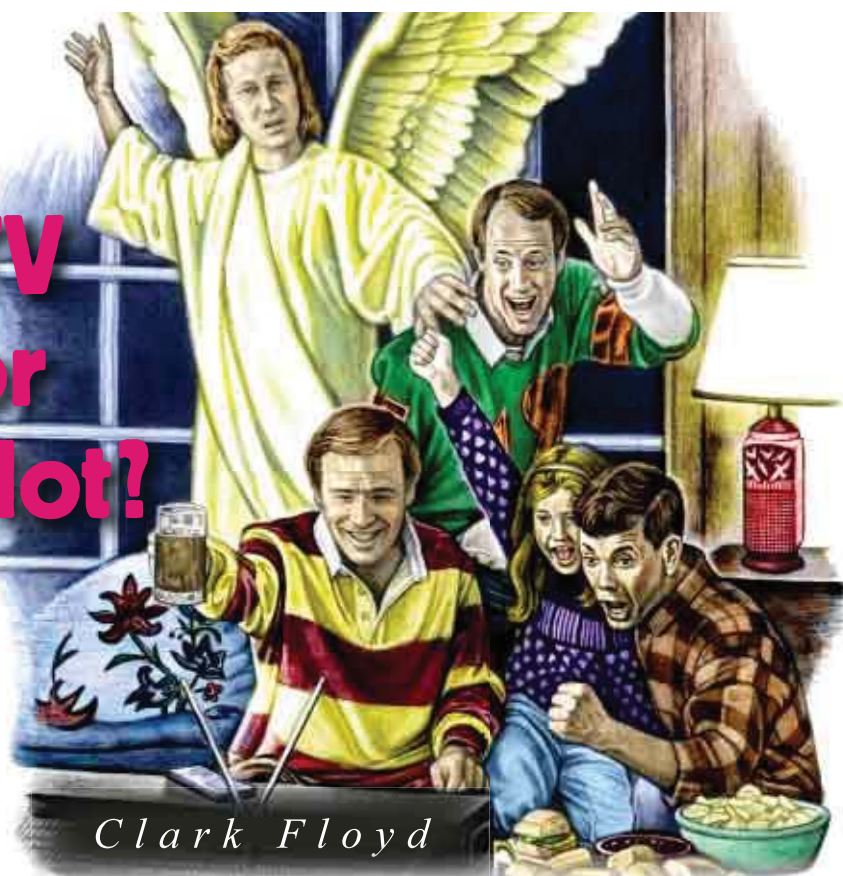
Seventh-day Adventists have been blessed with a most precious treasure of truth. No people ever in the history of mankind have been so comprehensively enlightened with truth as have Seventh-day Adventists. Yet, we often act strangely, as if our minds are stupefied.

knowingly *choose* eternal death.

Is that astounding, or what? It was also astounding to the prophet Ezekiel. His question still trumpets unanswered down through the millennia, "Why will ye die, O Israel?" See Ezekiel 18:31.

The servant of the Lord confirms this heart-sickening prophecy in *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 608–609: "I was shown the startling fact that but a small portion of those who now profess the truth will be sanctified by it and be saved. Many will get

TV or Not?



Clark Floyd

I can remember when television first came along. Prior to that time radio provided the evening's entertainment through such programs as "The Shadow," "The Green Hornet," "Jack Benny," "Fibber McGee and Molly," and many others in which the imagination had to picture in the mind's eye the events coming in through the auditory nerves of the ear. The opening of the door of Fibber McGee's packed closet and the spilling out of his treasured goods stand out vividly in my memory.

But in the late 40s and early 50s television became popular. I would enjoy traveling from Colorado to my uncle's house in California to sit for hours in front of the tiny black and white TV screen delighting in even the advertisements that came in, not only through the auditory nerves, but also through the optical nerves.

That was before I really understood the effect of what we hear and see upon character development and spiritual growth.

Through the years the family television has become the focal point of the living room in most homes in America. Its offspring soon found their way into the bed-

rooms, recreation rooms, and even kitchens of many American homes. The family altar has been replaced by TV.

Many of our children, now under the tutorage of that brown box located so conveniently in our homes, spend more hours parked and transfixed before its alluring images than they do in any other activity, including school. "Family time" has become the time that we come together, possibly separating from our individual TV sets, to enjoy a favorite program as a family around one television set.

The question is, Is it safe spiritually for a Christian family or for individual Christians to watch even the average programs seen on television today? I believe the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy indicate "no!" In Psalm 101:3, David, a man after God's own heart, says, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes." "The mind, the soul, is built up by that upon which it feeds; and it rests with us to determine upon what it shall be fed. It is within the power of everyone to choose the topics that shall occupy the thoughts and shape the character." *Education*, 126–127

In Philippians 4:8, Paul counsels us: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." The television may once in a while have a program that fits into one of these categories, but I would submit to you that such would be a rare occasion, and the risk of being exposed to the worthless and demoralizing material normally contained within its programming far outweighs the value of a once-in-a-while good program.

God, in speaking through the psalmist in Psalm 119, verse 37, tells us to "turn away [our] eyes from beholding vanity" [worthless things]. We need to be beholding God and the character of Jesus. "I have set the LORD always before me." Psalm 16:8. "Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net." Psalm 25:15

In Matthew 6:22–23, God says: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single [fixed on God and His glory], thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil [fixed on the world and its glitter], thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Having watched television for many years, I know how difficult it can be to give it up. However, on the other hand, now I can't imagine how I ever had time to sit in front of a TV. There seems to be a certain mesmerism that draws the mind to the box displaying the words and the pictures. I know that even now, if I go into a house with a television set on, my eyes are drawn immediately to it, and my ears seek to hear every word. It is very difficult to have any decent communication with the people in a home when

all eyes are focused on the picture screen.

Many of the programs offered are very shallow and are usually of very little socially redeeming value, let alone spiritual value. Will Satan steal the souls of the people through TV?

“Professed Christians keep altogether too near the lowlands of earth. Their eyes are trained to see only commonplace things, and their minds dwell upon the things their eyes behold. Their religious experi-

one model after which human character is to be formed—the character of Christ. Those who behold the Saviour are changed from glory to greater glory. When men will consent to submit to Christ’s will, to be partakers of the divine nature, their crooked, human peculiarities will disappear. When they decide that they will retain their own peculiarities and disagreeable traits of character, Satan takes them and places his yoke on them, using them to do his service.” *Ibid.*, 1098.

jects, you are, in a degree, as guilty before God as if your thoughts were carried into action. All that prevents the action is the lack of opportunity. Day and night dreaming and castle-building are bad and exceedingly dangerous habits. When once established, it is next to impossible to break up such habits, and direct the thoughts to pure, holy, elevated themes. You will have to become a faithful sentinel over your eyes, ears, and all your senses if you would control your mind and prevent vain and corrupt thoughts from staining your soul.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 561.

Brothers and sisters, I could set before you many more quotations from both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy regarding the avenues of the soul and how they are affected by television, but the real bottom line is this: We are coming into the last days of this earth’s history, and we will spend our extra hours preparing for the final crisis through drawing closer to our Lord, or we will waste those precious moments in seeking after worldly amusements such as television. Our eternal destiny will be determined by whether we make right choices. Are you listening to the still, small voice of God, or the voice of the world?

“Say firmly: ‘I will not spend precious moments in reading [or watching] that which will be of no profit to me, and which only unfits me to be of service to others. I will devote my time and my thoughts to acquiring a fitness for God’s service. I will close my eyes to frivolous and sinful things. My ears are the Lord’s, and I will not listen to the subtle reasoning of the enemy. My voice shall not in any way be subject to a will that is not under the influence of the Spirit of God. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and every power of my being shall be consecrated to worthy pursuits.’” *Adventist Home*, 409

May the Lord bless you and your family as you choose to belong wholly to Him. ✽

Can you picture Jesus absorbed watching television? . . . Would He have allowed His mind to focus on the majority of the events or programs that are seen on the “tube?”

ence is often shallow and unsatisfying, and their words are light and valueless. How can such reflect the image of Christ? How can they send forth the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness into all the dark places of the earth? To be a Christian is to be Christlike.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 1097.

Can you picture Jesus absorbed watching television? Would He have felt TV to be an appropriate use of His time? Would He have allowed His mind to focus on the majority of the events or programs that are seen on the “tube?” When would He then have had time to spend in prayer with His Father? Or would He have chosen to perhaps do less healing, or less teaching, or less training of the disciples?

“The Holy Spirit has been prevented from coming in to mold and fashion heart and mind, because men suppose that they understand best how to form their own characters. And they think that they may safely form their characters after their own model. But there is only

Television is one means that Satan can use to mold character, or at least to keep that character from reflecting the image of Jesus. The image of Jesus is not obtained through viewing TV.

Look at your time. Look at your family’s time. Could you not really use more time with the Lord? Could you not use more time with each other? How well do you know the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy? How well do you know each other? Is Jesus at the center of the family altar? Are you guarding the avenues of your soul and the souls of your children as God has instructed you to do as though your eternal life depended on it? For indeed it does!

“You should control your thoughts. This will not be an easy task; you cannot accomplish it without close and even severe effort. Yet God requires this of you; it is a duty resting upon every accountable being. You are responsible to God for your thoughts. If you indulge in vain imaginations, permitting your mind to dwell upon impure sub-

Join us for Hope International's Spring 2004 Illinois Convocation

April 9–11, 2004 • Friday, 7:00 p.m., through Sunday Noon

All of our speakers are lined up. We are preparing a real banquet of spiritual nourishment!

Our speakers will be the board members of Hope International:

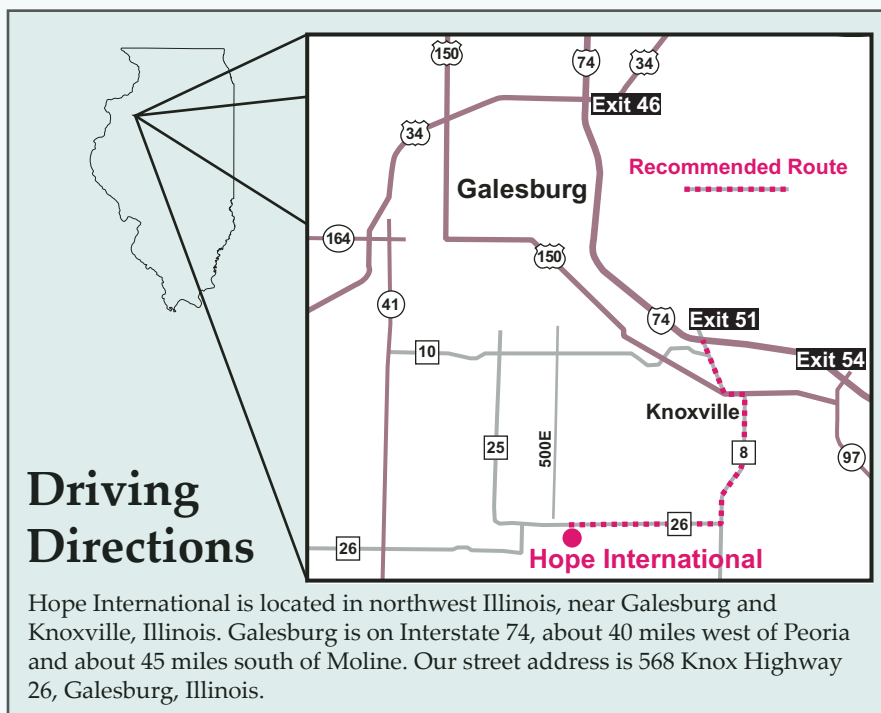
- **Ron Spear**—ordained SDA minister, international speaker, executive editor of *Our Firm Foundation* magazine, retired field secretary for the *Review and Herald*, and author of over 20 books
- **Clark Floyd**—ordained SDA minister, attorney, radio talk show evangelist, and international speaker
- **Lee Forbes**—business man, radio talk show evangelist, and speaker
- **Wallace Boddy**—retired business man, retired east coast distribution manager of *Earth's Final Warning* and *Behold He Cometh* tabloids, and speaker
- **J.C. Perozo**—an ordained SDA minister, former missionary to Inter- and South America, international speaker, and assistant to the president of Hartland Institute
- **Joe Olson**—Executive Director for Hope International, chairman of the board, and speaker

You won't want to miss this opportunity to hear all of these men at one location on one weekend! Take advantage of our new central location and hear messages that will stir, encourage, and uplift your souls!

We are going to be ready for a deluge of people to attend this convocation. Our eight-acre corn field is now a lawn and will provide plenty of space for those interested in camping.

We will provide a shuttle service from the local motels and campgrounds if needed.

Please call 1-800-468-7884 if you need more information regarding local campgrounds or motels.



Selected Publications

available from the

Hope International Bookstore

The following items represent a much larger selection available from Hope International. If you would like a free 2004 catalog, please give us a call or drop us a line, and we will be happy to send you one. ***You will be pleased to see that prices have been slashed on most items!*** You may also browse online at www.hopeint.org. Please see page 3 for shipping and sales tax information.

Featured Items

Illinois Convocation, Fall 2003

Our convocation in October 2003 was the first of its kind for two reasons: It was the first at our new location in Illinois, and the speakers were Hope International's board members.



Everyone who came received a special blessing from the heart-stirring messages, and we would like to share it with you!

Dave Westbrook: *Keeping the Conscience Clean*

Clark Floyd: *A Special People*

Ron Spear: *Preparing for Eternity*

J.C. Perozo: *Our God-given Identity*

Lee Forbes: *How to Study the Bible*

Wallace Boddy: *Sacrifice and Suffering*

Joe Olson: *The Question Jesus Asked*

Videos are \$4.95 each. Audios are \$1.95 each. Purchase a complete set and save more!

Set, 7 Video Cassettes per Set, VHS NTSC Format

VEHI-ICF3 Price: \$29.95

Set, 7 Audio Cassettes per Set

AEHI-ICF3 Price: \$12.95

General Publications

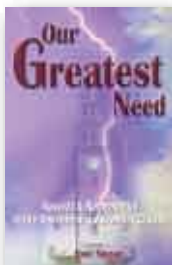
Spear, Ron

Our Greatest Need

Our Greatest Need points us to the divine remedy for the breach between us and God. It reveals, in no uncertain terms, what we must do to get back to a saving relationship with our Redeemer.

Paperback, 160 pages, 2003, Regular price: \$4.75

BESR-OGNE \$1.99



Preparing for Eternity

A compilation of priceless passages from the Spirit of Prophecy. By heeding these words of instruction and caution, you can become a part of the people who will be prepared to meet their Lord.

Paperback, 149 pages, 1988, Regular price: \$8.95

BESR-PFET \$1.99



Rebellion

Rebellion leaves no room for complacency or self-satisfaction. Elder Spear's loving burden for lost souls comes through strongly in this book. It faithfully chronicles the apostasy our church has engrossed itself in.

Paperback, 74 pages, 2003, Regular price: \$3.00

BESR-REBE \$1.99

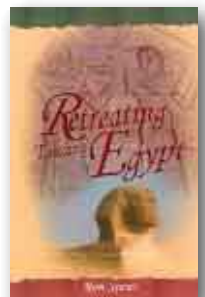


Retreating Toward Egypt

Is the church retreating toward Egypt? God has given us the answer. This book is a must read for all those who think, *There is something wrong with what I see going on at church, but I just can't put my finger on it!*

Paperback, 59 pages, 2003, Regular price: \$3.00

BESR-RTEG \$1.99



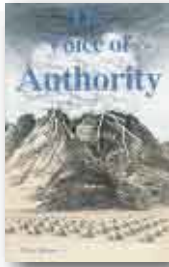
Theocracy

Before sin entered the universe, all created beings were under God's rule and immediate direction — a theocracy. Leading people to place their faith in church leaders and pastors is Satan's ploy to derail God's last-day message. Let us arise and follow God and His Word alone! Elder Spear presents compelling evidence that it is now time — long overdue — that we turn once more to God and place ourselves under His theocratic form of leadership.

Paperback, 96 pages, 2001, Regular price: \$8.00

BESR-THEO \$1.99





Voice of Authority, The

We believe that God has given authority to His remnant church. Leaders must lead but never assume the place that God has reserved for Himself. Under what conditions do church leaders speak with God's authority, and how far does that authority go?

Paperback, 30 pages, 1989, Regular price: \$1-00

BESR-VOAU \$0.49

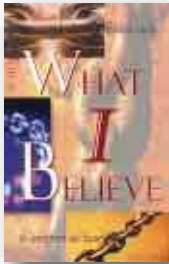


Waymarks of Adventism

As a successful soul winner, Elder Spear has developed an abiding confidence in the Biblical foundation of Adventist doctrines. In this book, he shares an encouraging and assuring message amid this time of uncertainty and dissension in our beloved church.

Paperback, 95 pages, 1999, Regular price: \$3-95

BESR-WOAD \$1.99



What I Believe

Responds to questions posed by a General Conference committee, by sharing some 20 convictions — each supported with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. You will see a blend of love and deep concern for God's last-day remnant church, and have your own faith strengthened as well!

Paperback, 127 pages, 1999, Regular price: \$7-95

BESR-WIBE \$3.99



What Is the Church?

Paints a clear picture of what the church really is. With this topic being discussed so widely today, we must know what the Word of God says.

Paperback, 106 pages, 1994, Regular price: \$4-00

BESR-WICH \$1.99



St. John, H. A.

Back To Our Future

Originally published in the nineteenth century, this book covers a wide variety of biblical topics such as the significance of Jesus, His First and Second comings; Sabbath vs. Sunday issues; the issue of God's love vs. eternal hell fire as it relates to the nature of man and fallen angels; the issue of the great apostasy in historical Christianity, and much more.

Paperback, 534 pages, 2001, Regular price: \$21-95

BESH-BTOF \$18.95

Standish, Colin D. / Standish, Russell R.

Gathering Storm and The Storm Bursts, The

The Seventh-day Adventist Church experienced a tragic and dramatic redirection of its doctrines and practices beginning in the mid-1950s. The authors' thorough documentation details how the New Theology developed in Australia and then spread to the United States and other parts of the world.

Paperback, 420 pages, 2000, Regular price: \$16-95

BESC-GSSB \$12.49

Perils of Time Setting

Demonstrates the failure of every time-setting prediction ever made since 1844. Conclusive evidence that such time-setting has its foundation in a deceptive scheme to derail the Protestant Reformation.

Paperback, 83 pages, 1992, Regular price: \$7-95

BESC-POTS \$5.99

Winds of Doctrine

Essential reading for all Seventh-day Adventists who are earnestly seeking the doctrinal truths, which are pivoted upon the words of Scripture. Do not be deceived!

Paperback, 168 pages, 1999, Regular price: \$12-95

BESC-WODO \$9.49

Thompson, Ron

Restoration of the Apostolic Church

The author traces the duplication of the apostolic church through redemptive history. Discover the origin of the secret rapture, the two-stage Second Coming, the Advent Movement, dispensationalism, and more!

Paperback, 148 pages, 1999, Regular price: \$11-95

BETR-ROAC \$8.99

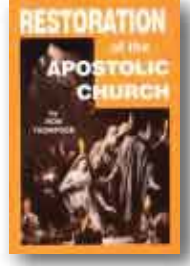
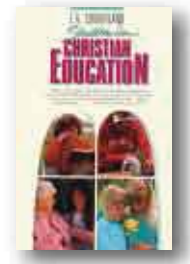
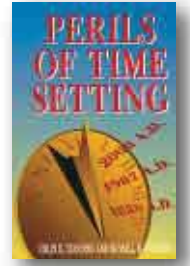
Van Bragt, T. J.

Martyrs' Mirror

Martyrs Mirror has timeless value in the teaching of the position of Christians in human conflict today. The heritage of bloodshed and persecution for the sake of a clear conscience and a pure faith grounded in the Word of God is the heritage of the Christian church.

Hardcover, 1141 pages, 1998, Regular price: \$60-00

BEVB-MMIR \$39.99





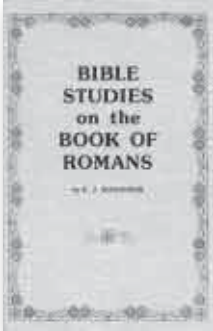
Vierra, Danny

"Star" of the New Evangelization of America

What do all the reported miracles, visions, appearances, messages, and predictions of the virgin Mary mean? Find out what the Bible says about the "virgin Mary" in this handy booklet, prepared especially for Seventh-day Adventists.

Paperback, 28 pages, 1999, Regular price: \$0.75

BEVD-SONE \$0.59



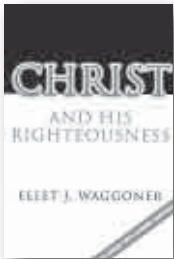
Waggoner, E. J.

Bible Studies on the Book of Romans

If you want to study Romans, you cannot afford to be without this helpful book. The insights will guide you into an understanding of this precious book of the Bible.

Paperback, Regular price: \$5.25

BEWE-BSOB \$4.49



Christ and His Righteousness

Find out the real reason for spiritual defeat in our lives – and the solution! Rediscover righteousness by faith. Expanded edition with 14 additional chapters!

Paperback, 201 pages, Expanded, 1999

BEWE-CHRX \$6.75



Glad Tidings, The

This book is a study of one of the most beautiful letters ever written – the book of Galatians. It reemphasizes the messages of salvation through faith and the righteousness of Christ.

Paperback, 154 pages, 1997, Regular price: \$7.95

BEWE-GTID \$5.99



Gospel in Creation, The

The confirmation of the truths of the gospel drawn from the study of the creation will make this book a valuable one to all who are watching with interest the attacks that are now made on the authority of the Bible.

Paperback, Regular price: \$8.95

BEWE-GICR \$2.99



Waggoner, J.H.

Atonement in the Light of Nature and Revelation, The

A study of the Atonement, the great central doctrine of the gospel, and its relationship to God's law.

Paperback, 368 pages, 1884 (reprinted 1997), Regular price: \$16.95

BEWJ-AILO \$12.49

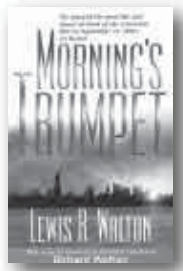
Walton, Lewis R.

Morning's Trumpet

On September 11, 2001, our lives were changed forever, and you didn't have to be an Adventist to see that; *everyone* did. The message is clear: it is time to take the Second Coming very seriously. This book is a wake-up call that fearlessly challenges the status quo. It may disturb some. It won't leave you bored!

Paperback, 160 pages, 2001, Regular price: \$10.95

BEWL-MTRU \$8.99



Wehr, Jeff / Wehr, Marlene

Twenty-one Days With Jesus

It has been said that it takes 21 days to develop a new habit or to unlearn an old one. By reading one chapter each day you will develop a daily habit of sitting at Jesus' feet. Each day includes a selection from *The Desire of Ages* and a health nugget.

Paperback, 378 pages, 1995, Regular price: \$5.95

BEWJ-TODW \$3.99



White, J. Edson

Story of Joseph, The

Joseph's life is a shining example that testifies to the fact that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proverbs 9:10. Big print and easy reading for little folk.

Paperback, 64 pages, 1989, Regular price: \$4.95

BEWJ-SOJO \$3.99



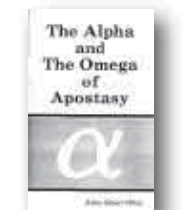
White, Julius Gilbert, M.D.

Alpha and the Omega of Apostasy, The

Do you know what the Alpha and the Omega of Apostasy is? Don't be deceived, for many will depart from the faith and follow doctrines of the devil. See 1 Timothy 4:1. A vital message for God's last-day church.

Paperback, 85 pages

BEWJ-AOOA \$4.49

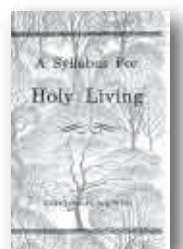


Syllabus For Holy Living, A

The material in this book will help you understand the urgency of our time, and how you can prepare to meet the coming crisis of the little time of trouble, the sealing, and the latter rain. Most importantly, it will help you understand the reality of victory over sin through the power of the Holy Spirit, and how to share this experience with everyone you meet.

Paperback, 127 pages, 1997, Regular price: \$4.00

BEWJ-SFHL \$1.99





I appreciate very much *Our Firm Foundation*, and I enjoy reading it over and over. We all need to be prepared for the second coming of Jesus. Keep up the good work you are doing. May God bless you and give you power to spread the Truth.

JK, Florida

I would like to express my profound gratitude and lots of thanks to you for *Our Firm Foundation* and also two *Lord's Day and a National Sunday Law* books (by Jacob Teske) which I received.

They have caused my spiritual life to grow and have spiritual stamina and also helped me with sermons, Bible studies, and personal evangelism as a lay preacher.

TR, Fiji

Thank for you standing up for Jesus and His truth. You have helped me to be anchored. Praise God.

RR, Maine

Just want to thank you again for your ministry. You are truly watchmen on the walls of Zion. We must all become more involved and speak up for the Lord's side and let the consequences fall where they will.

As I listened to the tapes "Apostasy in the SDA Church" [from the 2003 camp meeting], the tears came on as I listened. I knew of some of these things, but now they are all connected and in proper sequence. I was raised a Seventh-day Adventist, and years ago I never thought it would come to this—even though I had read in the Spirit of Prophecy that we are

following in the footsteps of Israel of old.

May God help us all is my prayer. May you be encouraged and strengthened each hour by our Omnipotent Father. He will be victorious and triumph in this battle—our Commander, our Shepherd!

I have just been reading the two little books, *Sanctified Life and Faith and Works*. I'm so glad I did.

MP, California

We were baptized into the church in February 1999. Unfortunately, we did not expect that we would have to take public vows. I know that sounds strange, but we got up in front of a whole church full of people, and then we realized we were agreeing to things we were not yet convicted on. We were too embarrassed to say no to any of the vows. We were sincere in our commitment, but we didn't realize how great the commitment was.

We desired to make the changes needed to fulfill the vows: some of them have been tougher than others. My husband has since stopped smoking, although he still feels a strong urge.

At the dinner after our baptism we met a man and his wife who have been a wonderful asset to our walk with Christ. At first they just came in and out of our life, and we saw them a little here and there.

As time went on I especially started to get a little disappointed with the church, for I longed for the great teaching we had received through the Revelation seminar. I assumed every Sabbath we would receive teaching like this, but our friend told me everyone goes through that, and I would get over it in time.

It was some where during this time that we started to receive your magazine. I was so impressed, but I

had no idea who sent it. So I asked my pastor in prayer meeting about this wonderful magazine. I'm sure you're not surprised that he told me to pitch it in the trash and never read it again. That made me more determined to read it. (I had already been reading it, and couldn't find anything wrong with it.) So when he told me to throw it away I read it even more critically than before. I had been a Sunday-keeper and had become very leery of false teachings.

My husband was curious and he read the magazine also. We have really enjoyed your magazine over the years. As you probably guessed, it was this same couple who sent us our first magazines.

The signs of the times are all around us; surely it won't be long until Jesus comes again. Right now we are running a Bible correspondence school. So far we have sent out over 160 copies of *The Great Controversy* and Bible studies to over 100 people. We have a few who are still studying. We are excited to do something for the Lord and hope that we can do more in the future.

May God bless your ministry. Keep printing truth in your magazine. I look forward to seeing more articles that make us wake up to our condition and make changes so that we can be ready when Jesus comes (we have so far to go and a short time to do it). Praise God that He has promised to finish the job in us, if we are willing.

AA, Ohio

God bless your work! The Adventist people need your frank, truthful information. Very sad to say, the warnings and instructions are not being preached in the Sabbath-keeping church.

RT, Colorado

Woodland Institute

"A School of the Prophets"

Woodland Institute, a division of Hope International in Portugal, is now accepting students for



our new "School of the Prophets." If you are interested, please e-mail Daniel Garcia, our Director of Woodland Institute:

danielg@woodland.mail.pt

If you do not have e-mail, call us at 309-343-1844, and we will take your information and have Daniel Garcia call you.



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See page 27 for more information.



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