God's Outstretched Hand

Agriculture, The ABCs Of Education

The Eye Of The Needle

Words From A Heavenly Instructor

The Church In The Wilderness

In Support Of Christ's Church, see page 14
I just want to say that I have surveyed the second issue of Our Firm Foundation. I believe it to be even better than the introductory issue. I'm delighted to see Ellen White's article on Higher Education here. I believe this unites the three great areas of our truth in one—the Gospel, Education, and the Health Message. This is a much needed magazine, and I hope it can get to every Seventh-day Adventist in the English speaking world. It would be excellent if it could be translated at least into a number of major languages like French, German, and Spanish. I like the positive thrust of the magazine, and I certainly would be honored to write regularly for it.

Colin Standish
President Hartland Institute
Rapidan, Virginia

We have read the first two issues, and if you continue in the spirit and doctrine of these first numbers there is absolutely no room for criticism. These contain the "straight" testimony, and that is what our people desperately need to hear.

Pastor California

Words can't possibly tell you what Our Firm Foundation has meant to me, in these first two issues.

As an SDA of eight years and always a workaholic, it has been a big problem for me to keep the Sabbath, especially the edges. The article on the Sabbath brought it forcibly to me, that if I am to follow the Saviour and the Father, it can't be important what I want, because if that is what He wants, that settles the issue. That was in the beautiful article, "A Test and a Sign."

Name Withheld
Newbury Park, California

My name is Gene Kimball. I live in a very remote area in Alaska. There isn't an SDA Church that I know of for more than 300 miles. I am on my own. I do lots of witnessing. I need lots of prayers for me and my work. Your magazine is God-sent. It is just what I need. You can expect support from me each month.

Gene Kimball
Slana, Alaska

I am praying for you all every day. I am sick of this old world and I want to go home to be with Jesus my Lord and King. I am on Social Security, so I can't do much. It's good to know we still have men and women who will stand up and be counted.

I am going door to door with Great Controversy paperbacks. Pray for me.

Carl Hencye
Wallingford, Kentucky

You don't know how much I enjoyed the November issue—I read every word. Truly God is directing the work in a mighty way. God is so long-suffering, not willing that any should perish. It makes my heart ache that so many of our people, I've been told, reject Sister E.G. White's writings.

Edith C. Perry
Norridgewock, Maine

I would be interested in ordering a bulk quantity of your most recent edition of Our Firm Foundation with Harry Anderson's picture of Christ holding the world in His hand except for the typesetting errors in "To Kill a Lamb" on p. 31. Surely by now the proofreader's error (actually a paste-up error—Eds.) has been found. But are all of that edition of the same printing run?

Errata

We apologize for the omission of the original source for the following articles by Ellen G. White in the January 1986 issue:

"Lay Members Go Forth" is found in Review and Herald, June 30, 1903
"Wake Up!" originally titled "Need of Earnestness in the Cause of God" is found in Review and Herald, February 25, 1890

If you have already made these changes, would you please send me prices for bulk quantities of the revised edition? I am thinking of about 200 copies.

H. Irwin Wolls, Jr.
Germantown, Ohio

The error has been corrected, and the second printing will have the appropriate alterations.—Eds.

Thank you for sending me the 200 copies of the December 1985 issue of Our Firm Foundation. I'm using the December issues to give away door-to-door. They are terrific! I simply tell them something like this (someone is standing next to me at the door):

"Hi, I'm Harvey, and this is ______. We are here because we have some timely information for you. We would like to give you this magazine free of charge if you would just take a few minutes to look at the table of contents to see if you would like to read it."

(Open to the table of contents. As they look at it, point out some of the articles that might be of interest to them.)

Some whom I met were interested to see that they could send in the card for free Bible studies. I am now putting my own address (by using a label) on the reply cards. With the Holy Spirit's necessary assistance, I believe this issue is a tremendous witnessing tool.

Harvey Steck
College Place, Washington

Our Firm Foundation
February, 1986

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We are accepting unsolicited manuscripts for future editions of Our Firm Foundation. Acceptance or rejection will be communicated only if the manuscript is accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address all editorial correspondance to: Managing Editor, Our Firm Foundation, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville WA 98328.

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Our time and our talents belong to the Lord. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." [1 Peter 1:18, 19] Then how can any one feel that he can be independent of God, and not subject to the Spirit of God? Those who imagine that they are independent of God's providences and plans, are in their supposed independence, in the veriest slavery to a power that is in rebellion against God.

Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary." [Isaiah 8:9-14]

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon His God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." [30:10, 11]

We are not safe in following the imagination of our own hearts. We cannot be independent of God. We are safe only as we realize our entire dependence upon Him as our Creator and Redeemer.

Satan has many devices whereby he holds us back from rendering prompt and unquestioning obedience to God. We have often had strong promptings and conviction of duty, but have shrunk back from fulfilling them. Yet Jesus says, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." [Matthew 16:24, 25] How many at times have been deeply stirred, and yet because duty demanded a sacrifice, they have tampered with their conscience, seated themselves in the enemy's debating chair, and have not made the decision that God sought to have them make. They have not broken away from the associations whose seductive influence for evil led them to follow their own carnal reasoning, and because there was no evidence of any immediate danger, they have rested down in their false security. They have debated in their minds, saying, Shall I obey the voice of God that bids me shake off the lethargy of the world, and escape from the world as did Lot from Sodom, or shall I listen to the voice of the world that cries peace and safety to my soul? Shall I wait for a more convenient season? All the sophistry of Satan is bound up in that one word, "wait." O that those who are now moved by the Spirit of God, would make a decided stand for God and for the truth!

We shall never be able to discern spiritual and heavenly things while we remain indifferent to the word of God. The voice of Jesus is calling, "Come to Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." [Matthew 11:28-30] Those who remain away from Jesus have placed their necks under a yoke that is not easy. They have clasped their arms about burdens that are not light. O, why not exchange the heavy yoke you now wear for the yoke of Christ? The voice of mercy is now sounding in warnings and entreaties, but that voice will not always be heard, if you continue to resist, and still choose your own way.

There is true missionary work to be done for those who move in higher circles, and the followers of Christ are to be true representatives of Christ, who though He was rich, for our sake became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. The rich should consecrate their all to God, and he who is sanctified through the truth in body, soul, and spirit, will also devote his property to God, and will become an agent whereby other souls will be reached.
In his experience and example it will be made manifest that the grace of Christ has power to overcome covetousness and avarice, and the rich man who renders unto God his entrusted goods, will be accounted a faithful steward, and can present to others the fact that every dollar of their accumulated property is stamped with the image and superscription of God. He can present to those who are rich the truth as it is in Jesus, showing that it was God who entrusted him with ability to get wealth, and gladly acknowledging the fact that his talents are not his, but God's who gave. The wealthy man who is truly converted can bring to bear upon his wealthy brethren the lessons of Christ, and show to them that their wealth is only safe as it is laid up in the bank of heaven.

There is a great danger that the riches of the wealthy shall prove not a blessing, but a curse to them. Rich men are in danger of trusting in their riches, of placing God's entrusted treasure where Christ should be in the heart, and interposing their wealth between the soul and God. Wealth thus becomes an idol, and separates the affection from its Giver. But let those who are fitted to work for the rich, and for those in high position, consecrate their all to God, and gain to Jesus Christ the name of Jesus go forth to do this work. Paul had converts even in Caesar's household. Truth will have its adherents even in king's courts. Paul wrote, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." [Philippians 4:22] The throne of the Caesars was then occupied by that monster of cruelty, Nero. If there ever was an atmosphere charged with the malarious influence of Satan, it was to be found in his household. The powers from beneath stirred up most fierce and determined hostility against Christians in that place, and Paul himself suffered death at the emperor's command. In such a household as this it seemed impossible that truth should find favor, and yet in this place there were those who were worthy to be called saints, and who sent greetings to the saints of other cities. Nothing is impossible with God.

We need more faith to work for those who are rich and in high position. For though Christ has said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God," [Mark 10:23] every rich man who does yield himself to the converting power of God, and is an overcomer, will find an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. The rich who are truly converted to God will understand that they are stewards of the Lord's property; and through the grace given unto them, they will discern that they have been entrusted with property, only that they may use it to advance the cause and kingdom of Christ in the world. There are many among the rich, who, were the truth presented to them as it is in Jesus, would be charmed with, and transformed through, the grace of Christ, and would see that money is of value only as it is devoted to doing good in the name and Spirit of Jesus. The wealthy man or woman converted to God will begin to comprehend what good may be done with their entrusted capital. They will see that institutions are to be established for the education of the youth, and that they are to be sustained by gifts and offerings. They will know that many youth must be trained for the missionary field, and the wealthy will become agents in the hands of God to set in operation the instrumentalities whereby men and women may become enlightened, and turned from degradation and error unto the living God.

Through the grace of Christ, those who have riches and are connected with Him, will sow abundantly, seeking out the youth, and running a risk in educating them, hoping that they will devote their lives to missionary work. God has entrusted the rich with gifts, that, if wisely used, will produce a hundredfold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting. To have the knowledge that our talents are being employed for the good of others, affords satisfaction in this life that brings a great reward. We know that if the Lord's entrusted capital is selfishly spent or hoarded, God will call us to an account. Because the rich are judgment-bound, we should put forth more efforts to win them to the service of Him who has entrusted them with large talents. God designed that through these very agents many souls should be converted, and sent forth on a mission of blessing to the world. His cause would be greatly advanced if those to whom He has given talents of means would devote their wealth to the upbuilding of His kingdom.

"Now Is the Time to Dedicate All to God," retitled "The Eye of the Needle," Review and Herald, September 19, 1893
God's Outstretched Hand

Ellen G. White

By the great law of God, man is bound up with his fellow man. To the answer given by the lawyer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself," Christ said, "Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live." [Luke 10:27, 28]

In these few words are laid down the terms of eternal life. True godliness is measured by the work done. Profession is nothing; position is nothing; a character like the character of Christ is the evidence we are to bear that God has sent His Son into the world. Those who profess to be Christians, yet do not act as Christ would were He in their place, greatly injure the cause of God. They misrepresent their Saviour, and are standing under false colors.

He in whose heart Christ abides shows forth to the world Christ's love for humanity. He is God's helping hand. The glow of spiritual health thrills his whole being as he receives from the Saviour grace to give to others. This is true missionary work. Its performance heals the wounds inflicted upon disordered human nature by the one who was once a covering cherub, but who through self-exaltation lost his high and holy estate, and took up a warfare against God and man. By his subtlety he led human beings into the pit of degradation, and it cost the life of the Son of man to redeem them. Christ gave His life to save every sinner. He is the light and life of men. He came as a mighty physician, a great medical missionary, to heal the wounds that sin had made in the human family. His mighty healing power sends a glow of spiritual health into the soul.

Pure and undefiled religion is not a sentiment, but the doing of works of mercy and love. This religion is necessary to health and happiness. It enters the polluted soul-temple, and with a scourge drives out the sinful intruders. Taking the throne, it consecrates all by its presence, illuminating the heart with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. It opens the windows of the soul heavenward, letting in the sunshine of God's love. With it come serenity and composure. Physical, mental, and moral strength increase, because the atmosphere of heaven, as a living, active agency, fills the soul. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory.

God calls upon us to show, by the exercise of true piety, that we are under divine enlightenment. When those connected with the service of God center their hopes on Jesus, a change will be seen in their deportment. Supreme love for God and selfless love for their fellow men will place them on vantage ground.

The gospel is good tidings of great joy. Its promises bring light to the soul and shine forth to the world. Therefore Christ says to those who have received the gospel, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." [Matthew 5:16]

Again: He illustrates the living reality of a Christian life by the saving properties of salt. "Ye are the salt of the earth," He says; "but if the salt have lost its savour, woe to it, shall it be salted?" [Matthew 5:13] Sollemn question! If the saving principles of truth are not exemplified by professing Christians, what benefit does the world derive from their lives? When the salt has lost its savour, "it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden..."
underfoot of men.” [vs. 13] When Christians do not reveal Christ, of what value are they? Are they not like savorless salt, “good for nothing”? But when they reveal in their lives the saving principles of the truth, poor, sin-hardened souls are not left to perish in corruption. Good works are seen; for the living principles of righteousness cannot be hidden. The gospel acted is like salt which contains all its savor. It is powerful in the saving of souls.

Christ inculcated the value of obedience, saying “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” [Matthew 5:17-19] Is not the best for us to keep the commandments, so that through us God can reveal His power? If all God’s people were obeying His law, they would indeed be lights in the world.

God’s promises to the obedient gladden the humble, contrite soul. The life of the true Christian is radiant with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. If men and women would act as the Lord’s helping hand, doing deeds of love and kindness, uplifting the oppressed, rescuing those ready to perish, the glory of the Lord would be their rearward. They would not send thousands of miles to learn from human beings their duty. They would call, and the Lord would answer, “Here am I.” [Isaiah 6:8] They would turn to the One close beside them, the One who has given them the promise, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” [Matthew 28:20]

Look, thirsty, bewildered souls! Can ye not see the fountain of life, opened for the weary, wayworn traveler? Can ye not hear the voice of Mercy as she beckons you to saying, “He who is thirsty, come ye to the waters;” [Isaiah 55:1] “whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”? [Revelation 22:17] The waters of this fountain contain medicinal properties which will heal both spiritual and physical infirmities. Drink deep from the fountain opened for Judah and Jerusalem. Then you can take the refreshing cup to parched, fainting souls.

Christ said of His work, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.” [Isaiah 61:1, 2] Notice, you are not to comfort only the few whom you are inclined to regard with favor, but all who apply to you for help and relief; and more, you are to search for the needy. Job says, “The cause which I knew not I searched out.” [Job 29:16] He did not wait to be urged, and then turn away, saying, “I will not help him.”

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.” [Isaiah 61:3]

Wake up, wake up, my brethren and sisters. You must do the work that Christ did when He was upon this earth. Remember that you may act as God’s helping hand in opening the prison doors to those that are bound. Wonderful is the work that God desires to accomplish through His servants, that His name may constantly be glorified. He is waiting to work through His people. Those who are willing to be used will obtain a rich experience, an experience full of the glory of God.

Of those who act as His helping hand the Lord says, “Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord; men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.” [Isaiah 61:6-9] “And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” [Isaiah 62:2, 3]

Shall we not try to crowd all the goodness and love and compassion possible into our lives?

“God’s Helping Hand,” Review and Herald, October 15, 1901

Food For Thought

One day two gentlemen came to visit my grandmother here at Els- haven. My father, Willie White, accompanied them up the main stairs to Grandma’s study. After a brief introduction they stated the purpose of their mission. Grandma was in need of funds to finish writing her books and testimonies, and these men seemed to have the answer.

They spent the next few minutes making a fine presentation offering her a cash advance for exclusive rights to all her material and stating that they would be able to sell more of her books if they could have sole publishing rights. Knowing how much Grandma needed the money, my father felt sure that she would make the agreement. Grandma paused, then walked toward the north side of the room and sat down. The men quickly followed her and placed the contract on her lapboard. She picked up her pen, then put it back down.

The two men looked at each other, somewhat puzzled by her reaction. Thinking that she must not have understood, they repeated their entire proposal. She politely listened as they finished their appeal, and then they nudge the contract a little closer and handed her the pen. She took the pen and set it down.

By now my father was becoming nervous. Not knowing what else to do, he ushered the gentlemen downstairs to the living room. He then came back up the side stairs to where Grandmother was sitting.

“Mother, you understand why the brethren were here, don’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Why didn’t you sign?”

She then shrugged her shoulders and said, “Just as I was about to sign, the angel stood back of them and gestured for me not to sign.”

Father went back downstairs and related the story to the men. They never came back.

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by Grace White Jacques, as told to Vince Christensen
The difficulties in have stood sinned charge did guilty. In tested, might Aaron, refusing them to the people, were doing idolatry. Firm were refused to worship, and people wereVerse 8. Our Firm Foundation February, 1986

The Church In The Wilderness

Ellen G. White

We would present before you the difficulties through which the church in the wilderness passed. They did not have faith, and when they were tested, they murmured and rebelled. They were stubborn. While Moses was in the mount, He who had been brought out of Egypt that they might serve God were dishonoring Him by worshiping the golden calf. Aaron, who feared to offend them by refusing their request to make for them a god to worship, had permitted this idolatry. Aaron manifested weakness of character in this. He stood in Moses’s place, and had charge of the congregation, but he did not guide them. He did not refuse to accede to their demand for an idol. In worshiping the golden calf, Israel sinned greatly, and the Lord punished the people, and 3,000 of the most guilty were slain.

Moses said to Israel, “Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, O, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.” [Exodus 32:30-33] It will be well to read this history carefully, and take heed to the lessons taught on this particular occasion. (Read the 32nd, 33rd, and 34th chapters of Exodus.) The Lord did not destroy His people, but those who had sinned were punished. But He revealed Himself to Moses, declaring His character.

In Numbers 12 is the account of Aaron and Miriam’s conduct when they spoke against Moses. “And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath He not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it.” [verse 2] Every envious feeling, every jealousy cherished, is known to the Lord; for He reads the hearts, and He hears every word spoken against those upon whom He has laid the burden of the work. How much of evil speaking is done even by those who have had but little experience in the work, little knowledge of the things of God, little realization of the holy requirements of His cause. Those who have not drunk deeply at the fountain of truth, and have not obtained an experimental knowledge of holy things, feel at liberty to criticize those whom the Lord is using in a special manner to do His work. Even youth, young men and women, have a small stock of respect and reverence, and they make flippant remarks in regard to God’s chosen messengers, and bring their names into their idle talk and gossip. They dissect their work, and pass judgment.
people, saying, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.” The exaggerated report of the unfaithful spies filled the people with discouragement, and they gave up in the abandonment of despair, and the leaven of murmuring spread throughout the camp of Israel. And they said one to another:—

Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.” [Numbers 14:4-10]

The people were ready to batter down the men who made their voices to be heard to change the current of feeling in the congregation of Israel, and it was now time for God to work. “And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke Me? and how long will it be ere they believe Me for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.” [11, 12]

Moses was then tested and proved of God. Forsake Israel? Come out from among them, and leave them in their rebellion and sin?—No, never.

“And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them;) and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that Thou Lord art among this people, that Thou Lord art seen face to face, and that Thy cloud is over them, and that Thou goest before them, by daytime in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if Thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations that have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore He slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech Thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as Thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it.” [13-23]

Mark the whole tenor of this chapter, and learn the lesson it conveys to modern Israel. These things are written for our ensamples upon whom the ends of the world are come. We see the unbelief, and the stout resistance of some who have had great light, and although evidence has been piled upon evidence, they have kept themselves in stubborn resistance. The Lord has sent messages of warning and entreaty, messages of reproof and rebuke, and they have not been in vain. But we have never had a message that the Lord would organize the church. We have never had the prophecy concerning Babylon applied to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, or been informed that the “loud cry” consisted in calling God's people to come out of her; for this is not God's plan concerning Israel.

In the example of Moses pleading for the children of Israel is represented the position that we should
take in regard to the people of God, however erring, or weak, or defective they may be. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the Lord has brought out a people from the quarry of the world, as He brought out of Egypt a people to keep His commandments, and at every step He has shown them that He is leading them in paths of truth and righteousness. He has sent His light and His counsels, instructing them to build institutions of learning, to provide sanitariums and publishing houses, and success has attended the carrying out of these plans. The money of the Seventh-day Adventists has not been hoarded in order that they might live delicately, but self-denial and self-sacrifice have marked their history, and still their work is to make progress, and to be aggressive. The world have a light constantly shining upon them, because this people honor God in keeping His commandments. Now can we expect that a message would be true that would designate as Babylon the people for whom God has done so much? Hell would triumph should such a message be received, and the world would be strengthened in iniquity. All the reproaches which Satan has cast upon the character of God, would appear as truth, and the conclusion would be made that God has no chosen or organized church in the world. O, what a triumph would this be to Satan and His confederacy of evil! God does not work in this way. He does just what He said He would do in the 58th chapter of Isaiah [11-14]:

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."


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The Lord my God, my Shepherd is, And Want I shall not know.
In pastures green He leadeth me, Still waters gently flow.

When shadows fall across my way,
Restoreth He my soul.
In righteousness paths He guideth me,
And in His name I'm whole.

Though through the valley I should walk,
No evil shall I fear.
Thy rod and staff, they comfort me,
Thy presence always near.

A table, Thou hast set, O Lord,
That all my foes may see.
That in their presence I do eat
The fruits of victory.

My head with oil Thou wilt anoint;
My cup shall overflow.
My Shepherd God, He leadeth me,
Where streams of blessing flow.

Goodness and mercy shall abound
And follow all my days.
And in God's house I shall abide
To sing His endless praise.

Clarence R. Munroe, 1971

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Dave Fiedler

If you have been mystified by "new theology" denials of victory over sin, if you've wondered how it is that differences have crept into the thinking of the church, please do yourself the favor of reading Face to Face With the Real Gospel. In clear, simple language that everyone can understand, Dr. Priebe traces both major "versions" of the gospel as taught among Seventh-day Adventists today. By examining the cause and effect relationship existing between our understanding of sin, our concepts of the nature of Christ, and our "chances" of overcoming sin, it becomes possible to see both versions as logical and far less mysterious.

Having dispelled these obscuring mists, it becomes much simpler to firmly establish one's own understanding of the "real gospel," and to deal wisely and kindly with the advocates of doctrines which are logical and consistent with themselves, but tragically unsupportable from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

This book's biggest defect is its lack of an index. This being the case, let me urge you to buy it, read it carefully, and index it yourself in the blank pages at the back. This would be money and time well spent.
Agriculture

There is no way that the impact of industrialization upon human experience can be adequately evaluated, but recent successful experiments with agriculture as a therapy for the mentally and physically handicapped are indices of the probable contribution of agriculture to harmonious human growth and development. While one may question Thomas Jefferson's claim that agriculture is the most democratic occupation, yet it is increasingly difficult to ignore the mounting evidence that the pursuits of the soil are basic to human experience.

God has provided a systematic philosophy of agriculture in education. It is surprising that a pursuit so integral to human history has been largely ignored or perhaps taken for granted even by God's Church. Ellen White has given some of the strongest rea-
It is reasonable to assume that prior to the industrialization of large segments of the world, little attention was given to the extraordinary role of agriculture in the harmonious development of mankind. After all, it is hard to perceive of anything being extraordinary that is the lot (some no doubt feel, the bane) of almost all members of the human race. Thus it is primarily in recent history that the retreat from the soil has been considered a major factor in the great fractures seen in contemporary society. Whereas small farms with their attendant close-knit family and social units once covered the expanse of arable America, except for the Amish and their like, the small farm is gone and huge landholdings dominate. Thus millions have been robbed of the helpful effects and therapeutic value of gardening.

In 1907, addressing the students and faculty of Michigan State University, on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the first state-sponsored Agricultural College, President Theodore Roosevelt said: “Our school system has hitherto been well-nigh wholly lacking on the side of industrial training, of the training that fits the men for the shop. . . . Agricultural colleges and farmers’ institutes have done much in instruction and inspiration; they have stood for the nobility of labor and the necessity of keeping the muscle and the brain in training for industry.” Theodore Roosevelt, “The Man Who Works With His Hands,” in Agricultural Thought in the Twentieth Century, edited by George McGovern, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc. 1967, 27, 32

Significantly, Roosevelt’s statement: “The best crop is the crop of children, the best products of the farm are the men and women raised thereon” (ibid., 32) has become a watch-cry to some advocates of the critical role for agriculture in education. For example, Hill and Struernmann assert:


Perhaps the most convincing evidence for agriculture in the educational curriculum ironically does not come from the regular classroom investigation. Rather, it comes from the increasing evidence of success with the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded, the emotionally disturbed, the hardened criminal and the sick.

As early as 1768, the renowned Philadelphia physician, Benjamin Rush, maintained that digging in the soil could cure the mentally ill. In the nineteenth century, Dr. Gregory of northern Scotland claimed cure for insanity by compelling patients to do farm work. Probably the longest continuous use of horticultural therapy is thought to be the Friends Hospital in Philadelphia, which has used this therapy since its foundation in 1813. The effectiveness of gardening in the restoration of the ill and the maladaptive seems to be compelling. Major claims include:

1. Positive results for stroke and accident victims and sufferers of degenerative diseases
2. Improvement in mental retardation victims
3. Some success with bitter and apathetic patients
4. Improvement in psychiatric patients
5. Developing self-worth in teenagers
6. Reducing fear in child patients facing operations
7. Aiding senior citizens to realize continued usefulness
8. Reaching the psychologically dangerous criminal

With this rapidly increasing evidence and with the spread of horticultural (hortitherapy), agricultural and garden therapy, the question which confronts the Christian educator is what role in prevention does agriculture play? Has the obvious fragmentation of Western society been in part a result of the retreat from the soil? The answer is a resounding “yes!” The introduction of agriculture (or gardening) into the curriculum as a continuing basic core subject must be urgently addressed.


But is it more than medicine? The pursuits of the soil offer a broad basis for the development of those human characteristics which are essential for the healthy growth of the individual and the stability of society. While the evidence at hand may not yet be conclusive in the ultimate sense, it is indeed compelling and thoroughly confirming of God’s counsel. First, there is the abundant socio-psychological evidence of an insecure and fragile society which is generally far removed from its roots in the soil. In the society the evidence of the dependency syndrome is increasingly apparent. Then there is the almost irrefutable proof of the success of soil pursuits in human rehabilitation.

Obviously, out-of-doors gardening
offers the widest range of benefits for the participants. These benefits include moderate exercise of the major muscle systems of the body, sunshine and fresh air (except if undertaken in an urbanized area). Not only are these important to physical health, but also to mental and spiritual health.

"Useful occupation was appointed them as a blessing, to strengthen the body, to expand the mind, and to develop the character." Education, 21

However, where climatic or physical reasons make outdoor gardening impossible, or for plants or plants in a greenhouse may still have considerable therapeutic and preventive value. Dealing with the therapeutic area, Anne Moffat says,

"The unique satisfaction derived from getting one's hands into the soil—preparing ground, sowing seeds, observing and nurturing growth, reaping harvests and even pulling weeds, seems to frequently set the stage for recovery," Anne Moffat, "Therapy in Plants," Science Digest. February 1980, 62, 63

But she further points out that the single largest group to benefit from garden therapy is the home gardeners. She identified three valuable antidotes to stress in home gardening:

"exercise, relaxation and aesthetic enjoyment" ibid., 65

With such wide-ranging benefits to be derived from agricultural pursuits, a strong case can surely be made for the inclusion of agriculture or attendant education in the core curricula of every school at all levels of education, kindergarten through college. These are based upon God's counsel and the following considerations:

1. Physical Benefits. Agriculture, along with many other practical and beneficial pursuits, has much advantage over sports, especially team sports. Physical education experts have increasingly recognized the general failure of team sports to establish lifetime patterns of exercise. Gardening offers a lifetime of such beneficial exercise.

Further, gardening offers exercise independent of the pressure associated with competitive sports so that relaxation rather than tension tends to result. The tendency of competition is to place stress upon winning at the expense of another individual or another team. Gardening is intrinsically free from such negative social consequences.

2. Intellectual Benefits. When the early investigators of intelligence began their work, the emphasis was directed toward defining intelligence as a general, inherent, cognitive capacity. However, more recent theorists and investigators no longer accept such a simplistic definition of intelligence. Most educators see a wide range of inherent and acquired factors. Of greatest importance to this article is the increasing emphasis upon practical skills as an index of intelligence alongside the verbal, numerical and theoretical reasoning skills.

For example, Vernon defines two major factors of intelligence (Ved verbal-educational and K: m kines-esthetic-mechanical). The continued emphasis on the practical factors leads to the conclusion that theory and application must stand together in good educational practice. While agriculture is by no means the only worthwhile practical skill, it is surely a skill which more than most skills accommodates the wide range of intellectual capacity of mankind and therefore should occupy a primary role in applied education.

3. Economic Benefits. We have yet failed to fully appreciate the devastating psychological effects of the entertainment syndrome upon modern culture. This failure not only dominates our leisure-time activities, but has also invaded education, work, the Church and almost all phases of life.

It is just now that we are beginning to realize the destructive psychological effect of living a life built largely around vicarious experiences. Most children have spent thousands of hours in the make-believe fantasy experience of television and other entertainment media, while spending little time in their self-initiated experience. Agricultural activities offer an excellent antidote to such mental health hazards.

The experiences in the real world, the basic cause and effect lessons and the personal fulfillment of agriculture, must help preserve mental health and offer experiences in meeting the real issues of life. These lessons contribute significantly to the establishment of self worth.

4. Spiritual Benefits. The moral benefits of hard work and worthwhile pursuits have long been recognized. The accomplishment of productive tasks and the rewards of honest labor sustain a platform for growth which will facilitate the choice of the worthwhile and the valuable. Idleness and indolence and the failure to achieve worthwhile ends not only threaten the emotional health of an individual, but also predispose the individual to anti-social and often criminal behavior. Agriculture, along with other worthwhile practical programs, can facilitate sound moral and spiritual growth.

While it is not within the scope of this article to detail the way agriculture might most effectively be integrated into the school curricula, a number of observations may be helpful:

1. Whenever possible, schools should have sufficient land so that every student may have a small garden of his or her own for which to care.

2. It may be advisable to have some opportunity for group agricultural pursuits where such social intercourse would be deemed advisable.

3. The handicapped is postulated upon all teachers engaging in and helping the students in their gardens.

4. Where there is much cold weather, greenhouses should be provided for the students' gardening program.

5. City schools have an even greater responsibility than rural schools to inaugurate garden programs. If existing space does not permit this, greenhouse and houseplant culture may be successfully substituted.

6. Gardening courses should offer increasing levels of theoretical understanding as well as practical experience.

7. Experimentation with soil enrichment and food quality analysis might also be added at upper levels.

Agriculture should stand beside reading, English, writing, mathematics and spiritual training as the core of the educational curriculum. True Christian education will offer every opportunity for students to gain an education in the pursuits of the soil.

1. E.G. White, Education, 112, 220
2. E.G. White, Counsel to Parents, Teachers and Students, 186
5. Jody Gaylin, op. cit., 118
6. Ibid., 118
7. Ibid., 118
9. Ibid., 62
11. Anne Moffat, op. cit., 62
In Support Of Christ's Church

Vince Christensen

Jesus watched the worshipers file past the treasury and drop their coins into the box. The disciples wondered what He might say. Would He talk about the way the temple priests embezzled from the offerings? Would He praise the wealthy man now lingering at the slot with his bulging sack of coins? Silently they wait.

Then they see her coming. She was obviously poor; her shawl was torn, her cloak ragged about the hem. Looking nervously about she seized her chance; no one noticed her, she thought. The tiny coins clattered in among the wealthy offerings. She gathered up her skirts and hurried off—wishing she could have given more. At first, she didn't see Him standing there behind the marble post, but as she turned to go, she caught His eye and heard the words: “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has placed in the treasury more than anyone; because they gave from their abundance, but she gave from her want.” Her timid heart rejoiced as she walked away. The same God that sees the sparrow fall marks the simple acts of love and weighs the motives in the balance of the heart. Much love—much gift. Much self—no gift. A simple and oft-repeated story, yet how easy to forget!

There are many lessons that can be extracted from this story found in Mark 12:41-44 that go beyond the contrasting motives of the poor and the wealthy worshipers.

One such lesson to be considered is why, with all of Christ's insights and knowledge about the apostasy and the corruption of the church, did He commend the woman for giving her last two mites to the scheming priests? Isn't this somewhat inconsistent in the light of the text: “to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin”? (James 4:17) Shouldn't Christ have run up to her just before she dropped her coins and warned her of the waste?

As a church, do we parallel the Jewish nation? If so, is Christ trying to leave us a principle to follow that goes beyond giving from the heart?

First, let us look at the parallels. “The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude before the first coming of Christ, illustrate the position of the people of God in their experience before the second coming.” (Review and Herald, February 18, 1890) And also in the Review and Herald, June 4, 1889: “What would the Saviour do if He should come to us now as He did to the Jews? He would have to do a similar work in cleansing away the rubbish of tradition and ceremony.” This appears to suggest some strong parallels, but will this always be?

In the following statement Ellen White does not indicate that things are about to get any better. “Never
Let us ever bear in mind that God is going to prevail and His church will take to the field and be victorious.

before have I carried so sad a heart as since I have seen the apostasy of men and women who have had great light, and an abundance of evidence of the truth for this time. This brings to me a grief that should be spared me, in the closing days of earth's history. But I have not power to change the seductive working of the enemy. The Scripture has said that such things will come. I accept the word of the Lord, and submit to the conditions that arise," Letter 266, 1906, p. 1 (To J.E. and Emma White, August 5, 1906)

Again in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1159, Ellen White gives the short and powerful warning, "This chapter [Jeremiah 36] is a record of historical events that will be repeated. Let all who desire to receive warning, read carefully."

What we find in Jeremiah 36 is a story of stiff-necked defiance from the leaders of the church to God's messages, and the result that follows is troubling. This prophetic statement paints a gloomy picture indeed concerning the way things will turn out in our church. Notice the last quotation does not say this is a record that may be repeated, but will be repeated. Should this cause us great anxiety and distress? Yes, but at the same time we should praise God that He has given us ample warning to prepare us so that we will have our faith firmly grounded as this time more fully comes. Also note that while the king was busy tearing up and burning the scroll, there were three men mentioned in verse 25 of Jeremiah 36 that opposed what was happening. What does this have to do with the story of the widow's mite? Everything. While apostasy will exist until the close of time, God will also have His faithful and loyal among them working as leaven and warranting support.

Christ was willing to identify Himself with His church even in the midst of an apostasy that is unequaled until the Earth's closing scenes. But as we see in the following statement, Christ was discriminating in how He supported the church:

"Christ unapologetically condemned abuses, but He was careful not to lessen obligation. He rebuked the selfishness that extorted and misapplied the widow's gifts. At the same time He commended the widow who brought her offering for God's treasury. Man's abuse of the gift could not turn God's blessing from the giver." Desire of Ages, 614

Christ shows us that in spite of the abuse, He still placed a trust into their hands, and He leaves us the ultimate example of trust as He placed His own funds in the hands of His betrayer.

This brings us to another important question, how was Christ sustained in His ministry? In Luke 8:2, 3 and Mark 15:41, we find evidence of how Christ was supported during His years of theming. Under God's direction the people responded with the appropriate means to sustain Christ. We can assume it was done without the knowledge or endorsement of the priests. Apparently God had a plan devised whereby even in the midst of rejection, His Son would be sustained. The same need will occur at the close of the work as messages and messengers come to the church out of the "usual order."

"Most startling messages will be borne by men of God's appointment, messages of a character to warn the people, to arouse them. And while some will be provoked by the warning and led to resist light and evidence, we are to see from this that we are giving the testing message of this time. Messages will be given out of the usual order." Testimonies, vol. 9, 137

We have much to be thankful for, and a bright future before us as a people. Let us ever bear in mind that God is going to prevail and His church will take to the field and be victorious. Ellen White states, "There will be religious failures because men do not have faith. When they look at the things that are seen, impossibilities appear; but God can lead them step by step in the course He desires them to take. His work will advance as His servants move forward by faith. While they may be called upon to pass through trying times, yet they should ever remember that they are contending with a weakened, beaten foe. God's people will finally triumph over every power of darkness." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 4, 1175

None of us can be absolutely sure of all the fine details of how and when the Lord is going to finish His work in righteousness. But we do know that He is going to take the reins into His own hands. This may involve unusual methods as we can see in the following statement.

"I stated [at the 1888 General Conference Session] that . . . another angel was to come down from heaven with a message, and the whole earth was to be lighted with his glory. It would be impossible for . . . [God's people] to state just how this additional light will come. It might come in a very strange way, in a way that would not agree with the ideas that many have conceived. It is not at all unlikely or contrary to the ways and works of God to send light to His people in unexpected ways." Letter 22, 1889, p. 10 (to R.A. Underwood, January 18, 1889) See also Testimonies to Ministers, 300

Would it be safe to assume that the additional light coming in this "unexpected manner" would not be figured into the conference budget?

If conditions at the end of time are going to be as they were in Christ's day, is it safe to assume that many, if not most of us, will have a difficult time recognizing the very working of God? It is a troubling thought, but maybe—just maybe—we are in for many surprises. It behooves us to be cautious when it comes to discounting or accepting the work of anyone. Remember, Christ and Barabbas came at the same time. Barabbas was accepted and Christ was not.

Now for one summarizing thought from the poor widow and her two mites. We must allow for God to do His work in His way. We should by no means levy "sanctions" against the church because of corruption, neither should we expect that God will necessarily do things in the same way, using methods that we currently see.

May God give us the wisdom and charity to support His cause, and the faith to see beyond the offering plate. Jesus wants our hearts, and as we give Him all we have and are, listen as He whispers, "I will use it well."
For weeks I have not been able to sleep after half past three o'clock. My mind is deeply exercised in regard to our condition as a people. We ought to be far in advance of any other people on the earth because we have greater light and greater knowledge of the truth, which lays us under increased accountability to advance that light and not only profess to believe the truth but to practice it. When we do practice the truth we are then following Jesus, who is the light of the world; and if we as a people are not constantly elevating, becoming more and more spiritually minded, we are becoming like the Pharisees—self-righteous—while we do not the will of God.

We must have a greater nearness to God. Much less of self and much more of Jesus Christ and His grace must be brought into our everyday life. We are living in an important period of this world's history. The end of all things is at hand; the sands of time are fast running out; soon in heaven it will be said: “It is done.” “He that is holy, let him be holy still,” “he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” [Revelation 21:6; 22:11]

Let our testimonies be sharpened up; let us have a firmer hold on God. I cannot refrain from prayer at one, two, and three o'clock in the morning for the Lord to work upon the hearts of the people. I think of all heaven being interested in the work that is going on upon the earth. Ministering angels are waiting about the throne to instantly obey the mandate of Jesus Christ to answer every prayer offered in earnest, living faith. I think of how many who profess the truth are keeping it apart from their lives. They do not bring its sanctifying, refining, spiritualizing power into their hearts. I think how this grieves Jesus.

I think of His great sorrow as He wept over Jerusalem, exclaiming, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!” [Luke 13:34] God forbid that these words shall apply to those who have great light and blessings. In the rejecting of Jerusalem it was because great privileges were abused which brought the denunciation upon all who lightly regarded the great opportunities and precious light that were entrusted to their keeping. Privileges do not commend us to God, but they commend God to us. No people are saved because they have great light and special advantages, for these high and heavenly favors only increase their responsibility.

The more and increased light God has given make the receiver more responsible. It does not place the receiver in any safer position unless the privileges are wisely improved, prized and used to advance God's glory. Christ said, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” [Matthew 11:21]

When Jerusalem was divorced from God it was because of her sins. She fell from an exalted height that Tyre and Sidon had never reached. And when an angel falls he becomes a fiend. The depths of our ruin is measured by the exalted light to which God has raised us in His great

Ellen G. White
goodness and unspeakable mercy. Oh, what privileges are granted to us as a people! And if God spared not His people whom He loved because they refused the church in the light, how can He spare the people whom He has blessed with the light of heaven in having opened to them the most exalted truth ever entrusted to mortal man to give to the world?

We are far from being the people God would have us be, because we do not elevate the soul and refine the character in harmony with the wonderful unfolding of God's truth and His purposes. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." [Proverbs 14:34] Sin is a disorganizer. Wherever it is cherished—in the individual heart, in the household, in the church—there is disorder, strife, variance, enmity, envy, jealousy, because the enemy of man and of God has the controlling power over the mind. But let the truth be loved and brought into the life, as well as advocated, and that man or woman will hate sin and will be a living representative of Jesus Christ to the world.

The people claiming to believe the truth will not be condemned because they had not the light, but because they had great light and did not bring their hearts to the test of God's great moral standard of righteousness. The people who claim to believe the truth must be elevated by living it out. Real Bible religion must leven the life, refine and ennoble the character, making it more and more like the divine model. Then will the home be vocal with prayer, with thanksgiving and praise to God. Angels will minister in the home and accompany the worshiper to the house of prayer.

Let the churches who claim to believe the truth, who are advocating the law of God, keep that law and depart from all iniquity. Let the individual members of the church resist the temptations to practice evils and indulge in sin. Let the church commence the work of purification before God by repentance, humiliation, deep heart searching, for we are in the antitypical day of atonement—solemn hour fraught with eternal results.

Let those who teach the truth present it as it is in Jesus. Under the subduing, sanctifying, refining, influence of the truth of God they are as clean vessels. Let them be leavened with Bible religion, and what an influence would go forth from them to the world! Let the individual members of the church be pure, steadfast, unmoving, always abounding in the love of Jesus, and they will then be a light to the world. Let the men stand-

ing as watchmen and as shepherds of the flock proclaim the solemn truth, sound the notes of warning to all people, nations and tongues. Let them be living representatives of the truth they advocate, and honor God's law by strict and holy compliance with its requirements, walking before the Lord in purity, in holiness, and a power will attend the proclamation of the truth that will reflect light everywhere.

God never forsakes people or individuals until they forsake Him. Outward opposition will not cause the faith of God's people, who are keeping His commandments, to become dim. The neglect to bring purity and truth into practice will grieve the Spirit of God and weaken them because God is not in their midst to bless. Internal corruption will bring the denunciations of God upon this people as it did upon Jerusalem. Oh, let pleading voices, let earnest prayer be heard, that those who preach to others shall not themselves be castaways. My brethren, we know not what is before us, and our only safety is in following the Light of the world. God will work with us and for us if the sins which brought His wrath upon the old world, upon Sodom and Gomorrha and upon ancient Jerusalem, do not become our crime.

The least transgression of God's law brings guilt upon the transgressor and without earnest repentance and forsaking of sin he will surely become an apostate. You inquire in regard to the course which should be pursued to secure the rights of our people to worship according to the dictates of our own conscience. This has been a burden on my soul for some time, whether it would be a denial of faith, and an evidence that our trust was not fully in God. But I call to mind many things God has shown me in the past in regard to things of a similar character, as the draft and other things. I can speak in the fear of God, it is right we should use every power we can to avert the pressure that is being brought to bear upon our people. I know that were our people spiritualized by the truth the greatest love would be maintained. We are not to provoke those who have accepted this spurious Sabbath, an institution of the Papacy, in the place of God's holy Sabbath. Their not having the Bible arguments in their favor makes them all the more angry and determined to supply the place of arguments that are wanting in the Word of God by the power of their might. The force of persecution follows the steps of the dragon. Therefore great care should be exercised to give no provocation. And again let us as a people, as far as possible, cleanse the camp of moral defilement and aggravating sins. When sin is making its march upon the people who claim to be elevating the moral standard of righteousness, how can we expect God to turn His power in our behalf and save us as a people that did righteousness?

All the policy in the world cannot save us from a terrible sifting, and all the efforts made with high authorities will not lift us from the scouring of God just because sin is cherished. If as a people we do not keep ourselves in the faith and not only advocate with pen and voice the commandments of God, but keep them every one, not violating a single precept knowingly, then weakness and ruin will come upon us. It is a work that we must attend to in every one of our churches. Each man must be a Christian.

Let the sin of pride be put away, let all superfluities of dress be overcome and repentance toward God be exercised, for the highhanded robbery toward Him which has withheld money which should flow into the treasury to sustain the work of God in its mission fields. Let the work of reformation, of true conversion, be set before and urged upon the people. Let our works, our deportment, cor-

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respond with the work for this time, that we may say, Follow me as I follow Christ. Let us humble our souls before God by humiliation, fasting, and prayer, repentance of sin, and putting it away.

The voice of the true watchman needs now to be heard all along the line, "The morning cometh, and also the night." [Isaiah 21:12] The trumpet must give a certain sound, for we are in the great day of the Lord's preparation. All the struggles to carry our appeals to the highest authorities in our land, however earnest and strong and eloquent may be the pleas in our favor, will not bring about that which we desire, unless the Lord works by His Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who claim to believe the truth. We may struggle as a mighty man in swimming against the current of Niagara, but we shall fail unless the Lord pleads in our behalf. God will be honored among His people. They must be pure; they must be divested of self, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work stirred to their very center. Support will be withdrawn from those who proclaim God's only standard of righteousness, the only sure test of character. And all who will not bow to the decree of the national councils, and obey the national laws to exalt the Sabbath instituted by the man of sin to the disregard of God's holy day, will feel, not the oppressive power of Popery alone, but of the Protestant world, the image of the beast.

Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. We must be divested of our self-righteousness and arrayed in the

shortcoming in His sight. God help us to render to Him all His law requires. We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ's righteousness into daily practice.

Dear brethren, the Lord is coming. Lift up your thoughts and heads and rejoice. Oh, we would think that those who hear the joyful news, who claim to love Jesus, would be filled with joy unutterable and full of glory. This is the good news which should electrify every soul, which should be repeated in our homes, and told to those whom we meet on the street. What more joyful news can be communicated! Cavilling and contention with believers or unbelievers is not the work God has given us to do.

If Christ is my Saviour, my Sacrifice, my Atonement, then I shall never perish. Believing on Him, I have life for evermore. Oh that all who believe the truth would believe in Jesus as their own Saviour. I do not mean that cheap faith unsupported by works, but that earnest, living, constant, abiding faith, that eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God. I want not only to be pardoned for the transgression of God's holy law, but I want to be lifted into the sunshines of God's countenance. Not simply to be admitted to heaven, but to have an abundant entrance.

Are we so insensible as a peculiar people, a holy nation, to the inexpressible love that God has manifested for us? Salvation is not in being baptized, not in having our names upon the church books, not in preaching the truth. But it is in a living union with Jesus Christ, to be renewed in heart, doing the works of Christ in faith and labor of love, in patience, meekness, and hope. Every soul united to Christ will be a living missionary to all around him. He will labor for those near and those afar off. He will have no sectional feeling, no interest merely to build up one branch of the work over which he presides and there let his zeal end. All will work with interest to make every branch strong. There will be no selfishness, no selfish rivalry, the cause is one, the truth a great whole.

Well may the question be asked with earnest, anxious heart, Is envy cherished, is jealousy permitted to find a place in my heart? If so, Christ is not there. Do I love the law of God, is the love of Jesus Christ in my heart? If we love one another as Christ has loved us then we are getting ready for the blessed heaven of peace and rest. There is no struggling there to be first, to have the supremacy; all will love their neighbor as themselves. Oh, that God would open the understanding and

...is fulfilling God's sure word of prophecy and accomplishing His grand work.

of the Lord. The Lord will elevate the humblest soul that trusts in Him. He will unite His power with human effort, if that man will honor Him as did Daniel. But as a people we need the beauty of righteousness, holiness, and truth. The most harmonious theory will not save us. The God that ruled in Babylon is the same God that rules now. There are many doctrines current in our world. There is many a religion current that numbers its thousands and tens of thousands, but there is but one that bears the superscription and the stamp of God. We must have our souls riveted to the eternal Rock. Everything in God's world, both men and doctrines and nature itself, is fulfilling God's sure word of prophecy and accomplishing His grand and closing work in this world's history.

We are to be ready and waiting for the orders of God. Nations will be righteousness of Christ.

The remnant that purify their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy. All these, He says, "I have graven . . . upon the palms of My hands." [Isaiah 49:16] They are held in everlasting, imperishable remembrance. We want faith now, living faith. We want to have a living testimony that shall cut to the heart of the sinner. There is too much sermonizing and too little ministering. We want the holyunction. We need the spirit and fervor of the truth. Many of the ministers are half paralyzed by their own defects of character. They need the converting power of God.

That which God required of Adam before his fall was perfect obedience to His law. God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, righteousness without a flaw, without
The Lord appoints and sends forth ministers not only to preach, for this is a small part of His work, but to minister, to educate the people not to be fighters but to be examples of piety. There are workers in every department appointed to do their work. When Jesus ascended on high he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. Some have entered the work with a human commission rather than the divine. They have educated themselves as debaters and the churches under their care show the character of their work. They were not ready, they were not fitted for the work. Their hearts are not right with God. In short, they have a theory but not true conversion and sanctification through the truth. The great issue so near at hand will weed out those whom God has not appointed, and He will have a pure, true, sanctified ministry prepared for the latter rain.

Our prayer should ascend to the throne of grace with fervor for the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His vineyard. My heart aches as I look around upon the mission fields and see so feeble efforts to get the truth before the people. No censure can be attached to our leading men. I believe, brethren, you are one with me in heart, in sentiment, in regard to our great need, and in the earnest desire and earnest efforts to meet the mind of the Spirit of God in these things.

Those who are at ease in Zion need to be aroused. Great is their accountability who bear the truth and yet feel no weight or burden for souls. Oh, for men and women professing the truth to arouse, to take on the yoke of Christ, to lift His burdens. There are wanted those who will not have merely a nominal interest but a Christlike interest, unselfish—an intense ardor that will not flag under difficulties or cool because iniquity abounds.

I want to speak to the ears of our people in America in every church. Awake from the dead, and Christ will give you life. Souls are perishing for the light of truth as it is in Jesus. We are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world. Fair-weather Christians will not be wanted for this work. The sentimental and tasteful religion is not needed for this time. There must be intensity brought into our faith and in the proclamation of truth. I tell you, a new life is proceeding from satanic agencies to work with a power we have not hitherto realized. And shall not a new power from above take possession of God's people? The truth, sanctifying in its influence, must be urged upon the people. There must be earnest supplications offered to God, agonizing prayer to Him, that our hopes as a people may not be founded on suppositions, but on eternal realities. We must know for ourselves, by the evidence of God's Word, whether we are in the faith, going to heaven or not. The moral standard of character is God's law. Do we meet its requirements? Are the Lord's people bringing their property, their time, their talents and all their influence into the work for this time? Let us arouse.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." [Colossians 3:1]

Portions of this article are found in Selected Messages, Book 2, 376-383. The article contains the entire letter written to Elders G.I. Butler and S.N. Haskell, designated as Letter 55, 1886.
Because competition is an ever-present issue, it is appropriate that special attention be given in the training of our children to combat its particularly insidious influence. As we would expect, this warning has been repeatedly articulated by the Lord’s messenger to the church. “One of the characteristics that should be especially cherished in every child is that self-forgetfulness which imparts to the life such an unconscious grace. Of all excellences of character this is one of the most beautiful, and for every true lifework it is one of the qualifications most essential.” Education, 237

“Character-building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings; and never before was its diligent study so important as now.

Never was any previous generation called to meet issues so momentous; never before were young men and young women confronted by perils so great as confront them today. 

“At such a time as this, what is the trend of the education given? To what motive is appeal most often made? To self-seeking. Much of the education given is a perversion of the name. In true education the selfish ambition, the greed for power, the disregard for the rights and needs of humanity, that are a curse of our world, find a counter influence. . . . In God’s plan there is no place for selfish rivalry.” Education, 225, 226

“But how widely different is much of the education now given! From the child’s earliest years it is an appeal to emulation and rivalry; it fosters selfishness, the root of all evil.

Thus is created strife for supremacy; and there is encouraged the system of ‘cramming,’ which in so many cases destroys health and unfit[s] for usefulness. In many others, emulation leads to dishonesty; and by fostering ambition and discontent, it embitters the life and helps to fill the world with those restless, turbulent spirits that are a continual menace to society.” Education, 226

We must conclude that careful attention needs to be given to structure everything in our educational system in such a way that we do not foster or encourage these attitudes and values that we are warned are deceptively designed to abort the salvation of our children. This responsibility requires that we must look critically at each area of instruction. How does it measure up to this standard?

Mrs. White was not unmindful of the particular problems presented in the area of recreation and physical culture. Her messages are clear in emphasizing the importance of appropriate exercise. “Vigorous exercise the pupils must have. Few evils are more to be dreaded than indolence and aimlessness.” Education, 210

At the same time she recognizes that providing such exercise can be a real dilemma for parents and teachers. She goes on to observe:

“Yet the tendency of most athletic sports is a subject of anxious thought to those who have at heart the well-being of the youth. Teachers are troubled as they consider the influence of these sports both on the student’s progress in school and on his success in afterlife. The games that occupy so much of his time are diverting the mind from study. They are not helping to prepare the youth for practical, earnest work in life. Their influence does not tend toward refinement, generosity, or real manliness. . . . They stimulate the love of pleasure and excitement, thus fostering a distaste for useful labor, a disposition to shun practical duties and responsibilities. They tend to destroy a relish for life’s sober realities and its tranquil enjoyments.” Education, 210, 211

Throughout her writings Mrs. White made every effort to strike an appropriate balance. Recognizing the need for physical exercise and recreational activities, she was always concerned with what effect the activities we choose have upon our spiritual welfare. She observes, “If I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone.
This test should be decisive...

| attitude that motivates. But the way we structure these activities can have an important influence upon the kind of attitude we encourage, whether that of competitive self-seeking or the cooperative self-sacrificing love of the Saviour. For as the Lord's messenger emphasizes:

| "The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love, that love which moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and to labor and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity." The Desire of Ages, 549

| How then shall we decide how to structure our activities so that we will avoid this seductive error? What kind of safeguards can we use? Fortunately this guideline has also been provided. "Any habit or practice that would lead into sin, and bring dishonor upon Christ, would better be put away, whatever the sacrifice. That which dishonors God cannot benefit the soul." (The Desire of Ages, 439) If we can take Jesus with us and maintain a prayerful spirit, we are perfectly safe. "Any amusement in which you can engage asking the blessing of God upon it in faith will not be dangerous. But any amusement which disqualifies you for secret prayer, for devotion at the altar of prayer, or for taking part in the prayer meeting is not safe, but dangerous." (Adventist Home, 513) Again, though in another context, this fundamental principle should always apply. "This test should be decisive. Amusements that have a tendency to weaken the love for sacred things and lessen our joy in the service of God are not to be sought by Christians." ibid., 517

| With all this array of admonition, what shall we say? It is interesting to observe the inventive variety of responses we may make when we read a "Thus saith the Lord" that is contrary to something we hold dear. The common tendency is to attempt to rationalize ourselves out of the target area. Most of these exercises are so familiar that they have become trite and threadbare with overuse, but it may be well to look at some of them lest we become deceived thereby.

| 1. Of course we can simply ignore the instruction or respond with indifference or neglect. This is probably the most used defense of all. But by this neglect we are saying that we consider the issue unimportant and we will do as we please regardless of the warning.

| 2. Yet for many the Lord's message gets through and pesters us with a conviction that we resist. This reaction gives rise to efforts to discredit the message by such charges as "That was taken out of context." The speaker, however, rarely goes back to read the context for fear of finding more instruction and warning that is uncomfortable to hear. Or he may willingly ignore the underlying principle that is being taught.

| 3. Another approach is "That applied only to the conditions that existed when that was written." It seems to me that little is realized that the conditions and the principle discussed are identical with or very applicable to the current situation that is being argued. Rationalizations do not have to be foolproof; it is sufficient that they just have the appearance of being valid.

| 4. "The writer copied some things from others, so I don't know whether this statement is inspired." It is interesting that this argument does not seem to apply when the same writer makes emphatic statements with which we can heartily agree.

| 5. Remarkable games of hide-and-seek can be played in the maze of semantics. Thus we can argue that because the author did not use the specific word "competition" therefore competition is good and no longer an issue. Actually I found 65 references in the writings of Ellen White in which she used some form of the word "competition." Again, the basic use is to see competition as straining to be first and thus contrary to a Christ-like spirit.

| 6. If these devices do not adequately serve to defend us from the continued appeals of the Holy Spirit we can always resort to discrediting the messenger. A method that has gained considerable notoriety in recent years is to declare that whatever authority Ellen White's messages have is pastoral and not canonical. Translated, this means that Mrs. White's admonitions and warnings have no more authenticity or authority as a message from God than those of my pastor, and I don't have to pay much attention to him either. Undoubtedly there are many defensive maneuvers that we may use to
avoid the corrective consequences of heeding God's warning messages to us. Yet we resist God's direction and warnings at our soul's peril. So often we view these messages as constrictive don'ts or as unpleasant impediments to our freedom and enjoyment of life. Yet God's intent is just the opposite: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil." (Jeremiah 29:11) "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matthew 7:11) "In face of all this, what is there left to say? He who did not grudge His own Son but gave Him up for us all—can we not trust such a God to give us, with Him, everything else that we can need?" Romans 8:31, 32, Phillips

God's continuing concern is for our welfare. As good parents warn their children away from danger that they can be assured of safety and greater happiness, God has made every effort to guide us away from snares of the enemy that would result in eternal destruction of our happiness and that of our children.

The question is, shall we ignore the warning, or will we take it seriously and reexamine and restructure our programs and activities with these cautions in mind? May we respond to God's messages with an open heart in which we are willing to put aside our own cherished ideas and be also willing to pray with Jesus "My Father . . . it must not be what I want, but what You want." Matthew 26:39, Phillips

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In the night season I was in a large company where the subject of education was agitating the minds of all present. Many were bringing up objections to changing the character of the education which has long been in vogue. One who has long been our Instructor was speaking to the people. He said: "The subject of education should interest the whole Seventh-day Adventist body. The decisions regarding the character of our schoolwork should not be left wholly to principals and teachers."

Some were strenuously urging the study of infidel authors and were recommending the very books which the Lord has condemned, and which, therefore, should not in any way be sanctioned. After much earnest conversation and discussion our Instructor stepped forward, and, taking in His hand books that had been earnestly advocated as essential to a higher education, He said: "Do you find in these authors sentiments and principles that make it altogether safe to place them in the hands of students? Human minds are easily charmed by Satan's lies; and these works produce a distaste for the contemplation of the word of God, which, if received and appreciated, will ensure eternal life to the receiver. You are creatures of habit and should remember that right habits are blessings both in their effect on your character and in their influence for good over others; but wrong habits, when once established, exercise a despotic power and bring minds into bondage. If you had never read one word in these books you would today be far better able to comprehend that Book which, above all other books, is worthy to be studied, and which gives the only correct ideas regarding higher education.

"The fact that it has been customary to include these authors among your lessonbooks, and that this custom is hoary with age, is no argument in its favor. Long use does not necessarily recommend these books as safe or essential. They have led thousands where Satan led Adam and Eve—to the tree of knowledge of which God has forbidden us to eat. They have led students to forsake the study of the Scriptures for a line of study that is not essential. If students thus educated are ever fitted to work for souls, they will have to unlearn much that they have learned. They will find the unlearning a difficult work; for objectionable ideas have taken root in their minds like weeds in a garden, and as a result some will never be able to distinguish between right and wrong. The good and the evil have been mingled in their education. The faces of men have been uplifted for them to behold, and the theories of men have been exalted; so that as they attempt to teach others, the little truth which they are able to repeat is interwoven with the opinions and sayings and doings of men. The words of men who give evidence that they have not a practical knowledge of Christ should find no place in our schools. They will be hindrances to proper education.

"You have the word of the living God, and for the asking you may have the gift of the Holy Spirit to make that word a power to those who believe and obey. The Holy Spirit's work is to guide into all truth. When you depend on the word of the living God with heart and mind and soul, the channel of communication will be unobstructed. Deep, earnest study of the word under the guidance of the
Why have you not extolled the word of God above every human production?

Holy Spirit will give you fresh manna, and the same Spirit will make its use effectual. The exertion made by the youth to discipline the mind for high and holy aspirations will be rewarded. Those who make persevering efforts in this direction, putting the mind to the task of comprehending God's word, are prepared to be laborers together with God.

"The world acknowledges as teachers some whom God cannot endorse as safe instructors. By these the Bible is discredited, and the productions of infidel authors are recommended as if they contained those sentiments which should be woven into the character. What can you expect from the sowing of this kind of seed? In the study of these objectionable books the minds of teachers as well as of students become corrupted, and the enemy sows his tares. It cannot be otherwise. By drinking of an impure fountain, poison is introduced into the system. Inexperienced youth taken over this line of study receive impressions which lead their thoughts into channels that are fatal to piety. Youth who have been sent to our schools have learned from books which were thought to be safe because they were used and encouraged in the schools of the world. But from the worldly schools thus followed many students have gone forth infidels because of the study of these very books.

"Why have you not extolled the word of God above every human production? Is it not enough to keep close to the Author of all truth? Are you not satisfied to draw water fresh from the streams of Lebanon? God has living fountains from which to refresh the thirsty soul, and stores of precious food with which to strengthen the spirituality. Learn of Him, and He will enable you to give to those who ask a reason of the hope that is within you. Have you thought that a better knowledge of what the Lord has said would have a deleterious effect upon teachers and students?"

There was a hush in the assembly, and conviction came upon each heart.

Men who had thought themselves wise and strong saw that they were weak and lacking in the knowledge of that Book which concerns the eternal destiny of the human soul.

The Messenger of God then took from the hands of several teachers those books which they had been making their study, some of which had been written by infidel authors and contained infidel sentiments, and laid them aside, saying: "There never has been a time in your lives when the study of these books was for your present good and advancement, or for your future eternal good. Why will you fill your shelves with books that divert the mind from Christ? Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? Christ calls you: 'Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. You need to eat of the Bread of life which came down from heaven. You need to be more diligent students of the Holy Scriptures and drink from the living Fountain. Draw, draw from Christ in earnest prayer. Obtain a daily experience in eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Human authors can never supply your great need for this time; but by beholding Christ, the Author and Finisher of your faith, you will be changed into His likeness."

Placing a Bible into their hands, He continued: "You have little knowledge of this book. You know not the Scriptures nor the power of God, nor do you understand the deep importance of the message to be borne to a perishing world. The time past has shown that both teachers and students know very little in regard to the awful truths which are living issues for this time. Should the third angel's message be proclaimed in all lines to many who stand as educators, it would not be understood by them. Had you the knowledge which comes from God, your whole being would proclaim the truth of the living God to a world dead in trespasses and sins. But books and papers that contain little of present truth are exalted, and men are becoming too wise to follow a 'Thus saith the Lord.'"

"By every teacher in our schools the only true God is to be uplifted, but many of the watchmen are asleep. They are as the blind leading the blind. Yet the day of the Lord is right upon us. As a thief it is coming with stealthy tread, and it will take unawares all who are not watching. Who are proclaiming the message of the third angel, calling the world to make ready for the great day of God? The message we bear has the seal of the living God."

Pointing to the Bible He said: "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are to be combined in the work of fitting a people to stand in the day of the Lord. Earnestly improve your present opportunities. Make the word of the living God your lessonbook. If this had always been done, students lost to the cause of God would now be missionaries. Jehovah is the only true God, and He is to be worshiped. Those who respect the words of infidel authors and lead students to look upon these books as essential in their education lessen their faith in God. The tone, the spirit, the influence of these books is deleterious to those who depend on them for knowledge. Influences have been brought to bear upon the students that have led them to look away from Christ, the Light of the world, and evil angels rejoice that those who profess to know God deny Him as He has been thus denied in our schools. The Sun of Righteousness has been shining upon the church to dispel the darkness and to call the attention of God's people to the preparation essential for those who would shine as lights in the world. Those who receive this light will comprehend it; those who do not receive it will walk in darkness, knowing not at what they stumble. The soul is never safe unless it is under the divine guidance. Then it will be led into all truth. The word of Christ will fall with living power upon obedient hearts; and through the application of divine truth the perfect image of God will be reproduced, and in heaven it will be said: 'Ye are complete in Him.'" Colossians 2:10 Testimonies, vol. 6, 163-167

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Why Did The Jews Reject The Messiah?

The question heading this article is an oft-repeated one. It seems difficult for many to understand how or why the Jewish nation rejected Jesus as the Saviour and Messiah, when the Old Testament Scriptures were so filled with prophecy, type, and prophecy regarding His advent into our world. Especially does it seem difficult to understand the refusal of the Sanhedrin to acclaim Jesus as Messiah when inspired apostles repeatedly stated that, had the people known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Their sacrificing of His life was done through ignorance. It seems well-nigh inexplicable for some to harmonize the rejection of Jesus by the Pharisees while they were recognized as the leaders who sat in Moses' seat.

That the Jewish people were honest, zealous, and sincere, is evident from the Scriptures. Paul says of them: "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." (Romans 10:2) And of his own training and education, even before he accepted the Saviour, he adds: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward man." Acts 24:16

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 1 Timothy 1:12, 13

The Jews Anxious to Follow God

Because of the bitter experience through which the seed of Abraham passed in the captivity of Babylon for seventy years, after their deliverance from Babylonian exile the leaders determined never again to reject the counsel of God's word. The influential men of Israel feared the serious consequences which might overtake them if they were again led away from the true God. The following statement from Ezra is to the point:

"Should we again break Thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldst not Thou be angry with us till Thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?" Ezra 9:14

A Jewish book entitled Ethics of the Fathers,1 written about the second century before Christ, chapter 1, paragraph 2, says: "Be deliberate in judgment; train up many disciples; and make a fence for the law." The sages of Israel put forth their best effort to fence in the law. They multiplied comments, explanations, treatises, targums, and other religious helps, in order that the people might better understand the teaching of the word of God. Unfortunately, in their endeavor to familiarize the people with the requirements contained in Scripture for following God, they stumbled over a great stumbling stone.

After Alexander the Great worshiped in the temple at Jerusalem, following his reception by Jaddua the high priest,2 a spirit of friendliness developed between the Greeks and the Jews. Alexander's generals found it difficult to understand why their chief embraced the high priest, when they met on Mount Scopus, instead of putting him to death. Alexander told his officials that what occurred that day was shown to him in a vision when he was in Macedonia, and he wanted the privilege of entering the temple and worshipping the God of Jaddua.

Greece assured the Jews that they desired to be their true friends and benefactors.3 They became desirous of learning more of the God of the Hebrews. An arrangement was entered into that allowed a large number of rabbis from Jerusalem to go to Alexandria and translate the writings of the Jewish Scriptures into the Greek language. Greek scholarship and learning was seeking every possible avenue of information to enhance the value of its own culture and refinement. It was also suggested by the Greeks that the Jews send their talented young men to Alexandria for training and instruction in the philosophies, sciences, and learning of the Greeks.

Many of the elders of Israel feared the results of such a course; the sages remembered the sorrows of their ancestors who came into contact with heathen manners and customs. They counseled the younger men against such a procedure. These, in turn, argued that it would be an advantage for strong, thoughtful, vigorous young men to enter the schools of Greece, as they might influence the philosophers and Greek scholars to see the value and beauty of the

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By mingling human philosophy with the word of God they came to lack the power of the Scriptures in their lives. They did not have spiritual discernment.

Jewish religion, and some of the learned Greeks might embrace Judaism. Yet the aged men of Israel advised against it. They maintained that should the younger men be given encouragement to come into contact with the learning of the heathen, it might be ruinous to the future of the Jewish race.

Greece assured the fathers of Israel that they might hold to their own standards of religion. They were encouraged to believe that the synagogues where the children were taught their religion would not be interfered with; their Beth Hamedrosh (house of learning, their high schools), where their young people received preparatory training, would continue as heretofore; the Talmud Torah (their colleges where advanced studies were conducted) would be strengthened if the teachers of the law should only imbibe the wisdom and learning of the scholars of Greece; and by receiving recognition from the world's greatest nation, the graduates of Jewish schools would find it greatly to their advantage.

Many of Israel's influential men yielded to Greek insistence. The former said that God would help their young men to be true to their religion, and the training schools of Jewry would have a better standing in the eyes of the nations. The men of Israel were made to feel that the advantages to the Jewish scholars would be immeasurable, for they would have incentives or goals to reach. The young men would gain knowledge, influence, prestige; and the more they advanced in learning, the higher would be their attainments.

Gradually the Jewish schools came to confer degrees upon their graduates. There was the Rav, or rabbi, the Tana, the Gayon, the Sadi, and the Rabbon. It was thought necessary for the graduates of the rabbinical schools to show the mark of their rank by wearing different clothing. The man with a degree must wear a peculiar, distinctive gown and cap. Little by little an educational aristocracy was formed, which was called the Sanhedrin. This term is of Greek origin, the Hebrccw name being Beth Din Hagodol, Great House of Judgment.

Decline of Spirituality

While the religious schools continued to operate, a marked declension in spiritual influence and power was visible. Year by year the word of God was studied less, as the courses of studies based on culture and philosophy increased. The curriculum of the rabbinical schools was influenced toward intellectualism. As the years passed, man became exalted and God was less thought of. The rabbi was exalted; the unlearned were depreciated. Piety gradually diminished as form and ceremony increased. Many laws were passed favoring rabbinism and school customs, yet students were encouraged to love and obey God.

In Ethics of the Fathers, the rabbis taught: "A child of five years should study the Bible, at ten the Mishna, at fifteen the Gemara." The Mishna is a voluminous commentary of the Bible; the Gemara is the commentary of the Mishna. So as the student advanced in years and developed in mental acumen, he studied God's word less, and man's writings more.

Intellectualism Sets Aside Inspiration

In order for men to be accepted by Jewish assemblies, they must have completed a course in the rabbinical schools. Those who failed to follow the procedure mapped out by the Great Sanhedrin (or by the lesser Sanhedrin located in cities and towns of Palestine outside the city of Jerusalem, headquarters of the Beth Din Hagodol, the Great House of Judgment), received no recognition by the populace. The graduate rabbi was known by his garb. It was vital that rabbinical qualifications be met in order for a person to gain a hearing by the children of Abraham.

Such were existing conditions in the land of Judea at the time when John and Jesus appeared in the land of Israel.

The following from The Desire of Ages is pertinent here:

"By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images. During the centuries that followed, they suffered from the oppression of heathen foes, until the conviction became fixed that their prosperity depended upon their obedience to the law of God. . . . "

"After the return from Babylon, much attention was given to religious instruction. All over the country, synagogues were erected, where the law was expounded by the priests and scribes. And schools were established, which, together with the arts and sciences, were considered necessary, to teach the principles of righteousness. But these schools became corrupted. . . . In many things they conformed to the principles of idolaters. . . ."

"As they departed from God, the Jews in a great degree lost sight of the teaching of the ritual service. . . . The Jews lost the spiritual life from their ceremonies, and clung to dead forms. . . . In order to supply the place of that which they had lost, the priests and rabbis multiplied requirements of their own; and the more rigid they grew, the less of the love of God was manifested. They measured their holiness by the multitude of their ceremonies, while their hearts were filled with pride and hypocrisy." pp. 28, 29

"As the Jews departed from God, faith had grown dim, and hope had well-nigh ceased to illuminate the future. The words of the prophets were uncomprehended." ibid., 32

Since John and Jesus were not attendants at rabbinical schools, the people would not recognize their authority as teachers. However, God gave these men a message filled with divine power and with the heavenly Spirit. Because the leaders of Israel failed to accept the message of John as coming from God, they were unprepared to receive the message of the Saviour, although He assured them that His life and advent were based on the Sacred Scriptures. The rabbis argued, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John 7:15

Since the family of Jesus were loyal to the synagogues, His own brothers did not believe on Him as the Messiah. (See John 7:4, 5) Because the standards of learning were set up by the Sanhedrin, and none who refused to follow the teaching of the rabbis were given recognition, it is not difficult to understand why, when the Saviour came to those who were custodians of the oracles of God, they failed to recognize Him as the fulfillment of the types and prophecies noted in Moses and the prophets. By mingling human philosophy with the word of God, teachers and laymen had come to lack the spiritual force and power of the Scriptures in their lives. They did not have spiritual discernment. Greek philosophy, Alexandrian, and Athenian culture had sapped the spiritual

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From Purgatory To Paradise

Charles Lawson

In the 1960s the T.V. series Star Trek captured the attention of a generation that emerged from postwar technology to watch men rocket into space. Star Trek had a slogan that aptly fits the motto and aim of the Dark County Outreach Program headed by Rolf Lindfors and his wife, Faith—"To boldly go where no man has gone before." Only in this case he is to boldly go where there are no Seventh-day Adventists.

This dark county seed-sowing project was originally tested in Yelm, Washington. The first large scale target area was Alaska, where 47 remote villages and towns were reached.

Just recently invitations to participate in The Bible Says study program blanketed the dark counties of Montana from the cities of Purgatory to Paradise. If, coming from a metropolitan background, you were to visit some of the cities of Montana the first thing you would notice would be the rugged spirit of the people living there. From the windswept bluffs of Butte to the beautiful town of Kalispell, there are hundreds of people in Big Sky Country who need to hear the gospel. Watching over this Big Sky Country is our Creator and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 55:11 He has promised, "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Ellen White tells us that we will be amazed at the simple methods God uses to finish the work. Just think for a moment what a miracle God has performed. Thousands who may otherwise not hear the gospel may be won to Jesus by this inexpensive outreach. Within hours after these fliers are mailed, the government marshals its work force using jeeps, airplanes, trucks, and snowplows to make sure these invitations reach those who need them. Hundreds of workers sort these fliers, busily promoting God's word that shall not return unto Him void.

As a woman and her daughter walked through a park in Missoula one day, the daughter stepped on a piece of paper blown about in the park. It was one of the 90,000 fliers that had been mailed out. As a result, she and her two daughters are taking the Bible study course for the first time. Interestingly enough, no fliers had been mailed to Missoula, as it is not in a dark county. Over 600 Bible studies have resulted from this outreach.

Mr. John Van Cleave is an example of those who respond. He writes, "The Adventists do have a permanent house of worship in Butte, and if you can answer the above questions for me, . . . I might just get myself rebaptized."

All of the interests that develop as a result of the Bible studies are turned over to the local pastors, lay Bible workers and the appropriate conference for followup. Along with the lessons a Bible is provided, free of charge, for those who do not have one, and upon request they will receive a copy of The Desire of Ages. Steps to Christ, The Great Controversy, and Bible Readings for the Home. When lessons 11 and 12 on the Sabbath are mailed, a pamphlet is sent along with them entitled, "One Hundred Bible Facts on the Sabbath Question."

If you are interested in this simple but effective program, you can assist by sending your tax-deductible donation to New Life and Health Ministries, P.O. Box 855, Eatonville, WA 98328, or call (206) 832-6442.
The Transforming Power Of God

This morning one of the ministers remarked that he had been greatly helped in these meetings. He understood faith better than he ever had before; but he could not yet rejoice in the full assurance of the favor of God. His heart craved the blessing of God. His life seemed productive of little good; but he wished to go forth to his labors wholly consecrated, with no selfish motive, but with the object to save his fellow men, and glorify his Creator.

Another said that he had been in discouragement, and almost in despair, but the words spoken in these morning meetings had helped him. Rays of light had broken in upon his mind, dispelling the dark clouds that enshrouded him, and he felt that the Lord, for Christ's sake, had forgiven his sins. He could now see that unbelief had been the greatest hindrance to his enjoyment of the blessing of God.

Others bore their testimony that they were confessing their sins and striving for the blessing of God, but they had fears that Jesus would not, could not, pardon them. They could have faith for others, but not for themselves. This was the language of unbelief. Such persons will receive no help, no freedom, until they look to Jesus. There is no merit in self; Jesus is our only hope.

Some confessed that they had a light and trifling spirit, which cut off their influence in the desk. They now realized the magnitude and wickedness of this fault as they never had before. This spirit of jesting and joking, of lightness and trifling, is a stumbling-block to sinners and a worse stumbling-block to those who give way to the inclination of the unsanctified heart. The fact that some have allowed this trait to develop and strengthen until jesting is as natural as their breath, does not lessen its evil effects. When any one can point to one trifling word spoken by our Lord, or to any lightness seen in His character, he may feel that lightness and jesting are excusable in himself. This spirit is unchristian; for to be a Christian is to be Christ-like. Jesus is a perfect pattern, and we must imitate His example. A Christian is the highest type of man, a representative of Christ.

Some who are given to jesting, and to light and trifling remarks, may appear in the sacred desk with becoming dignity. They may be able to pass at once to the contemplation of serious subjects, and present to their hearers the most important, testing truths ever committed to mortals; but perhaps their fellow-laborers, whom they have influenced, and who have joined with them in the careless jest, cannot change the current of their thoughts so readily. They feel condemned, their minds are confused; and they are unfit to enter upon the contemplation of heavenly themes, and preach Christ and Him crucified.

The disposition to say witty things that will create a laugh, when the wants of the cause are under consideration, whether in a committee meeting, a board meeting, or any other meeting for business, is not of Christ. This untimely mirth has a demoralizing tendency. God is not honored when we turn everything to ridicule one day, and the next day are discouraged and almost hopeless, having no light from Christ, and ready to find fault and murmur. He is pleased when His people manifest solidity, strength, and firmness of character, and when they have cheerful, happy, hopeful dispositions.

Says Peter, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." [1 Peter 1:13] Here is a lesson for us to learn; here is a work for us to do to control the mind, not letting it drift on forbidden themes, or spend its energies on trifling subjects. "The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." We are not only
Untiring energy is required of the Christian; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand.
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What people are saying....

"I feel it would not have been possible to baptize the 162 souls in the Birmingham, Alabama, "Real Truth" Crusade if it had not been for the evangelistic efforts of United Prison Ministries." William Scales, Jr., Assoc. Ministerial Secretary of General Conference.

"If everyone kept the commandments of God as being taught by the United Prison Ministry, there would be no need for jails, police, or prisons. Your group, more than anyone or anything else, has done what more guards, higher prison walls, and increasing financial expenditures for the war against crime, have failed to do." Richard Arrington, Jr., Mayor Birmingham, Alabama

"I believe that your ministry to prisoners is more important than any other missionary group anywhere in the world. If people could just realize that every inmate that you cause to change is one less threat to our safety at home, in our businesses and on the streets, they would give out of pure selfishness (to help you continue and expand your program)." Carl V. Garrett, Captain, Birmingham City Jail

"Thank God for United Prison Ministry, for now I am a commandment keeper today." William Bryant, Prisoner

"I have been a police officer for thirty years and have never known of a more effective program than the Soul-saving Pack offered by U.P.M." Captain Carl V. Garrett, Commander, Birmingham City Jail

"I have been in prison for 18 years; I have done everything that a man can do. I began to study God's Word, and today I am a changed man." Ellis Howard, Prisoner

"Since United Prison Ministry has been coming to my prison, we have not had one murder." Warden, Staton Prison Annex

"I have been in prison since 1916 years of age. I am now 28. Thank God for bringing United Prison Ministries my way so that I can know the love of Jesus." Andre Wallace, Prisoner

"This program will not fail, must not fail, cannot fail because it is Biblical and a Spirit of Prophecy program." Elder Stan Dombrosky, Florida Conference.

"I couldn't believe my ears when I heard a young prisoner by the name of Ridgeway say that he was currently giving 63 Bible studies." W.A. Geary, President of Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

"I have ministered in Federal Prisons, State Prisons, County Jails, City Jails, but I have never seen or heard of a more effective program than United Prison Ministries." Ward Sumpter, Secretary of Southern Union Conference.

"A program like this, United Prison Ministries, is what the Church needs. It gets the laymen involved." Charles Bradford, President, North American Division.

"United Prison Ministry is a Seventh-day Adventist lay program which not only changes the lives of inmates, but also of those who participate in the ministry. We are going nationwide, and we solicit your support. See tear-out card for details."
Strategic Defense Initiative by Dave Fiedler

Putting aside all the talk of "Star Wars," "accelerated electron beams," and the like, in just five minutes a day you can successfully carry out your own Strategic Defense Initiative. And you'll reap the benefits in your own better health.

Unfortunately, many people, like Naaman of old, will long for something more dramatic, and will neglect this simple procedure. Though it won't cure leprosy any more than would a dip in the Jordan River, it will 1) stimulate blood vessel activity and circulation, 2) equalize circulation throughout the body, 3) stimulate muscular and metabolic activities of the internal organs, 4) heighten muscular tone and nervous system activity, 5) increase phagocytosis (destruction of bacteria) and antibody production, 6) increase oxidation of bacterial toxins.

You may be wondering how all that could happen. One of the primary means is the way this procedure affects the blood cells. Most often, the greater portion of both our red and white blood cells tend to collect in the abdominal organs, the liver and spleen in particular. This five minute treatment increases the number of red blood cells in the peripheral circulation (away from the abdomen) by 35%, and for the white blood cells the increase is from 200 to 300%.

These white blood cells are your soldiers in the trenches in the warfare against infection. These are the ones who are responsible for the seeking out and destroying of harmful bacteria. Clearly a 200 to 300% increase in your defense in the areas where infection begins is going to be a healthy advantage.

Now then, you want to know how to go about this. Purchase a little snake skin oil, perhaps? No, better and simpler than that. Just take a washcloth, dip it in cold water, wring it enough to keep the water from running away on its own, and then vigorously rub your left arm. When the skin begins to turn pink, dry your arm with a towel and repeat the procedure on your right arm, chest and abdomen, back, and legs. It all takes about five minutes, and it's a great way to start the day.

A few simple precautions should be mentioned. 1) Make sure your body is warm before you begin the procedure, and that there are no cool drafts in the room. 2) Don't rub too hard. The skin is not supposed bleed, just turn pink. If it hurts, ease off. 3) If your skin doesn't turn pink the first day, just try again tomorrow. The greatest benefits come with a consistent, daily practice.

After you've said goodbye for good to colds and the flu, you'll want to tell your friends. But what do you call this treatment? You could call it a Strategic Defense Initiative if you wanted to. A hundred years ago they called it a cold mitten friction.

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Editorial

Ron Spear

When the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well asked for living water and received the Holy Spirit, she became a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (See John 4:14)

The 120 in the upper room asked for an outpouring of the Spirit; then the Spirit used them as lighted torches to win thousands of souls. Under the power of the Spirit the whole world had heard the gospel in Paul's day. (Colossians 1:23) Prayer and unity of spirit preceded Pentecost.

Bible prophecy predicts a spiritual revival. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter-rain power awaits our demand and reception. "The Holy Spirit, the representative of Himself, is the greatest of all gifts." (Mount of Blessing, 132) But God will not pour out His supreme gift in infinite plenitude upon a prayerless people.

"When we beseech the Lord to pity us in our distress, and to guide us by His Holy Spirit, He will never turn away our prayer." (Mount of Blessing, 132) Prayer precedes the power of the Spirit of grace and supplication. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication." (Zechariah 12:10) It precedes the refreshing of the latter rain, for "Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence." Steps to Christ, 94, 95

Nothing supersedes prayer when we daily merge our will with God's will, walking carefully and prayerfully, practicing the presence of Jesus in our lives. This is what it means to pray without ceasing, (See 1 Thessalonians 15:17) to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

"The lapse of time has wrought no change in Christ's parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because the promise is not appreciated as it should be. If men were willing, all would be filled with the Spirit. Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is a matter little thought of, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Whenever minor matters occupy the attention, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude.

"Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God. Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely." Acts of the Apostles, 50

"The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and heaven is waiting to bestow it." Review and Herald, March 19, 1895

Brethren and sisters, let us pray for it, seek for it, believe for it. We must have it now to fulfill the gospel commission.

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