Fifth Day's Proceedings.

The conference was held at the Union Temple, and Elder W. C. Nees was the presiding officer.

The last business meeting was held at the American Labor Hall, and Elder J. B. W. Nees was the presiding officer.

The condition of the society was reported to be very good.

The following resolutions were adopted:

1. Resolved—That the Law in Galatians is the Ceremonial Law (signed) J. B. W. Nees

2. Resolved—That the Law in Galatians is the Moral Law (signed) J. B. W. Nees

Stand by the landmarks!

J. B. Butler

Special Edition—1888
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am glad that you are willing to face the issues. Your article on whether or not God ever destroys is very good. I have xeroxed it and sent it to a friend that has gotten tangled in that spider web of the devil. Hopefully she will be helped.

H.B. Colburn
East Lebanon, Maine

Congratulations on your publication. We have needed a magazine like Our Firm Foundation supporting our firm foundation, and it is very welcome.

In reference to Dr. Priebe's article "Two Gospels Beneath the Surface," I believe he has captured a major problem within Adventism. There is a strong trend toward belief without obligation.

Keep up the good work.

Tony Tauro,
Stoneham, Massachusetts

God bless you and keep up the good work in getting our church back to following what we should be doing as God's people. We sincerely believe you are being used of God in writing the wonderful paper Our Firm Foundation. Your first tape was shared with us and it was a real blessing to us. We plan to share them with all our family.

Brother and Sister Porter,
Selma, California

We just received the January issue of Our Firm Foundation and am impressed with each issue. I especially liked "Wake Up!" and "The Doctrine of the Nicolaitans." Actually every article is timely and pertinent.

Thank you for the 100 copies of the December issue you sent us. We only have six left, but we plan to send (or give) these out as well.

We know God will prosper your efforts if they continue along the same lines as they have been. By the way, what would be the chances of reviving some of the beautiful dissertations given by A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner during the 1880s and 90s? Any chance?

Virgil R. Stanphill
Franklin, Kentucky

Reader Stanphill timed his question well. See the following pages of this issue for articles about the 1888 General Conference and articles by Jones and Waggoner.—Eds.

It was so good to have the next issue of Our Firm Foundation to read Friday night. All the artwork makes the paper more attractive. I especially enjoyed all the facial expressions in the family picture in the November issue. There is good food for the soul in every article.

Evelyn Hawes,
Falkland, British Columbia

I am writing to thank you for sending a copy of Our Firm Foundation to our library. I would like to assure you that your periodical is very much appreciated.

At the same time, I want to congratulate you for the high quality and the spiritual orientation of your journal. I have examined the copy you sent us and I am convinced that this new publication will be very useful for our church. We will never have too many good papers to proclaim our heritage of faith and our message.

I hope that we will be able to continue to receive Our Firm Foundation. It is the type of literature that will benefit our students and our faculty. I believe that it will be particularly useful to those who are preparing themselves to serve the Lord as pastors and teachers.

Gilberto Abella
Special Collections Librarian,
Loma Linda University
Riverside, California

About the cover—The 1888 General Conference session held in the newly constructed church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is replete with importance to the student of Adventist history. Portrayed on our cover are 1) Ellet Joseph Waggoner, 2) Ellen Gould White, 3) Alonzo Trevier Jones, 4) George Ide Butler, 5) J.H. Morrison, 6) the telegraph message from Elder Butler, and 7) the blackboard which Elder Waggoner declined to sign.
It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of Our Firm Foundation to give the straight testimony and to present Christ and Him crucified. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the truths that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.—The Editors

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ERRATA

The quotation on page 23, middle column, paragraph 4 of the January, 1986, issue reads “Review and Herald, November 4, 1890, quoted in Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 1073.” It should read “Review and Herald, October 5, 1886, quoted in Bible Commentary, vol. 6, 1073.”

The article “Why Did The Jews Reject The Messiah?” printed in the February, 1986, issue is incorrectly attributed to Ellen G. White. The Table of Contents was correct in listing F.C. Gilbert as the author.
Editorial

For one hundred forty years Seventh-day Adventists have tried to carry out the great Gospel Commission. From its inception in 1863 until the present our organization has grown and flourished. From the small handpress and the printing of The Present Truth to the sophisticated presses of our many publishing houses around the world and our multiple medical and educational institutions with their highly trained staffs, yes, and with thousands of missionaries around the earth, we are still further from taking the Gospel to the whole world than we ever have been. At our present rate of reaching out to those in darkness, evangelizing the world would take millennia.

What has gone wrong? In 1852, Ellen White told us that we could have been in the kingdom if we had accepted the Third Angel’s Message. (See Selected Messages, Book 1, 68) In 1888, God sent a most precious message through Ellen White, Waggoner, and Jones. In the righteousness-by-faith message Jesus Himself was reaching out to His church leaders and laity to wrench them back from their legalism and worldliness in which they had been drifting for some years. We are told whole churches were dying for the want of the teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ. (See Gospel Workers, 301)

Many articles and books have been written to support the idea that we accepted the message back then, but the evidence is overwhelming that we rejected both the experience and the practice of the everlasting gospel, and we are still here. After two world wars and a great depression, millions have gone into Christless graves because we have been unwilling to follow God’s plan for the finishing of His work. God’s says that we are in insubordination to His orders, (see Evangelism, 696) and we can never complete the commission until we are willing to become obedient.

The message of 1888 is now coming again to our churches. We pray that we all, leadership and laity, will see our great mistake of the past and enter that beautiful relationship with Christ--victory over every sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, and only then, will the latter rain fall upon His faithful, loyal and obedient saints and the loud cry go like fire in the stubble. Jesus will come.

This special 1888 edition is planned to help us reach that great experience soon. --Ron Spear, editor

A Preparatory Message

Ron Spear

Through the millenniums the devil has controlled the inhabitants of this sinful world through appetite. It was appetite that caused the fall of the human race, and there has been a continuous fall for 6000 years until man no longer resembles the original creation.

The devil is controlling the minds of the world by the food and the amusement industries. God gave the Adventist Church the health message so that people’s minds would be clear to receive the message of the three angels, and to understand the righteousness-by-faith message by practice and experience. Tragically, to a great degree the church has disregarded the health instruction, and the world now is listening to the eastern religions which are proclaiming it in the framework of heathenism.

One of the reasons the 1888 message was rejected was that some of the leaders, and some of the people, had not accepted the health message. As the 1888 message now returns to the church in this crisis hour, it is critical that the members see, understand and accept this wonderful truth of health and practice it so that they can understand and experience righteousness by faith, which is victory over every sin. (See Testimonies, vol. 1, 144)

The following quotations will help to show the message and its importance for this hour. “The health reform is an important part of the third angel’s message; and as a people professing this reform, we should not retrograde, but make continual advancement.” (Counsels on Health, 49) “The light God has given on health reform is for our salvation and the salvation of the world.” (Review and Herald, November 12, 1901) Inspiration speaks of the health reform message as being the “right arm” of the Advent message. Through backsliding, the “right arm” has suffered a shock. It has become paralyzed. When a physical arm becomes paralyzed, where does the real trouble lie? In the central nervous system. Likewise, when the spiritual “right arm” becomes paralyzed, the same is true; the trouble is in our minds. Do we not need a revival in living our health principles? Is it not folly to pray for the “latter rain” until we are willing to obey God regarding our diet?

During the early days of the message, God gave us much light as to how to live in order to re-enter Eden. Sister White was given instruction by vision in 1863 regarding the diet which should be used by members of the remnant church. Upon receiving this light from heaven, she immediately changed her former manner of living. Of her experience she wrote in Testimonies, vol. 2, 371: “We want to act like men and women who are to be brought into judgment. And when we adopt the health reform, we should adopt it from a sense of duty, not because somebody else has adopted it. I have not changed my course a particle since I adopted the health reform. I have not taken one step back since the light from heaven upon this subject first shone upon my pathway. I broke away from everything at once,—from meat and butter, and from three meals.”

Principles never change. Yet she never made her convictions into dogma. “I eat only two meals a day. But I do not think that the number of meals should be made a test. If there are those who are better in health, continued on 12
In the mid 1880s, two young ministers entered the stream of Adventist history. Alonzo Trevier Jones (38 at the time of the Minneapolis Conference) and Ellet Joseph Waggoner (33) were near opposites when they found themselves coeditors of the Signs of the Times. Jones was a former soldier from Fort Walla Walla, self-educated and possessed of a photographic memory. Tall and somewhat impulsive, he became one of the most powerful public speakers in the denomination. Waggoner, on the other hand, was shorter, stockier, a product of collegiate schooling with an M.D. from Bellevue Medical College.

In the Signs, and in their classes at Healdsburg College, these two young men took exception to certain traditional Adventist interpretations. Jones found reason to question the inclusion of the Huns as one of the seven horns represented in Daniel 7. Instead, he favored the Alemanni. Waggoner saw the "schoolmaster" law mentioned in Galatians as the moral rather than the ceremonial law.

These matters attracted the attention of two older men, General Conference President George Butler, and General Conference Secretary Uriah Smith. Alarmed that these younger men would take positions opposed to the established views of the church, Elders Butler and Smith worked to counteract their influence. When delegates arrived at the 1886 General Conference session they found that a new book by Elder Butler had just been published. Entitled The Law in the Book of Galatians: Is it the Moral Law or Does it Refer to That System of Law Peculiarly Jewish?, the book was an obvious refutation of Waggoner's teaching, though it made no direct reference to him by name.

A nine-member theological committee was appointed to examine the question of the law in Galatians. After hours of discussion, the group split 5 to 4 in favor of a motion to censure the Signs for publishing Waggoner's views. Reluctant to fuel the controversy by disclosing this close division, Butler settled for a resolution prohibiting the publishing and teaching of "doctrinal views not held by a fair majority of our people" unless they were first "examined and approved by the leading brethren of experience."

In Europe at the time, Ellen White was concerned. The 1886 conference had been shown to her in "the night season." Writing to Elder Butler she said, "I was shown the attitude of some of the ministers, yourself in particular, at that meeting, and I can say with you, my brother, it was a terrible conference."

Her angel guide said, "The Spirit of God has not had a controlling influence in this meeting. The spirit that controlled the Pharisees is coming in among this people."

Such a strong statement may seem a surprising response to a relatively minor case of administrative tussling. But to see the case in perspective, one must remember that for nearly twenty years Mrs. White had been shown the deleterious influence of men looking too much to their fellow men for guidance, and—perhaps worse—the tendency for those in positions of responsibility to dictate and control their brethren.

That Elders Butler and Smith were well aware of these warnings, yet did not seem to see their proper application, only made the matter more serious. As early as 1868, Sister White had written of the dangers of church members looking to her and her husband for counsel when they should properly seek wisdom from God. All who relied on others to direct them—"walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, acting as others act"—would "fail of everlasting life, unless they become sensible of their wavering character, and correct," she warned.

One of the clearest chapters on this subject in the Testimonies was addressed to none other than George Butler. You can find it now under the title of "Leadership" in Volume 3. As recently as October of 1885 she had written him on this topic:

"I have been shown that there is
one practice which those in responsible places should avoid; for it is detrimental to the work of God. Men in position should not lord it over God’s heritage, and command everything around them. Too many have marked out a prescribed line which they wish others to follow in the work. Workers have tried to do this with blind faith, without exercising their own judgment upon the matter which they had in hand. If those who were placed as directors were not present, they have followed their implicit directions just the same. But in the name of Christ, I would entreat you to stop this work. Give men a chance to exercise their individual judgment. Men who follow the leading of another, and are willing that another should think for them, are unfit to be entrusted with responsibility. Our leading men are remiss in this matter....

“I think I have laid out this matter many times before you, but I see no change in your actions.... There are men today [who] might be men of breadth of thought, might be wise men, men to be depended upon, who are not such, because they have been educated to follow another man’s plans. Give the Lord a chance to use men’s minds. We are losing much by our narrow ideas and plans. Do not stand in the way of the advancement of the work, but let the Lord work by whom He will....

“This same character of spirit is found here in Europe. For years Elder Andrews held the work back from advancing, because he feared to entrust it to others lest they would not carry out his precise plans. He would never allow anything to come into existence that did not originate with him. Elder Loughborough also held everything in his grasp while he was in California and England. Elder Wilcox and Sister Thayer have the same spirit of having everything go in the exact way in which they shall dictate, and no one is being trained in such a way as to know how to get hold of the work for himself.”

And so it was with some concern that Sister White followed events in faraway Battle Creek as she pursued her busy itinerary in Europe.

Three months after the 1886 conference session, on February 10, 1887, Ellet Waggoner prepared a 71 page reply to Elder Butler’s book. Entitled *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians: A Review*, the pamphlet remained unpublished for nearly two years. Why the delay? Most likely because of a February 18 letter written by Mrs. White. This letter (largely reprinted in *Counsels to Writers and Editors, 75-82*) reproved Jones and Waggoner for publicizing differences of belief.

“It is no small thing for you to come out in the *Signs* as you have done, and God has plainly revealed that such things should not be done. We must keep before the world a united front. Satan will triumph to see differences among Seventh-day Adventists. These questions are not vital points.”

Such presentations would confuse those who were not well grounded in the truth, and some would make minor differences the "whole burden of the message," and "get up contention and variance." Publishing their views in opposition to their brethren would bring in a state of affairs that they had never dreamed of. The result would be harm, and only harm.

It is understandable that Waggoner never went to press with his review of Butler’s booklet after having received this letter. Unfortunately, Elders Butler and Smith—who had been more in accordance with the light God has seen fit to give....

“I tell you brethren I am troubled, when I see you take positions that you forbid others to take and that you would condemn in others. I do not think this is the right way to deal with one another. I want to see no pharisaism among us. The matter now has been brought so fully before the people by yourself as well as Dr. Waggoner, that it must be met fairly and squarely in open discussion.... You circulated your pamphlet; now it is only fair that Dr. Waggoner should have just as fair a chance as you have had. I think the whole thing is not in God’s order. But, brethren, we must have no unfairness.”

In spite of the interest displayed by many in the Law in Galatians, Sister White did not consider it a vital subject. Unfortunately, the controversy had been raised, and it

To allow the confusion of opposing views would only mean the loss of more souls
Let us come to God as reasonable beings to know for ourselves what is truth

which she spoke of as "a most curious production of accusations and charges against me"—he expressed his concern that she had failed to support him in his dispute with Waggoner. It was the stress brought on by her course which had largely contributed to his five-month-long illness.

Four days into the institute Sister White wrote him, commenting on events of the past as well as giving news of the meetings:

"The spirit which has prevailed at this meeting is not of Christ. There is no love, there is not sympathy or tender compassion one toward another. Dark suspicions have been suggested by Satan to cause dissension...."

"I wrote [previously] in the anguish of my soul in regard to the course you pursued in the General Conference two years since. The Lord was not pleased with that meeting. Your spirit, my brother, was not right. The manner in which you treated the case of Dr. Waggoner was perhaps after your own order, but not after God's order...."

"You refer to your office as president of the General Conference, as if this justified your course of action, which you deemed wholly right, but which, from the light the Lord has been pleased to give me, I deem to be wrong in some respects. The very fact that you are standing in a position of responsibility I urge upon you as the reason why you should show a forbearing, courtious, Christlike spirit at all times.... Your brethren in the ministry who respect you and your office, will be very apt to follow your example in the treatment of such cases...."

"You call brethren Jones and Waggoner fledglings, and you make reference to the words I spoke at the conference in California. I am surprised, my brother, to read such things from your pen."  

Monday, October 15, E.J. Waggoner introduced the subject of the law in Galatians. It was expected that the matter would be handled as a debate, Elder J.H. Morrison having been selected to defend the traditional position. Waggoner, however, had other plans, and refused to sign the formal statement of resolve which had been prepared for him. He preferred to have a Bible study.

Ellen White listened with interest, for she had never before heard the views of Dr. Waggoner. She remarked several times during the conference that she differed with him on some points, but said "I believe him to be perfectly honest in his views, and I would respect his feelings and treat him as a Christian gentleman.... I see the beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law as the doctor has placed it before us."

Elder Butler, of course, was kept informed of developments. Unable to advocate his views in person, he sent telegrams to Elders Morrison and Kilgore urging them to "Stand by the old landmarks." Alarmed by the turn events were taking in the meetings, Elder Kilgore—a member of the General Conference committee and a strong Butler supporter—stood to his feet and moved that the discussion of "righteousness by faith" be closed until Elder Butler was able to participate. Ellen White had been seated on the platform at the time. Rising to her feet she said, "This is the Lord's work. Does he want His work to wait for Elder Butler? The Lord wants His work to go forward and not wait for any man." There was no reply; the studies continued.

In her morning talk to the delegates the next day she spoke of the matter again: "Had Brother Kilgore been walking closely with God he never would have walked onto the ground with his yesterday and made the statement he did in regard to the investigation that is going on. That is, they must not bring in any new light or present any new argument... because one man is not here...."

"I never was more alarmed than at the present time.... I want to tell you, my brethren, that it is not right to fasten ourselves upon the ideas of any one man...."

"I tell you in the fear of God, 'Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.' How can you listen to all that I have been telling you all through these meetings and not know for yourself what is truth?...."

"Let us come to God as reasonable beings to know for ourselves what is truth. But if you want to take the position that only one man can explain the truth, I want to tell you that this is not as God would have it. Now we want to harmonize the truth into a unit. But if we fasten to any man we are not taking the position that God would have us take...."

If the ministers will not receive the light, I want to give the people a chance; perhaps they may receive it. God did not raise me up to come across the plains to speak to you and you sit here to question His message and question whether Sister White is the same as she used to be in years gone by...."

"I speak decidedly because I want you to realize where you are standing. I want our young men to take a position, not because someone else takes it, but because they understand the truth for themselves."

"Elder Kilgore, I was grieved more than I can express to you when I heard you make that remark, because I have lost confidence in you. Now, we want to get right at what God says.... Let us go to the Lord for the truth instead of our showing this spirit of combattiveness. God has given me light, and you have acknowledged it in times past."

The normal responsibilities of the conference were not completely lost sight of in all this. A great deal of regular business was attended to, including the election of new officers. Elder Butler resigned his position on account of sickness. While Ellen White sympathized with her old friend in his affliction, she confided to a family member that he had already been in office three years too long and had come to think of himself as virtually infallible, continued on 11.
Need For A Deeper Study

Ellen G. White

Dear Brethren Assembled at General Conference:

I entreat you to exercise the spirit of Christians. Do not let strong feelings of prejudice arise, for we should be prepared to investigate the Scriptures with unbiased minds, with reverence and candor. It becomes us to pray over matters of difference in views of Scripture. Personal feelings should not be allowed to influence our words or our judgment. It will grieve the Spirit of God if you close your understanding to the light which God sends you.

Dr. Waggoner has spoken to us in a straightforward manner. There is precious light in what he has said. Some things presented in reference to the law in Galatians, if I fully understand his position, do not harmonize with the understanding I have had of this subject; but truth will lose nothing by investigation; therefore I plead for Christ's sake that you come to the living Oracles, and with prayer and humiliation seek God. Everyone should feel that he has the privilege of searching the Scriptures for himself, and he should do this with earnest prayer that God will give him a right understanding of His Word, that he may know from positive evidence that he does know what is truth.

I would have humility of mind, and be willing to be instructed as a child. The Lord has been pleased to give me great light, yet I know that He leads other minds, and opens to them the mysteries of His Word, and I want to receive every ray of light that God shall send me, though it should come through the humblest of His servants.

Of one thing I am certain, as Christians you have no right to entertain feelings of enmity, unkindness, and prejudice toward Dr. Waggoner, who has presented his views in a plain, straightforward manner, as a Christian should. If he is in error, you should, in a calm, rational, Christlike manner, seek to show him from the Word of God where he is out of harmony with its teachings. If you cannot do this you have no right as Christians to pick flaws, to criticize, to work in the dark, to prejudice minds with your objections. This is Satan's way of working.

Some interpretations of Scripture given by Dr. Waggoner I do not regard as correct. But I believe him to be perfectly honest in his views, and I respect him as a Christian gentleman. I have no reason to think that he is not as much esteemed of God as are any of my brethren, and I shall regard him as a Christian brother, so long as there is no evidence that he is unworthy. The fact that he honestly holds some views of Scripture differing from yours or mine is no reason why we should treat him as an offender, or as a dangerous man, and make him the subject of unjust criticism. We should not raise a voice of censure against him or his teachings unless we can present weighty reasons for so doing and show him that he is in error.

No one should feel at liberty to give loose rein to the combative spirit. I know that it would be dangerous to denounce Dr. Waggoner's position as wholly erroneous. This would please the enemy. I see the beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law as the doctor has placed it before us. You say, many of you, it is light and truth. Yet you have not presented it in this light herebefore. Is it not possible that through earnest, prayerful searching of the Scriptures he has seen still greater light on some points? That which has been presented harmonized perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me during all the years of my experience. If our ministering brethren would accept the doctrine which has been presented so clearly—the righteousness of Christ in connection with the law—and I know they need to accept this, their prejudices would not have a controlling power, and the people would be fed with their portion of meat in due season. Let us take our Bibles, and with humble prayer and a teachable spirit, come to the great Teacher of the world; let us pray as did David, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." (Psalm 119:18)

I see no excuse for the wrought-up state of feeling that has been created at this meeting. This is the first time I have had opportunity to listen to anything in reference to this subject. I have had no conversation in regard to it with my son, W.C. White, with Dr. Waggoner, or with Elder A.T. Jones. At this meeting I have heard for the first time Dr. Waggoner's reasons for his position. The messages coming from your president at Battle Creek are calculated to stir you up to make hasty decisions and to take decided positions; but I warn you against doing this. You are not now calm; there are many who do not know what they believe. It is perilous to make decisions upon any controverted point without dispassionately considering all sides of the question. Excited feelings will lead to rash movements. It is certain that many have come to this meeting with false impressions and perverted opinions. They have imaginings that have no foundation in truth. Even if the position which we have held upon the two laws is truth, the Spirit of truth will not countenance any such measures to defend it as many of you would take. The spirit that attends the truth should be such as will represent the Author of truth.

The truth must be represented as it is in Jesus; if there are any among us who become stirred up because ideas contrary from what they have believed are presented in this meeting, then stop your unsanctified criticisms and candidly investigate the subject, and it will sanctify the soul.

Two years ago, while in Switzerland, I was addressed in the night season by a voice which said, "Follow me." I thought I arose, and followed my guide. I seemed to be in the Tabernacle at Battle Creek, and my guide gave instructions in regard to many things at the conference. I will give in substance a few things that were said: "The Spirit of God has not had a controlling influence in this meeting. The spirit that controlled the Pharisees is coming in among this people, who have been greatly favored of God."

Many things were spoken which I will not now present to you. I was told that there was need of great spiritual revival among the men who bear responsibilities in the cause of God. There was not perfection in all points on either side of the question under discussion. We must search the Scriptures for
All who reverence the word of God just as it reads, all who do His will to the best of their ability, will know of the doctrine, whether it be of God evidences of truth. There are but few, even of those who claim to believe it, that comprehend the third angel's message, and yet this is the message for this time. It is present truth. But how few take up this message in its true bearing, and present it to the people in its power! With many it has but little force.

Said my guide, "There is much light yet to shine forth from the law of God and the gospel of righteousness. This message, understood in its true character, and proclaimed in the Spirit, will enlighten the earth with its glory. The great decisive question is to be brought before all nations, tongues, and peoples. The closing work of the third angel's message will be attended with a power that will send the rays of the Sun of Righteousness into all the highways and byways of life, and decisions will be made for God as supreme governor; His law will be looked upon as the rule of His government."

Many who claim to believe the truth will change their opinions in times of peril, and will take the side of the transgressors of God's law in order to escape persecution. There will be great humiliating of hearts before God on the part of every one who remains faithful and true to the end. But Satan will so work upon the unconsecrated elements of the human mind that many will not accept the light in God's appointed way.

I entreat you, brethren, be not like the Pharisees, who were blinded with spiritual pride, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency, and who because of this were forsaken of God. For years I have been receiving instructions and warnings that this was the danger to our people. Says the Scripture: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." [John 12:42, 43]

There is a positive danger that some who profess to believe the truth will be found in a position similar to that of the Jews. They take the ideas of the men they are associated with, not because by searching the Scriptures they conscientiously accept the teachings in doctrine as truth. I entreat you to make God your trust; idolize no man, depend upon no man. Let not your love of men hold them in places of trust that they are not qualified to fill to the glory of God; for man is finite and erring, liable to be controlled by his own opinions and feelings. Self-esteem and self-righteousness are coming in upon us, and many will fall because of unbelief and unrighteousness, for the grace of Christ is not ruling in the hearts of many.

We are to be ever searching for the truth as for hidden treasures. I entreat you, close not the door of the heart for fear some ray of light shall come to you. You need greater light, you need a clearer understanding of the truth which you carry to the people. If you do not see light yourselves, you will close the door; if you can you will prevent the rays of light from coming to the people. Let it not be said of this highly favored people, "Ye have entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye have hindered." [Luke 11:52] All these lessons are given for the benefit of those upon whom the ends of the world are come.

I have been shown that Jesus will reveal to us precious old truths in a new light, if we are ready to receive them; but they must be received in the very way in which the Lord shall choose to send them. With humble, softened hearts, with respect and love for one another, search your Bibles. The light may not come in accordance with the plans that men may devise. But all who reverence the Word of God just as it reads, all who do His will to the best of their ability, will know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, notwithstanding the efforts of the enemy to confuse minds and to make uncertain the Word of God. God calls every man's attention to His living Oracles. Let no one quench the Spirit of God by wresting the Scriptures, by putting human interpretations upon His inspired Word; and let no one pursue an unfair course, keep in the dark, not willing to open their ears to hear and yet free to comment and quibble and sow their doubts of that which they will not candidly take time to hear.

Let men be careful how they handle the Word of inspiration, which has been preserved for ages through the power of God. If men were themselves controlled by the Holy Spirit they would bring heart and soul to the task, searching and digging in the mines of God for precious ore. They would be eager to come into harmony with the writings of inspired men. If they are not controlled by the spirit of God, they will give evidence of this by caviling over His Word and by sitting in judgment upon its teachings just as did the Jews.

We should guard against the influence of men who have trained themselves as debaters, for they are in continual danger of handling the Word of God deceitfully. There are men in our churches all through the land who will pervert the meaning of the Scripture to make a sharp point and overcome an opponent. They do not reverence the Sacred Word. They put their own construction upon its utterances. Christ is not formed within, the hope of glory. They are educated critics, but spiritual truths can only be spiritually discerned. These men are ever ready and equipped to oppose at a moment's notice anything that is contrary to their own opinions. They handle the Scriptures in an unwise way, and bring self into everything they do.

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give repentance to the acknowledging of truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." [2 Timothy 2:24-26] The servant of the Lord must not strive, but must teach the Word of God in the manner that God has ordained. Any other way is not God's way, and will create confusion.

It is a matter of deep concern to us whether or not we are perfecting a Christian character, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we are daily learners in the school of Christ we shall be daily obtaining an experience in Christian life, and we shall not be self-sufficient and self-exalted. We shall be as humble as little children, and there will be a nourishing power in our words which will drop as the dew. The fruits of righteousness, sown in peace of them that make peace, will then appear.

The debating spirit has come into the ranks of Sabbath-
When the Jews took the first step in the rejection of Christ, they took a dangerous step

keepers to take the place of the Spirit of God. They have placed finite men where God should be, but nothing can suffice for us but to have Christ dwell in our hearts by faith. The truth must become ours. Christ must be our Saviour by an experimental knowledge. We should know by faith what it is to have our sins pardoned, and to be born again. We must have a higher, deeper wisdom than man's to guide us amid the perils surrounding our pathway. The Spirit of Christ must be in us just as the blood is in the body, circulating through it as a vitalizing power.

Our greatest fear should be that we may be found rebelling against God's Word, which is to be our guide amidst all the perils of the last days. We must be sure that we are on the Lord's side, that we have the truth as it is in Jesus. With the grace of God in the soul, we may be secure anywhere, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

We would discourage the discipline that tends to make persons debaters. We urge you not to connect young men who are learning to be teachers of Bible truth with one who has a debating spirit, for they will surely receive the wrong mold of character. The habitual debater is so accustomed to belaboring and turning aside evidence, and even the Scriptures, from the true meaning to win his point, that everything that does not strike him favorably and is not in harmony with his ideas he will combat, caviling at God's inspired Word.

There is too little dependence on God. When God would have a special work done for the advancement of the truth, He will impress men to work in the mines of truth with prayerful earnestness to discover the precious ore. These men will have Christlike perseverance. They will not fail or be discouraged. They will sink self out of sight in Jesus. Men will go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way for the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is their work to make crooked things straight. Some things must be torn down, some things must be built up. The old treasures must be reset in a framework of truth. They are to preach God's Word; their testimony must not be molded by the opinions and ideas that have been regarded as sound, but by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. They are to lift up Christ and call sinners to repentance. They are to practice the graces of Christ, to pursue a straightforward course, breaking down the skepticism and urging upon all their personal responsibility to be kind and courteous, to do good and to win souls to Jesus.

We must have the power of God to soften and change the rugged traits of our character, that we may be susceptible to the influence of truth. We should look upon the Word of God with reverence, as something sacred. Christ is true, and without Him we know nothing as we ought to know it. We are lacking in the spirituality of true religion.

When the Jews took the first step in the rejection of Christ, they took a dangerous step. When afterward evidence accumulated that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, they were too proud to acknowledge that they had erred. So with the people of our day who reject the truth. They do not take time to investigate candidly, with earnest prayer, the evidences of the truth, and they oppose that which they do not understand. Just like the Jews, they take it for granted they have all the truth, and feel a sort of contempt for anyone who should suppose they had more correct ideas than themselves of what is truth. All the evidence produced they decide shall not weigh a straw with them, and they tell others that the doctrine is not true, and afterward, when they see as light evidence they were so forward to condemn, they have too much pride to say, "I was wrong"; they still cherish doubt and unbelief, and are too proud to acknowledge their convictions. Because of this, they take steps that lead to results of which they have never dreamed.

Those who have not been in the habit of thinking and investigating for themselves believe certain doctrines because their associates with them in the work believe them. They resist the truth without going to the Scriptures for themselves to learn what is truth. Because those in whom they have had confidence oppose the light, they oppose it, not knowing they are rejecting the counsel of God against themselves.

Truth will triumph gloriously, and those who have received the truth because God has revealed it in His Word will triumph with it. Those who neglect to search for evidence for themselves, will not be able to give a reason for the hope that is within them. God's commands must be heard. He says, "Go forward." There are large fields to be explored. There are mines to be discovered in which are precious jewels of truth. Let no one close these mines, and cease to dig for the truth lest they should have to cast aside some preconceived idea or opinion. No, brethren, we want to know the truth; and God forbid that any of you should turn from precious truths simply because you do not want to believe them.

No one must be permitted to close the avenues whereby the light of truth shall come to the people. As soon as this shall be attempted, God's Spirit will be quenched, for that Spirit is constantly at work to give fresh and increased light to His people through His Word. Let the love of Christ reign in hearts here. Let all yield themselves to that heavenly power which alone can create unity by quelling selfish ambitions and human pride. When the Spirit of God comes in, love will take the place of variance, because Jesus is love; if His spirit were cherished here our meeting would be like a stream in the desert.

Has the truth as it is in Jesus been received into the heart? Is the law of God our standard? If it is, its principles will be wrought out in our life. Wherever the love of Jesus reigns there is peace with God, joy in God; and the love and joy are reflected to others. We cannot afford to be deceived by a semblance, a form. The truth of the Bible may be read, and we may think that a form of words will accomplish that which only the Spirit of God can accomplish by its converting, transforming power. We may hold certain points of truth firmly and yet refuse to let in any fresh rays of light which God may send to show us the beauty of the truth. It is dangerous for us to take a step in uncertainty. We should not reject or oppose the views of our fellow laborers because they do not agree with our ideas until we have used every means in our power to find out whether or not they are truth, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

MS 15, 1888
History, continued

To whom do you look for counsel, for wisdom, for encouragement? To man—or to the Son of man?

On November 4 the conference closed. In a letter written that day, Sister White characterized the experience as "the hardest and most incomprehensible tug of war we have ever had among us as a people." Still, she believed that the meeting would "result in great good."12

One of the most frustrating features of the 1888 conference is that no clear record was kept of what Elder Waggoner presented. That it touched on the law—and the gospel—in Galatians is obvious. It was this issue that created the great animosity to his message. His opponents became so preoccupied with this point that they missed what Ellen White saw—the matchless charms of Christ.

What thrilled her heart at Minneapolis? The law in Galatians? No, certainly not. Not until 1896 was she to be shown that Galatians 3:24 referred especially to the moral law. Before then she would say, "As to the law in Galatians, I have no burden and never have had."13

The cause for her enthusiasm is simple. So simple, yet so profound, that many overlooked it. And many still underestimate it. The cause for her enthusiasm was Jesus Christ—the source of all power, the healing of all ills, the knowledge of all things, the remedy for all sin. Not a Christ held separate from the life, but Christ our Saviour dwelling in our hearts and filling us with all the fullness of God. Somehow, somewhere along the way, it seems we had lost touch with Jesus.

"Now, it has been Satan's determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore God gave to His servants [Elders Jones and Waggoner] a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines."14

The reception given this "most precious message" was, of course, mixed. Jones described it in 1893: "I know that some there [Minneapolis] accepted it; others rejected it entirely. You know the same thing. Others tried to stand halfway between, and get it that way; but that is not the way it is to be had, brethren; that is not the way it is received. They thought to take a middle course, and although they did not exactly receive it, or exactly commit themselves to it, yet they were willing to go whichever way the tide turned at the last..."

"Brethren, you need to get that righteousness of Jesus Christ nearer to your heart than that. Every man needs to get the righteousness of God nearer to him than simply weighing up things and compromising between parties, or he will never see or know the righteousness of God at all."15

The greatest opposition came from Battle Creek. True to her promise, Ellen White gave the people "a chance," traveling extensively for most of the next year, often in company with one or both of the "fledglings." Perhaps the greatest boost to the message came in 1892 after she had been removed from the scenes of these labors. Writing from Australia, she revealed that this movement embraced the beginning of the "loud cry of the third angel."16

This positive identification has fixed the importance of 1888 firmly in Adventist thought. Yet we are forced to conclude that nothing, as of yet, has fixed the reality of the message in our hearts. The loud cry has not sounded, the latter rain has not fallen, our Lord has not come. He has not been slack in His promise, but we have never looked to Him for the fullness of blessing which He has to offer.

Has our view of Jesus been "eclipsed"? To whom do we look for counsel, for wisdom, for encouragement? To man—or to the Son of man? Do we flatter ourselves that numbers will make a difference? That committees or by-laws are sufficient authority to contradict God's word? Such conclusions are "worthy of no more consideration than are any man's expressions. Christ says, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' If He is not honored in your assemblies as chief counselor, your planning comes from no higher source than the human mind."17

Our history—and that of ancient Israel—speaks eloquently, urging that we learn both the theological truths and the practical lessons of righteousness by faith. "Depending upon
THE PLEDGE

"I solemnly promise, before God, to abstain from tobacco, spiritous liquors, snuff, tea, coffee, flesh-meats, butter, spices, rich cake, mince pies, a large amount of salt, and animal fat of all kinds, baking powder, soda or saleratus, in any form, and cheese, and from all exciting articles of food, and to abstain from eating between meals, and to do all I can to induce others to do likewise."

-Pledge sent to the General Conference March 29, 1908
The great thought and purpose of the true sanctuary, its priesthood, and ministry, is that God shall dwell in the hearts of the people. What now is the great thought and purpose of His dwelling in the hearts of the people? The answer is, Perfection; the moral and spiritual perfection of the worshiper.

Let us consider this: At the close of the fifth chapter of Hebrews, immediately following the statement that Christ, “being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec,” it is written: “Therefore, that is, because of this, for this reason, “leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” Hebrews 6:1.

Next it is shown that perfection is attained only through the Melchisedec priesthood. And it is shown that this was always so, and that the Levitical priesthood was only temporary, and typical of the Melchisedec priesthood. Following this, in discussing the Levitical priesthood, it is written: “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, ... what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?” (Hebrews 7:11) And again, in the same connection, “For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did [or “but it was the bringing in of a better hope,” margin] by which we draw nigh unto God.” vs. 19.

By these Scriptures it is perfectly plain that the perfection of the worshiper is that which is offered and which is attained in the priesthood and ministry of Christ.

Nor yet are these all the words on this thought. For, as already quoted in the description of the sanctuary and its service, it is said that it “was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.” That none of this could make him that did the service perfect is its great lack. Therefore that the priesthood and ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary, can and does make perfect him who enters by faith into the service, is the great thought and the goal of all.

That earthly service “could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.” “But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Hebrews 9:11, 12) This sanctuary, priesthood, sacrifice, and ministry of Christ’s does make perfect in eternal redemption every one who by faith enters into the service, and so receives that which that service is established to give.

Alonzo T. Jones

March, 1986 Our Firm Foundation 13
Sanctification is the true keeping of all the commandments of God

Further, “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctify to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” The blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean in the Levitical service and the worldly sanctuary did sanctify to the purifying of the flesh; for so the word concerning it continually declares. And that being so, “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,” sanctify to the purifying of the spirit and “purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

What are dead works? Death itself is the consequence of sin. Dead works therefore are works that have sin in them. Then the purging of the conscience from dead works is to so entirely cleanse the soul from sin, that in the life and works of the believer in Jesus sin shall have no place; the works shall be only works of faith, and the life shall be only the life of faith, and so be only the true and pure “service of the living God.”

Again it is written: “The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” Hebrews 10:1-4

This again shows that though perfection was the aim in all the ministry that was performed under the law, yet perfection was not attained by any of those performances. They were all simply figures for the time then present of the ministry and priesthood by which perfection is attained; that is the ministry and priesthood of Christ. Those sacrifices could not make the comers thereunto perfect. The true sacrifice and the true ministry in “the sanctuary and the true tabernacle” do make the comers thereunto perfect: and this perfection consists in the worshipers having “no more conscience of sins.”

But since it is “not possible” for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sins, it was not possible, though those sacrifices were offered year by year continually, so to purge the worshipers that they should have no more conscience of sins. The blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean could and did sanctify to the purifying of the flesh; but of the flesh only: and even this was “but a figure for the time then present” of “the blood of Christ,” which so much more purges the worshipers that they have no more conscience of sins.

“Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.” Hebrews 10:5-9

Here are mentioned two things: “the first,” and “the second.” What are these two things? Which is “the first,” and which “the second”? The two things mentioned are sacrifice, offering, burnt offerings, and offering for sin—all as one; and the will of God. Sacrifice, offering, burnt offerings, and offering for sin—all as one— are “the first!” and “the will of God” is “the second.” “He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.” That is, He taketh away sacrifice, offering, burnt offerings, and offering for sin, that He may establish the will of God. And the will of God is “even your sanctification” and your perfection. (1 Thessalonians 4:3; Matthew 5:48; Ephesians 4:8; 12, 13; Hebrews 13:20, 21) But this could never be accomplished by those sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings, and offering for sin which were offered by the Levitical priesthood—they could not make the comers thereunto perfect. They could not so purge the worshipers that they should have no more conscience of sin. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.

Therefore, since the will of God is the sanctification and the perfection of the worshipers; since the will of God is that His worshipers shall be so cleansed that they shall have no more conscience of sin; and since the service and the offerings in that earthly sanctuary could not do this; He took it all away that He may establish the will of God. “By the which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

The will of God is “even your sanctification.” Sanctification is the true keeping of all the commandments of God. In other words, this is to say that the will of God concerning man is that His will shall be perfectly fulfilled in man. His will is expressed in His law of ten commandments, which is “the whole duty of man.” This law is perfect, and perfection of character is the perfect expression of this law in the life of the worshiper of God. By this law is the knowledge of sin. And all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God, have come short of this perfection of character.

The sacrifices and the service in the earthly sanctuary could not take away the sins of men, and so could not bring them to this perfection. But the sacrifice and the ministry of the true High Priest in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle do accomplish this. This does take away utterly every sin. And the worshiper is so truly purged that he has no more conscience of sins. By the sacrifice, the offering, and the service of Himself, Christ took away the sacrifices and the offerings and the service which could never take away sins; and by His per-
He has given assurance that every human soul can walk in that way.

fect doing of the perfect will of God He established the will of God. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hebrews 10:10

In that former earthly sanctuary and service, "every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." But in the service in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle, "this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Hebrews 10:11-14

Thus perfection in every respect is attained through the priesthood, the sacrifice, and the service of this our great High Priest at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens in His ministry in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." Hebrews 10:15-18

And this is the "new and living way" which Christ, through the flesh, "hath consecrated for us"—for all mankind; and by which every soul may enter into the holiest of all—the holiest of all places, the holiest of all experiences, the holiest of all relationships, the holiest of all living. This new and living way He "hath consecrated for us through the flesh," that is, He, coming in the flesh, identifying Himself with mankind in the flesh, has, for us who are in this flesh, consecrated a way from where we are to where He now is, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens in the holiest of all.

In His coming in the flesh—having been made in all things like unto us, and having been tempted in all points like as we are—He has identified Himself with every human soul just where that soul is. And from the place where every human soul is, He has consecrated for that soul a new and living way through all the vicissitudes and experiences of a whole lifetime, and even through death and the tomb, into the holiest of all, at the right hand of God for evermore.

O that consecrated way! consecrated by His temptations and sufferings, by His prayers and tears, by His holy living and sacrificial dying, by His triumphant resurrection and glorious ascension, and by His triumphal entry into the holiest of all, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens! And this "way" He has consecrated for us. He, having become one of us, has made this way our way; it belongs to us. He has endowed every soul with divine right to walk in this consecrated way; and by His having done it Himself in the flesh—in our flesh—He has made it possible, yea, He has given actual assurance, that every human soul can walk in that way, in all that that way is; and by it enter fully and freely into the holiest of all.

He, as one of us, in our human nature, weak as we, laden with the sins of the world, in our sinful flesh, in this world, a whole lifetime, lived a life "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," and "was made" and ascended "higher than the heavens." And by this He has made and consecrated a way by which, in Him, every believer can in this world, and for a whole lifetime, live a life holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and as a consequence be made with Him higher than the heavens.

Perfection, perfection of character, is the Christian goal—perfection attained in human flesh in this world. Christ attained it in human flesh in this world, and thus made and consecrated a way by which, in Him, every believer can attain it. He, having attained it, has become our great High Priest, by His priestly ministry in the true sanctuary to enable us to attain it.

Perfection is the Christian's goal; and the High Priesthood and ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary is the only way by which any soul can attain this true goal in this world. "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary." Psalm 77:13

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." And "let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised."

"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. . . . But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an immeasurable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

O, then, "see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." Hebrews 12:18-25
The Prayer Of Victory

Ellet J. Waggoner

The Bible says that “the just shall live by faith.” The righteousness of God is “revealed from faith to faith.” (Romans 1:17) Nothing can better illustrate the working of faith than some of the examples that are recorded for our learning, “that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4) We will take, first, a notable event recorded in the twentieth chapter of 2 Chronicles. Let the reader follow the running comment with his Bible.

“It came to pass after this, also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat, ... saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazon-tamar, which is Engedi.” vss. 1, 2

This great host caused the king and the people to fear, but they took the wise course of gathering together, “to ask help of the Lord; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.” (vss. 3, 4) Then follows the prayer of Jehoshaphat, as leader of the congregation, and it is worth special study, since it was a prayer of faith, and contained within itself the beginning of victory:

“And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven? and rulest Thou not over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in Thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee?” vss. 5, 6

That was an excellent beginning of a prayer. It starts with a recognition of God in heaven. So the model prayer begins, “Our Father who art in heaven.” What does this signify? That God, as God in heaven, is Creator. It carries with it the recognition of His power over all the kingdoms of the world and of the powers of darkness; the fact that He is in heaven, the Creator, shows that in His hand there is power and might, so that none is able to withstand Him. Why, the man who can begin his prayer in the hour of need with such a recognition of God’s power, has victory already on his side. For, notice, Jehoshaphat not only declared his faith in God’s wondrous power, but he claimed God’s strength as his own, saying, “Art not Thou our God?” He fulfilled the Scripture requirement: “He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

Jehoshaphat then proceeded to recount how the Lord had established them in that land, and how, although He had not suffered them to invade Moab and Ammon, those nations had come to cast them out of their God-given inheritance. (vss. 7-11) And then he concluded: “O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee.” (vss. 12) It is nothing with the Lord to help, whether with many, or
If God gives a promise, it is as good as fulfilled already

with them that have no power (2 Chronicles 14:11); and since the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is entire towards Him (2 Chronicles 16:9), it well becomes those who are in need, to trust Him alone. This position of Jehoshaphat and his people was in keeping with the apostolic injunction, "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2) He is the beginning and the end, and all power in heaven and earth is in His hands.

Now what is the result?—The prophet of the Lord came in the power of the Holy Spirit, "and he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; and thou King Jehoshaphat: Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's." (vs. 15) And then came the command to go forth in the morning to meet the enemy, and they should see the salvation of the Lord, for He would be with them.

Now comes the most important part:—And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekos; and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth forever." vss. 20, 21

Surely, this was a strange way to go out to battle. Few armies have ever gone to battle with such a vanguard. But what was the result?

"And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, everyone helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch-tower in the wilderness, they looked upon the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped." vss. 22-24

If there have been few armies that have gone to battle with such a vanguard as did the army of Jehoshaphat, it is equally certain that few armies have been rewarded by such a signal victory. And it may not be amiss to study a little into the philosophy of the victory of faith, as illustrated in this instance. When the enemy, who had been confident in their superior numbers, heard the Israelites coming out that morning, singing and shouting, what must they have concluded?—Nothing else but that the Israelites had received reinforcements, and were so strengthened that it would be useless to try to oppose them. So a panic seized them, and each one looked upon his neighbor as an enemy.

And were they not correct in their conclusion, that Israel had received reinforcements?—Indeed they were; for the record says: "When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir." They had reinforcements, and doubtless if their eyes could have been opened to see them, they would have seen, as did the servant of Elisha on one occasion, that they were with them more in number than the enemy.

But the point which should be specially noticed is that it was when Israel began to sing and to praise that the Lord set ambushments against the enemy. What does that signify?—It signifies that their faith was real. The promise of God was considered as good as the actual accomplishment. So they believed in the Lord, or, more literally, they built upon the Lord, and thus they were established, or built up. Thus they proved the truth of the words, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4)

Let us now apply this illustration in a case of conflict against sin. Here comes a strong temptation to do a thing known to be wrong. We have often proved to our sorrow the strength of the temptation, because it has vanquished us, so that we know that we have no might against it. But now our eyes are upon the Lord, who has told us to come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. So we begin to pray to God for help. And we pray to the God that is revealed to us in the Bible as the Creator of heaven and earth. We begin, not with a mournful statement of our weakness, but with a joyful acknowledgment of God's mighty power. That being settled, we can venture to state our difficulty and our weakness. If we state our weakness first, and our discouraging situation, we are placing ourselves before God. In that case Satan will magnify the difficulty and throw his darkness around us, so that we can see nothing else but our weakness, and so, although our cries and pleading may be fervent and agonizing, they will be in vain, because they will lack the essential element of believing that God is, and that He is all that He has revealed Himself to be. But when we start with a recognition of God's power, then we can safely state our weakness, for then we are simply placing our weakness by the side of His power, and the contrast tends to beget courage.

Then, as we pray, the promise of God comes to our mind, brought there by the Holy Spirit. It may be that we can think of no special promise that exactly fits the case; but we can remember that "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15); and that He "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4); and we may know that this carried with it every promise, for "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

Then we remember that God can speak of things that are not as though they were that it, if God gives a promise, it is as good as fulfilled already. And so, knowing that our deliverance from evil is according to the will of God (Galatians 1:4), we count the victory as already ours, and begin to thank God for His "exceeding great and precious promises." As our faith grasps these promises and makes them real, we can begin to rely upon His goodness; and while we are doing this, our minds are wholly taken from evil, and the victory is ours. The Lord sets ambushments against the enemy. Our ascription of praise shows to Satan that we have obtained reinforcements; and as he has tested the power of the help that is granted to us, he knows that he can do nothing on that occasion, and so he leaves us. This illustrates the force of the apostle's injunction:—"Be careful for nothing [that is, do not worry about anything]; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanks-giving let your requests be made known unto God." Philippians 4:6
For nearly a century the mystery of Minneapolis has been with us as a people. Especially in the last 25 years have the clouds of confusion been deepening. Though volumes have been published on the subject, mutually exclusive opinions remain, and many are concerned.

What is this seemingly mystical message on which the future of the church hangs? Is it the message to the Laodicean Church. "The message given us by A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggeron is the message of God to the Laodicean Church, and woe be unto anyone who professes to believe the truth, and yet does not reflect to others the God-given rays." Letter S 24, 1892

But more than that, it is also the third angel's message. "Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.' " Review and Herald, April 1, 1890

Any well-grounded Adventist would be familiar with these topics. The third angel's message and the Laodicean message became notable truths of this movement even before the denomination came into existence.

Ellen White made this important inspired statement about four years after the Minneapolis meeting: "The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the uncompromising Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel, whose glory shall fill the whole earth." Review and Herald, November 22, 1892, quoted in Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 984

Third angel, Laodicea, Loud Cry—this message certainly deserves our respect. Even a cursory examination reveals the end-time aspect of this message. This is the end-time message, present truth for the final days. But the mere fact that this message came decades ago raises questions. "If the message was accepted, why is the church still in this world? What happened to the loud cry that began years ago?"

In these quotations depicting the attitudes of that era, God speaks to us: "Since the time of the Minneapolis meeting, I have seen the state of the Laodicean Church as never before. I have heard the rebuke of God spoken to those who feel so well satisfied, who know not their spiritual destitution. . . . Those who realize their need of repentance toward God, . . . will confess their sin in refusing the light that heaven has so graciously sent them, and they will forsake the sin that grieved and insulted the Spirit of the Lord." Review and Herald, August 26, 1890

"The Spirit of God is departing from many among His people. Many have entered into dark paths, and some will never return. They will continue to stumble to their ruin. They have tempted God, they have rejected light. . . . They have not only refused to accept the message, but they have hated the light. These men are parties to the ruin of souls. They have interposed themselves between the heaven-sent light and the people."

"I would speak in warning to those who have stood for years resisting light and cherishing the spirit of opposition. How long will you hate and despise the messengers of God's righteousness? . . . I have no smooth message to bear to those who have been so long as false guides, pointing the wrong way. If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ. . . . I entreat you now to humble yourselves, and cease your stubborn resistance of light and evidence." Testimonies to Ministers, 90, 91, 96-98

That there was resistance to this message when it first came is an important truth of history, one from which we should learn and take warning. But what about the intervening years? What about the present? Have we ever, in all those years, opened our hearts to the message? Or has the Lord arbitrarily refused to bestow His blessings? Are we any better than our fathers? Let's look again at that message from the Lord.

The 1888 message is the everlasting gospel—victory over every sin through Christ. This gospel was given to Adam and Eve the day they sinned. Jesus came to seek out the sinful pair and to show them the consequences of their actions. He held them to His breast as they cried for mercy. Tears streamed down His face as He explained their great loss. As angels with flaming swords stood by, He revealed the only means heaven could devise to restore them to their garden home. The Creator explained the mystery of godliness and promised to be their Re-creator and Redeemer. With great compassion He revealed Himself to them as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He speaks to us today as He spoke to them. "If you are willing to be made willing to give your will to me, I will give you My faith. With My faith you can again be trusted. With My righteousness, I shall restore you in godlikeness, and you can again love as I created you to love."

This is what happened at Pentecost. With Jesus' faith they were clothed with Jesus' righteousness; they were living Jesus' life by the power of the Holy Spirit and they had Jesus' love which gave them the ability to respond to every life situation as He would. When they were beaten, persecuted, and killed, they could respond as did Jesus: "God forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Jesus has desperately tried to bring leaders, pastors, and laity into this relationship so that He could send the second Pentecost in the latter rain and then the loud cry. He has tried since 1844 to this day, but like the Jews we have stubbornly resisted the experience of righteousness and victory over every sin.

We are too prone to go to either one extreme or the other, for human nature resents dependence and resists obedience. A century ago an overemphasis on the law made us "dry as the hills of Gilboa." Today, many seem enthanced with a species of grace which excludes sin. But we find that the message of 1888 "presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God." Testimonies to Ministers, 91, 92

It is faith we need, but a faith that yields. . . . We look to the character of Christ must be perfectly reproduced in each of God's saints, 144,000 strong, before the end will come. "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." Christ's Object Lessons, 69

Perfection and holiness is the standard of redemption. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) "Because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy." I Peter 1:16

God's prophet says: "None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach.
the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character." Acts of the Apostles, 531

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." [Revelation 3:21] We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him." Testimonies, vol. 1, 144

"Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.

"It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character.

"The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven." Testimonies, vol. 5, 214-216

Justification and sanctification are accessible to all, even the thief on the cross. When we are so sorry for sinning that we honestly want to quit, Jesus justifies us as the Holy Spirit takes charge of our wills. Because we are willing, He keeps us from sin. We then practice the presence of Jesus in our lives by His power. See 2 Corinthians 7:10; Selected Messages. Book 1, 366, 368

This great experience is available to all who listen to God. "The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life. Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' 2 Corinthians 6:16 " The Desire of Ages, 311

"Through faith, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed." Acts of the Apostles, 564

None of us need fail if we will seek after righteousness with all our hearts and souls. "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13

The message of 1888 is coming before God's remnant church once again. What will we do with it now? Receive it, friends; it is the power of God unto salvation, the everlasting Gospel. It is the matchless charms of Christ, a living active principle to transform the life.

The Message
To Completion

Vince Christensen

Mankind has an insatiable desire to search speculative works in the vain hope of finding clues to what tomorrow will bring. Examine any newspaper and you will find a section devoted to astrology and to other mystic arts. Each year prominent psychics are paid exorbitant fees to predict events.

The accuracy of such predictions has been tabulated at an embarrassing rate of merely three percent, yet year after year The National Enquirer, The Star, and other grocery check-out tabloids continue to sell the largest number of issues when such predications are made. One can only conclude that accuracy is not a requirement. Mankind is desperate to know, and inaccuracy does not dissuade him in his search.

We as Seventh-day Adventists have a unique body of prophetic writings. What does the future hold for the Seventh-day Adventist Church? How and when will the work be completed? In the following account we will look to the recent past and the near future. To the recent past for the comparison of biblical and Spirit of Prophecy predictions; to current conditions and to the future to see what will occur, and to the experience of God's people as the warning cry is again proclaimed with a fervor exceeding that of 1844.

RECENT PAST

Nineteen eighty-four ushered in what appears to many as a new phase in the human experience. Disasters began occurring with fearful frequency and devastation—disasters both manmade and natural.

In Mexico City a natural gas explosion leveled several square blocks, burning houses to the ground and cremating hundreds of inhabitants. One week later Bhopal, India, suffered the worst industrial disaster in history when for yet unknown reasons a safety valve on a tank of poisonous gas failed, leaking its deadly fumes. Thousands died, and

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Everyone agrees that something has gone drastically wrong

over 300,000 suffered injuries resulting in blindness for many.

The grim reality of Ethiopia’s famine evokes sympathy, and financial support from around the world. Flowing the last babies continue to starve as Ethiopia’s civil war impedes the flow of supplies.

Terrorism lashes out in the name of religion, indiscriminately killing men, women, and children. From car and truck bomb attacks to hijacking and murder aboard planes and ships, to the bombing and complete destruction of a commercial airliner over the Pacific Ocean killing 329 civilian passengers, the carnage continues. Commuters are now fearful of travel in many parts of the world.

Nature itself appears incensed at man’s cruelty as natural disasters follow in quick succession in 1985.

As the crop-freezing winter retreated to the North, spring sent killer tornadoes raging across the Midwest and the South, leaving broken bodies and rubble scattered in their paths.

Summer, quick to follow the attack, sets fires sweeping through the tinder-dry hills of the western states, scorching 170,000 acres and destroying 250 homes. Meanwhile a windstorm and tidal wave kill 15,000 in Bangladesh. In September Mexico City again suffers destruction from the shock of a major quake—nearly 5,000 perish. Then just as magazine and television coverage finished showing the last rescue and cleanup attempts in Mexico City, a volcano erupts in Columbia burying an estimated 20,000 men, women, and children beneath tons of steaming mud.

One might assume that these fits of destruction have come about as the result of mere chance, but why the unaccounted-for increase in air traffic fatalities? A one-thousand percent increase in 1985 over the previous year. Then just as 1986 begins, the greatest shock of air traffic fatalities occurs as the space shuttle Challenger explodes in full view of a startled world. Dozens of times the replays froze out for answers. Who will be watched in disbelief, experiencing a grief unequaled since the assassination of President Kennedy.

With the backdrop of continuing famine in Africa, the AIDS epidemic, and the infestation of insects apparently immune to pesticides, the disasters continue with rhythmic frequency as the worst rainstorm in thirty-one years floods California and Nevada. Alaska is forced to cancel the annual dog-sled race from Anchorage to Nome for a lack of snow and continued warm temperatures, while Texas digs out of one to two feet of snow and the temperature drops to 16 below zero.

Everyone agrees that something has gone drastically wrong. Our security is slipping away, and the world is frantically looking for something or someone to restore our sense of well-being.

THE FUTURE
Based on Great Controversy
Chapters 38-40

What will take place in the closing scenes as our message of warning, comfort, and hope is proclaimed?

As the tensions mount and disasters come, the world desperately cries out for answers. Who will be able to give back the confidence and the stability of yesterday? Who can comfort us as we recover from the agony of one disaster, only to be met by the pain of another? As the cries ascend to God for help the answer comes: we must return to God—this is our only safety. From religious leaders to secular humanists the cry is proclaimed: “We must develop the moral fiber of mankind. Through legislation, through education we will come close to God, thus appeasing His anger and ushering in the long-anticipated millennium of peace.”

The churches agree, the government agrees, we must seek God to survive.

And so it is that laws are passed and mandates are given for religious observance and secular prohibitions—yet the devastation continues with greater frequency and intensity until the cry is heard, “What more can be done?” The answer is love back, “We must unite; we must be one.” Thus those who resist the call to uniformity of belief are hunted down, questioned, fined, imprisoned and ultimately slain for defiance of social order. The church and the world unite to legislate their dogmas into laws, thus attempting to legally govern the consciences and souls of men.

There is one group, however, who conscientiously resist all such oppression. They are Sabbatarians, scorned, derided, and accused as the cause of the continuing global upheaval. Many of them are caught while hurrying from place to place, telling all who will hear of the issues and making plain the danger of participating in the unholy union of church and state. Theirs is not a mission of terrorism or a worldly domination; theirs is a mission to vindicate the character of the God of heaven, to show forth His mercy, love, and judgment. They have a mission to show from Scripture why the world has come to this time of trouble.

Thousands unite with the little band. The cry is heard, the world is warned of coming destruction. Prominent men throughout the world, lawyers, judges, statesmen, and legislators have the issues presented before them as one by one the dissenters are brought before councils to answer the charge of treason to the state and subordination to the church. Many who once accused and condemned the defendants now join their ranks as the issues are made clear. The battle rages as Satan appears on the scene with illusions to bolster his masterful claims void of biblical support.

While laws are passed and illusions are given from the powers beneath, a faithful remnant clings to a “thus saith the Lord.” Nothing can turn them back. How has it come to this? One small group standing faithfully against the prevailing powers of man and the persuasive illusions of the supernatural? The answer is: “Our God has written, our God is able, our God is coming, and we are subject to and answerable only to Him.”

“...the purest and most elevated devotion to God is that which is manifested in the most earnest desires and efforts to win souls to Christ.” Special Testimonies, 332

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The message of 1888 stands vindicated

This group was not formed in a moment; the issues were not settled in an hour. One hundred years earlier in 1888 the message was sounded by a select few men and women, the message of Righteousness-by-Faith and subjection to God, and God alone. Satan quickly attacked from within, using well-intentioned but shortsighted men to stifle conviction and blunt the cutting edge of truth. For generations the banner flew at half-mast; then again the call rang out and thousands responded gathering about the banner of truth—raising it high, placing it in its rightful position. The message has its effect as the theory of truth becomes the reality of changed lives. Characters once self-serving now become submissive to the One altogether lovely. Their obedience to God is unaltering; their faithfulness and compassion toward one another is like that of apostolic days.

Satan rages, and the tares among the wheat rise up and attack. Now fully mature, they expose themselves for what they are in contrast to the precious grain. They cannot endure the stern rebukes, straight messages, and holy example of God's faithful and loyal. The battle is fierce; the lines once indistinct between groups now become well established. Confusion rages in the church of God. Who will survive? The majority, once having rejoiced in the truth, separate themselves from the faithful few, turning upon them with darkened minds inventing lies, betraying trusts, accusing, hunting down and finally leading out in the most cruel persecution of God's people.

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17

The overwhelming surprise comes to the people of God, both genuine and vain professors. The genuine are surprised to see those whom they once deemed loyal turn so venomously against them. And the vain professors are surprised to see the events foretold occurring as they are passed by.

The 1888 message is revived and God takes the reins into His own hands, pouring upon His purified church the electrifying power of the Holy Spirit. Differences have been put away; all self-seeking and clamoring for the highest place then cease as the call goes out throughout the land. The written word, radio, television—every means of communication once dominated and employed in the services of the arch-enemy are now also enlisted in the cause of God to finish the final call. "Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters." [Revelation 14:7]

The issue of the Sabbath is central to the theme, for the questions must be settled in each mind: whom shall I serve, God or man? Where do I place my trust, in this world or the next? Is God able to sustain me if I go against prevailing opinion and civil controls? Most turn away from truth and righteousness; yet many others, no matter what the cost,—position, family, wealth, and even life—join in swelling the midnight cry.

The evidence is in; every case has been decided; the censer is thrown down. God has been vindicated, but the work is not complete. Time continues a little longer to show forth the full maturity of God's saints and the full maturity of the evil nature of sin and sinners.

Where once only partial devastation raged, the world is thrown into upheaval. It is called the great time of trouble. The earth heaves and rolls like the waves of the sea as the plagues are falling. The once glorious cities lie in desolation as the very elements appear to be tearing apart. No more calls to repentance are given. Above the clash of elements are heard the cries of those once loyal to the truth.

Fearful is the scene, yet glorious is the hope that swells within each loyal heart. Jesus Christ is soon to come. There is no doubt; the time is here.

The message of 1888 stands vindicated as the messengers attest to the power of God's word. And now the millenium of peace once looked for upon this earth commences as the radiant throne is raptured into the waiting arms of the King of Kings.

Glorious is the realization of a task now complete, yet still more glorious is the realization of an eternity of bliss—forever free of sin, guilt, and pain.

How soon will it be before the final scenes are upon us? Soon,—as we look around us now we see the ominous signs that tell us it is just upon us now.

"May only if you hear His voice harden not your hearts. Listen to Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Elijah, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, Paul, Ellen White, A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and countless others who have joined in proclaiming the triumphant truth: "God is able."

Until and unless the people of God unreservedly submit their lives to the character-changing power of God and are fashioned into His likeness, nothing of significance can and will take place among us as a people toward finishing the work. We must personally participate in the reality of the promises God has given for the fullness of His power to be realized. If we cannot face the issue of God's sovereignty over man's in our daily life and our church relationships now, we will be unable to stand in the day when we are called to make decisions between what God says and what the laws of men demand.

Thus the 1888 message encompasses much more than what is thought of as Righteousness by Faith for it places the groundwork on which we build the principles of God governing our lives in all things and being subject to God and God alone. We work in harmony and union with our brethren, but never at the price of compromise. Unity without compromising truth brings conflict, but far better the conflict with the world than the lack of peace with God.

Let us press together under Christ and follow one another as we follow Christ.

Now we are again at the crossroads. Shall we again choose delay? Shall this generation be passed by? Would we wish another 100 years upon this world wrecked in sorrow, pain, and suffering? Let us determine by the grace of God to be among that mighty throng that swells the anthem cry: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

The time has fully come to proclaim the messages of hope and comfort that we have so abundantly been given. Of all peoples on earth we have been given more—more knowledge on health, education, and spiritual truths, more hope for the future and more responsibility to show the hope. The desire of all ages is entrusted to us. We must act now, for we have been given the Righteousness-by-Faith message for this generation—"Christ in you, the hope of glory."
It is agreed by all that on earth Christ possessed a dual nature, human and divine. It is in the area of His human nature that there is disagreement. Many, following part of the Augustinian package of falsehood, teach that Christ's human nature was unfallen, having misunderstood the true human nature of our Saviour. Yet Augustine's position was established upon the false premise of man's original sin, which naturally led him to wrongly postulate that Christ could not have inherited man's fallen nature. Many times, as we have seen in other areas, inconclusive statements have been used to deny conclusive statements of Inspiration which clearly establish the human nature of Christ. There is little doubt that this topic has been greatly weakened by serious errors of judgment in some of our publications. Thus the beautiful truth of Christ's nature as set forth in the 1915 edition of *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* was edited out over three decades ago. *Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* produced a wonderful collection of Sister White's statements on Christ's nature, but biased the reader's interpretation by the headings supplied. In many instances the headings contradicted the truths, as we shall see.

Why is Christ's nature so important to our understanding of the gospel theme? It is vital because what we believe colors our understanding of truth. In order to support the view that man cannot obey fully, the "New Adventism" finds it necessary to postulate that Christ, who all agree did obey perfectly, had a nature which cannot be ours, for if Christ obeyed in a nature that could be ours, there would be no excuse for sinning. And of course a central theme of the "New Adventism" is that we will continue to sin until the second coming.

Let the Bible speak unequivocally of Jesus' nature:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Hebrews 2:14-18

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14

It will be seen that it is specifically stated that Christ was of the seed of Abraham, as regards His nature. In His epistle to the Romans, Paul even passed over a few more generations to inform us "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Romans 1:3

Last century there were those who, like many present-day Christians, found it difficult to believe that Christ had a fallen human nature. Sister White's unequivocal answer was, "Letters have been coming in to me, affirming that Christ could not have had the same nature as man, for if He had, He would have fallen under similar temptations. If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man had been." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 408

But lest there be any doubt, Sister White spells it out, so that there can be no doubt whatsoever that "the great work of redemption could be carried out only by the Redeemer taking the place of fallen Adam." *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874

Naturally Sister White never deviates from this truth that Christ's nature was the same as that of His fallen forebears.

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

Speaking to the angels before His incarnation, Jesus told them that "He would take man's fallen nature," *Early Writings*, 150

"It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon Himself the form and nature of fallen man." *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, 115

Further, Sister White in clear words that none can misunderstand, specifically denies that Christ had the unfallen nature which Adam possessed prior to his sin. "But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was not thus with Jesus when he entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical and mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation." *The Desire of Ages*, 117, emphasis supplied

Here is a decisive statement on the matter. It is not a quotation which allows two interpretations. A thousand inconclusive statements do not negate one statement which is unequivocal and conclusive.

Unfortunately many are accepting inconclusive statements concerning Christ's nature and drawing their own conclusions which directly oppose those statements of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy which
We need not retain one sinful propensity

directly provide the required specificity needed for doctrinal proof. Let us look at yet another incontrovertible statement on this subject.

"It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to suffer our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life. The Desire of Ages, 49

Once again God has provided us with a plain Thus saith the Lord. Further, reasons for Christ's acceptance of our nature are provided. In the first quotation we are told that Christ could not have rescued us from our depth of degradation had He not accepted our nature. In the second statement we are told that He wished to give us an example in sinless living. And this is the whole crux of the controversy presently seen in our church. When the "New Adventism" declares that "sinlessness in this life is indeed a chimera" (Dr. D. Ford, Signs of the Times, Australasian Edition, February 1978), it must seek to destroy the truth of Christ's nature since, by taking our nature in its fallen condition, Christ demonstrated beyond all dispute that sinlessness in this life is no chimera [fabrication of the mind] when a man is under the power of the indwelling Spirit. Once the nature of Christ is understood, the fallacy of the claim that obedience is not possible in this life is forever revealed.

Let it be understood that nothing better serves the arch enemy's plans than the proclamation of this central theme of the omega of apostasy, for Satan full well knows that "And being made perfect, He [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Hebrews 5:9

Thus to declare that complete obedience is impossible, is to deny the restoration work of Christ that is characteristic of the sealed at the close of human probation.

Another inspired statement is worthy of our attention. In a most powerful commentary on both Christ as our example and Satan's ever-pervading lie, the servant of the Lord states that

"The only begotten Son of God came to our world as a man to reveal to the world that man could keep the law of God. Satan, the fallen angel, had declared that no man could keep the law of God after the disobedience of Adam." MS 1, 1892

It is proper to propose two questions, based upon this statement:

1. If Christ had a nature different from ours, could He really have proven that we can keep God's law?
2. Satan had claimed that obedience was impossible after the fall of Adam. Could Christ have rebutted Satan's miserable falsehood if He had taken the nature of man before the fall of Adam?

These questions, of course, answer themselves. Two thirds of the angels and a host of created beings on other worlds had amply demonstrated that beings with unfallen natures can obey. But Satan pointed the finger at another class of being which had never previously existed—a man with a fallen nature. Here, he claimed, as he continues to claim, that such a man cannot possibly obey, implying that God's injustice was manifest in demanding obedience of such an individual. Here, by Satan's testimony, God was requiring the impossible. Those who would support this vile claim, no matter how beautiful the language, cast aspersions upon the integrity of Jehovah. Jesus came to this earth and demonstrated by living a perfect life in our nature that Satan had no grounds for his false assertion. The glorious truth is that Jesus' life was an illustration of God's offer to us if we will only cast self aside and permit the Holy Spirit full access to our hearts.

In order to confuse the issue, inconclusive statements of the Spirit of Prophecy are often used in an effort to "explain" away the impact of irrefutable statements. Perhaps none has been more often used, and more wrongly applied, than the following:

"Do not set Him [Christ] before the people as a man with the propensities of sin." Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, 1128

Now it will be noted that this statement says nothing whatsoever concerning the question of Christ's obedience. Unreasonably drawn from the book The Desire of Ages, this statement does not address itself to the issue of whether Christ accepted our nature or the nature of unfallen Adam. Ignoring this fact, which greatly limits its usefulness as a proof concerning the nature of Christ, many thousands of Seventh-day Adventists have accepted it as proof positive that Christ had a nature different from theirs. After all, it is reasoned that we are full of propensities to sin; thus Christ must have been possessed of a different nature.

We can deduce only one fact from this statement—Christ had no propensities of sin. This statement does not answer the question of whether or not such a state is consistent with the possession of a fallen nature. As we shall see, it most certainly is, and the whole force of this passage as a defense of Christ having an unfallen nature is entirely lost.

Speaking of human beings, Sister White makes the following amazing statement: "We need not retain one sinful propensity." Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 943

How different the statement concerning Christ now must seem to those unacquainted with this passage. Here is specific proof from Inspiration, that men and women who have fallen natures need have no sinful propensities. This does not imply holy flesh, for should we again turn from divine power, we should be plunged back into our sinful practices.

Sister White then quotes a passage of Scripture which beautifully sets forth the true change which comes with the quickening of the new birth: "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:1-6

Then Sister White continues her comments: "As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivating tendencies to evil are cut away from the character and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations.... Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places." Review and Herald, April 24, 1900, quoted in

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It is mandatory that we fully appreciate the power and significance of the new birth if we are to properly perceive the glorious truth that we lose our propensities to sin, and become as Christ who had none. Sister White expresses this fact in another way, "Without the transforming process which can come alone through divine power, the original propensities to sin are left in the heart in all their strength, to forge new chains, to impose a slavery that can never be broken by human power." *Evangelism,* 192

When we recognize that Christ, when possessed of our nature, did God's will joyously, we can more perceptively understand the following: "And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us." *The Desire of Ages,* 668

If only Seventh-day Adventists could recapture the glorious promises of the Lord and break loose from the errors of the "reformation" theologians, Christ would rapidly finish His work in their lives and in the world through them.

Of course when we stop to examine just what Sister White meant by the term propensities, it becomes quite obvious that neither Christ nor the regenerated Christian could possibly possess sinful propensities. "Self-indulgence, self-pleasing, pride, and extravagance must be renounced. We cannot be Christians and gratify these propensities." *Review and Herald,* May 16, 1893

Thus it can be amply demonstrated that the use of statements concerning Christ's lack of propensity to sin in order to support the fact that He did not take fallen human nature, is entirely unjustified.

A second type of statement has also been used for this purpose. On the face of it, this may seem to be one which does lend genuine support to the view that Christ had an unfallen nature. "He [Christ] vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan obtained the victory." *Youth's Instructor,* April 25, 1901

Does this statement provide evidence for those who are saying that Sister White can be quoted either way on this issue? An examination of the point which Sister White is making dispels any doubt on this issue, for she goes on to say: "The enemy was overcome by Christ in His human nature. The power of the Saviour's Godhead was hidden. He overcame in human nature, relying upon God for power." *Ibid.*

The matter which Sister White is here addressing is not the type of human nature—fallen or unfallen—which Jesus took, but whether He used human nature or His own divine nature in His battle with temptation. She asserts, as does the Bible, that He used His human nature alone. Consequently this statement cannot be rightly cited as one which conclusively proves one or the other of the positions postulated concerning Christ's nature.

Whether one studies Scripture or the Spirit of Prophecy, all incontrovertible evidence declares that Christ's human nature did not differ from our regenerated nature. By living a sinless life with such a nature, Jesus proved that we humans can have complete victory over sin if we give our lives unrestrainedly to be filled by the Holy Spirit.

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**Food For Thought**

The following story was related to Evelyn Grace White Jacques by both her father, Willie White, and her sister, Mabel.

Mabel loved riding horses. While we were living in Australia we had several, and one, named Ray, was quite lively. Mabel wanted to ride Ray, but Miss McEnterfer (Mrs. White's companion) always said No, fearing that Mabel might not be able to handle Ray.

One day Grandma was shown something concerning Battle Creek College, and she wrote a letter to W.W. Prescott. No one was there to take the letter to be mailed except Mabel, and all of the horses were gone except Ray. "I guess you'll have to ride Ray," Grandma said, and off she went, enjoying every moment.

The letter took a whole month to reach the mainland, and then another week overland to arrive at Elder Prescott's office.

The college needed someone to teach in the English department, and not having a qualified Seventh-day Adventist to fill the position, the school placed an advertisement in the local Battle Creek newspaper. A certain well-dressed lady came in response to the ad. Elder Prescott interviewed her and was well pleased with her qualifications and deportment. "I cannot give you the final word," he said, "until I talk with my committee, but as far as I'm concerned, you have the job. Come back next Wednesday." The next Wednesday just before the woman returned, W.W. Prescott received the letter that Grandma had sent five to six weeks earlier.

The lady seeking the job came in and sat down. Elder Prescott glanced at the letter, then looked up at the woman in astonishment and said, "I don't understand," and handed her the letter.

The letter said: "There is a lady that is come to apply as an English teacher in the college. Do not hire her. She is not what she represents herself to be. She belongs to one of the highest orders of the Catholic Church." The lady paused for a moment after she had read the letter, then said, "Only the Lord could have revealed that to someone."

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**Line Upon Line**

It is quite possible that Elder Jones or Waggoner may be overcome by the temptations of the enemy; but if they should be, this would not prove that they had had no message from God, or that the work that they had done was all a mistake. But should this happen, how many would take this position, and enter into a fatal delusion because they are not under the control of the Spirit of God." Letter S-24-1892

Our churches and institutions must return to where they were before the backsliding commenced, when they began trusting in man and making flesh their arm. Have we not seen enough of human wisdom? Shall we not now seek God in earnestness and simplicity, and serve Him with heart and mind and strength?" "Faithful Stewardship," June 26, 1900 (in *Kress Collection*, 120)
Special meetings began at South Lancaster on Friday, January 11. We were glad to find the church well filled with those who had come to receive benefit from the meetings. There were many persons present whom we had never met before, and their presence testified to the power of God to convert souls, and to turn men's feet into the path of His commandments. Delegates were present from Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and other States. We realized that there was a work to be done in setting things in order, which man's best efforts could not accomplish without the aid of God. Our hearts were drawn out in earnest supplication to God that He would work in our behalf. We had a message of present truth for the people; and if they would place themselves in the channel of light, they would be prepared to do a work for others similar to the work that should be done for them.

On Sabbath afternoon I had freedom in presenting to the people the necessity of obeying the law of God. It is not enough to say that we believe. We must have that genuine faith which works by love, and purifies the soul. God has given us a perfect standard of righteousness in His law. "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 neighbor as thyself." [Mark 12:30, 31] This comprehends the whole duty of man to His God and to his neighbor. We owe to God our life, and all that makes life desirable, and when we refuse to render obedience to Him, we rob and defraud our own souls. No man can choose his own way without deep ingratitude to God; in so doing he renders to God enmity for love.

We felt burdened for those who had been bearing the message of truth to others, lest they should close their hearts to some of the precious rays of heaven's light that God has sent them. Jesus rejoiced when His followers received His messages of truth. At one time He raised His eyes to heaven, and said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." [Matthew 11:25] The precious Saviour, who brought life and immortality to light, rejoiced that the plan of salvation could be understood by those who were humble in spirit, although the proud and self-sufficient could not comprehend its mystery. The world-wise cannot see the beauty of that truth which Christ constantly opens to the understanding of those who have a willing, childlike desire to be loyal to God. To the humble the truth is the power of God unto salvation.

On Sabbath afternoon, many hearts were touched, and many souls were fed on the bread that cometh down from heaven. After the discourse we enjoyed a precious social meeting. The Lord came very near, and convicted souls of their great need of His grace and love. We felt the necessity of presenting Christ as a Saviour who was not afar off, but nigh at hand. When the Spirit of God begins to work upon the hearts of men, the fruit is seen in confession of sin, and restitution for wrongs. All through the meetings, as the people sought to draw nearer to God, they brought forth works meet for repentance by confessing one to another where they had wronged each other by word or act. Wild, clamorous cries and exercises are no evidence that the Spirit of God is at work. The Lord manifested Himself to Elijah in the small still voice. Says Christ, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." [Revelation 3:20] It is the sinner himself who has barred the door. Will he take down the barriers? Will he un-bolt the door? The locks are all on his side of the door, not on the Saviour's side.

There were many, even among the ministers, who saw the truth as it is in Jesus in a light in which they had never before viewed it. They saw the Saviour as a sin-pardoning Saviour, and the truth as the sanctifier of the soul. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." [1 John 1:9] If we would be partakers with Christ of His glory, we must also be willing to share with Him in His humiliation. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." [Hebrews 5:8] This must be the experience of every true child of God. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." [1 Peter 4:1]

We should not murmur if we are called upon to share the suffering part of religion. There are many who do not feel averse to suffering, but they do not exercise simple, living faith. They say they do not know what it means to take God at His word. They have a relation of outward forms and observances. It is painful to see the unbelief that exists in the hearts of many of God's professed followers. We have the most precious truths ever committed to mortals, and the faith of those who have received these truths should correspond to their greatness and value. There are many who seem to feel that they have a great work to do themselves before they can come to Christ for His salvation. They seem to think that Jesus will come in at the very last of their struggle, and give them help by putting the finishing touch to their life-work. It seems difficult for
him to understand that Christ is a complete Saviour, and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. They lose sight of the fact that Christ Himself is "the way, the truth, and the life." When we individually rest upon Christ, with full assurance of faith, trusting alone to the efficacy of His blood to cleanse from all sin, we shall have peace in believing that what God has promised He is able to perform. As Christ represented the Father, so we are to represent Christ to the world. We cannot transfer our obligation to others. God desires to make known to you what is the richness of His glory, that you may preach the mystery of salvation to those around you,—Christ in you the hope of glory.

As our brethren and sisters opened their hearts to the light, they obtained a better knowledge of what constitutes faith. The Lord was very present. The Lord has been ready to strengthen His people. The meetings continued a week beyond their first appointment. The school was dismissed, and all made earnest work of seeking the Lord. Elder Jones came from Boston, and labored most earnestly for the people, speaking twice and sometimes three times a day. The flock of God were fed with soul-nourishing food. The very message the Lord has sentso the people of this time was presented in the discourses. Meetings were in progress from early morning till night, and the results were highly satisfactory.

In the early morning meetings I tried to present the paternal love and care of God for His children. The knowledge of God's love is the most effectual knowledge to obtain, that the character may be ennobled, refined, and elevated. Jesus is to be our pattern. The Lord has given us the greatest importance for us to learn. He leads us as children to take views of His goodness, mercy, and love, from the simple, lowly life of our dear Redeemer. Christ ever directed the minds of His disciples to God as to a loving Father. He educated His followers to look upon God with confidence and love. When we are overawe with the greatness and justice of God, we are pointed to Jesus, to His spotless character and His infinite love. There we see the Father revealed in the Son, for God is love.

Both students and teachers have shared largely in the blessing of God. The deep movings of the Spirit of God have been felt upon almost every heart. The general testimony was borne by those who attended the meeting that they had obtained an experience beyond anything they had known before. They testified their joy that Christ had forgiven their sins. Their hearts were filled with thanksgiving and praise to God. Sweet peace was in their souls. They loved every one, and felt that they could rest in the love of God.

I have never seen a revival work go forward with such thoroughness as this before. They testified that Christ had forgiven their sins. Their hearts were filled with thanksgiving and praise to God. Sweet peace was in their souls. They loved every one, and felt that they could rest in the love of God.
Before His crucifixion, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and prayed for His disciples. He said, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are. ... Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." [John 17:9-11, 17-19]

Christ declared He sanctified Himself that we also might be sanctified. He took upon Himself our nature, and became a faultless pattern for men. He made no mistake, that we also might become victors, and enter into His kingdom as overcomers. He prayed that we might be sanctified through the truth. What is truth? He declared, "Thy word is truth." His disciples were to be sanctified through obedience to the truth. He says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." That prayer was for us; we have believed in the testimony of the disciples of Christ. He prays that His disciples may be one, even as He and the Father are one, and this unity of believers is to be as testimony to the world that He has sent us, and that we bear the evidence of His grace.

We are to be brought into a sacred nearness with the world's Redeemer. We are to be one with Christ, as He is one with the Father. What a wonderful change the people of God experience in coming into unity with the Son of God! We are to have our tastes, inclinations, ambitions, and passions all subdued, and brought into harmony with the mind and spirit of Christ. This is the very work that the Lord is willing to do for those who believe in Him. Our life and deportment are to have a molding power in the world. The spirit of Christ is to have a controlling influence over the life of His followers, so that they will speak and act like Jesus. Christ says, "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." [vs. 22]

The mighty cleaver of truth has taken a people out of the world, and the rough, coarse material is to be hewed and squared and polished for the heavenly building. Those who profess to follow Christ should not be in the same condition in which they were before they made this profession. The grace of Christ is to work a wonderful transformation in the life and character of its receiver; and if we are truly the disciples of Christ, the world will see that divine power has done something for us; for while we are in the world, we shall not be of it. We are to bring our life up to the great moral standard of God. The moral law is to judge us in the last day. How unbecoming it is for us to criticize others, when God must work so great a work upon us before we can be fitted for the kingdom of heaven! Is there any of the glory of Christ in suspicion and evil surmising, in criticism and condemnation of our brethren? We should present before them the perfection of Christ, but we should not accuse and condemn our brethren and friends.

There are many who seem to think that roughness and coarseness are a mark of humility; but this is a mistake. The truth of God elevates the mind, refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and fashions the life according to the divine Pattern. We are to be partakers of the divine nature. We are to be like the great Teacher. He came to this earth, marred and seared by the curse; that He might lift up fallen men, and elevate them so that He could give them a seat upon His throne. Bible religion will have a sanctifying influence upon character, and will prepare its receiver for association with Jesus, the angels of God, and redeemed saints. We must be fitting up so that we shall behold the King in His beauty.

Why should we not have a deeper and deeper experience every day? He must be a dull scholar who does not become more and more assimilated to the divine image, if He is brought into association with Christ from day to day. Why should there not be a growing intelligence in prayer? If a person seeks God in His closet, and pleads for help, telling the Lord his situation, he will not plead in vain. Christ told the Father of the darkness that would press upon His followers, and we may take His words, and present them to God. We are not to preach a sermon to the Lord when we engage in prayer; for God knows our need. We must be petitioners. We must plead for help for our own souls, and for the souls of others. We should lay hold of the throne of grace with that earnestness that says, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

We should not think that the Lord will not regard our petitions. I have heard persons say that they could not get an evidence that the Lord heard their prayers. Where did they look for

The Secret Of Unity

Ellen G. White

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It is from your conduct at your home that we shall be able to judge in a large measure whether or not you are a real Christian.

That we shall be able to judge in a large measure whether or not you are a real Christian. Does the peace of Christ abide in your home? Are you educating yourselves and your children for the heavenly courts? Are you, as a household, knit together in love? If we have unity in the church, we must first have it in the home; for it is from the home that the church is formed, and the tempers and dispositions displayed in the family circle are the tempers and dispositions found in the church. A well-ordered family is a powerful influence for good in the world. If we walk in the light, and train our children in the fear of the Lord, we shall reflect the light of the glory of God which shines in the face of Jesus Christ. You may never know on earth how many have responded to the light that you shed by your godly example and influence, but it will be made plain in the day of reward.

Joseph was sold into Egypt. He was put into prison. The enemy strove to overwhelm him in darkness. It seemed as though every ray of hope was extinguished; but his faith took hold on God, and it was rewarded. God brought him out of his dungeon and made him a light to the world. Our faith is too weak; it does not reach out, and take hold of the promises of God in times of darkness. We need more sympathy and love. There is too much Pharisaism among us. We must cultivate love. We must talk of Jesus and His love, and our hearts will be softened, and subdued under divine influences. There is too much of the spirit that feels, “I am holier than thou.” Many are like the Pharisee that stood praying in the temple, and said, “God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are.” The publican who smote upon his breast, and would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but cried, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” stood higher before God than did the self-righteous Pharisee. We should seek to understand our own need. We must have the righteousness of Christ to cover us. If we have left the snow of Lebanon, and forsaken the living streams, let us return, and drink at the fountain of life.

When we are filled with enmity toward the law of God, we may know that there is something wrong with us; and we should examine our hearts, and prove ourselves whether we are in the faith. We must keep the law of God as the apple of our eye; for His law governs the whole universe. I am thankful that we have a standard with which to compare our character. How shall I know that I am following in the light of Heaven? I may know because God has given us a test for doctrine. Says the prophet, “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20) It is our privilege to know what is truth, and that no error is of the truth.

There are many who set up a standard of their own, and they trample upon the law of Jehovah. What we believe influences our life and molds our character; and every one carries with him an atmosphere that is either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. We are not safe a moment without that living faith that grasps the promises of God.

There will be those who will come in at the eleventh hour, and they will receive an equal reward with those who have long known the truth. And why is this?—It is because they used all their talents to the utmost of their ability, and brought all their powers to bear on the work of advancing the light of the truth. When the true work was brought to their attention, they accepted it with joy, and God could trust them with a large measure of light and power. A great work is to be done in the earth, and while men sleep, Satan sows his tares. We must awake! Jesus is ready to work mightily in our behalf.

We are anxious to hear that you are walking in the light. We want you to testify to the power of the saving grace of Christ. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10) We must rely wholly upon Christ. It will do you no good merely to talk of the righteousness of Christ; you must appropriate it by living faith. You should cultivate faith until faith is the language of your soul. May God help us to walk in the light as He is in the light.

*Review and Herald, July 2, 1889*
Under Divine Rebuke

Taylor G. Bunch

Notwithstanding the fact that the children of Israel greatly increased their membership and improved their organization during their wilderness wandering, they were in a deplorable spiritual condition. This fact is evident from many Scriptures of which the following are samples: Deuteronomy 9:7, 8, 23, 24; Psalm 78:17, 18, 36-41. Their entire journey was marked by disobedience and rebellion. "Yet the only records of their wilderness life are instances of rebellion against the Lord. The revolt of Korah had resulted in the destruction of fourteen thousand of Israel. And there were isolated cases that showed the same spirit of contempt for the divine authority." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 407

The secret of their backslidden spiritual state is found in the statement that they were "children in whom is no faith." In Hebrews 3:17-19 we are told that the failure or lack of faith was the reason for their failure to enter Canaan and was the thing that especially grieved and provoked God. Between the crossing of the Red Sea and the capture of Jericho there was no exhibition of faith that was worthy of mention in the divine record (Hebrews 11:29, 30). The very purpose of the wilderness sojourn was to teach them lessons of faith and obedience, but they were slow to learn.

During the wilderness wandering, Israel was not only under the divine rebuke but they were a partially rejected people (Numbers 32:13, Deuteronomy 2:14, 15).

"For nearly forty years the children of Israel were lost to view in the obscurity of the desert. . . . During these years the people were constantly reminded that they were under the divine rebuke. In the rebellion of Kadesh they had rejected God; and God had, for the time rejected them. Since they had proved unfaithful to His covenant they were not to receive the sign of the covenant, the rite of circumcision. Their desire to return to the land of slavery had shown them to be unworthy of freedom, and the ordinance of the Passover, instituted to commemorate the deliverance from bondage, was not to be observed." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 406

The divine rebuke or partial rejection continued till the crossing of the Jordan into the promised land (John 5:7-10). On that day the " reproach of Egypt" was rolled away, the divine rebuke removed, the period of rejection ended, and the covenant of grace renewed. Here Joshua "circumcised the children of Israel," and "the children of Israel encamped at Gilgal, and kept the Passover." Since the rebellion at Kadesh the Lord had forbidden the Israelites the privilege of celebrating these two ordinances because their rebellion had made them void of meaning. Their desire to return to Egypt and the fact that in their hearts they did return to Egypt made the Passover of no effect. The Passover also pointed forward to Calvary and that event also was lost sight of. Circumcision was a symbol of the cutting off of sins from the heart and was therefore a sign of righteousness by faith. (Romans 2:28, 29; 4:11) Without this inward experience circumcision was a farce. Jeremiah 4:4, 9:26; Ezekiel 44:7

The rejection of divine leadership through the prophet of the Exodus movement together with the abundance of evidence that the Israelites were not separated from their sins, knew nothing of righteousness by faith as an experience, and were still lusting after the things of Egypt and were not therefore delivered from their former bondage, made the rite of circumcision and the ordinance of the Passover meaningless.

"The suspension of the rite of circumcision since the rebellion at Kadesh had been a constant witness to Israel that their covenant with God, of which it was the appointed symbol, had been broken. And the discontinuance of the Passover, the memorial of their deliverance from Egypt, had been an evidence of the Lord's displeasure at their desire to return to the land of bondage. Now, however, the years of rejection were ended. Once more God acknowledged Israel as His people, and the sign of the covenant was restored." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 485

There are many texts that indicated that Moses constantly reminded the Israelites of their sins during their period of partial rejection and he especially did not permit them to forget their rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea. "Moses faithfully set before them their errors, and the transgressions of their fathers. They had often felt impatient and rebellious because of their long wandering in the wilderness; but the Lord had not been chargeable with this delay in possessing Canaan; He was more grieved than they because He could not bring them into immediate possession of the promised land, and thus display before all nations His mighty power in the deliverance of His people. . . . Had their fathers yielded in faith to the direction of God, being governed by His judgments, and walking in His ordinances, they would long before have been settled in Canaan, a prosperous, holy, happy people. Their delay to enter the goodly land dishonored God, and detracted from His glory in the sight of surrounding nations." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 464

"It was the design of God that Moses should frequently remind Israel of their transgressions and rebellion, that they might humble their hearts before God in view of their sins. The Lord would not have them forget the errors and sins which had provoked His anger against them. The rehearsal of their transgressions, and of the mercies and goodness of God to them, which they had not appreciated, was not agreeable to their feelings. Nevertheless, God directed that this should be done." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 320

We are told that Korah flattered
"The facts concerning the real condition of the professed people of God speak more loudly than their profession"

the people and criticized Moses for being too pessimistic. He declared that the people should not be constantly reminded of their sins because they were really a good people and that their leader should talk courage and cheer them along. This was the reason for the large following of Korah and his fellow-rebels. (See Patriarchs and Prophets, 349)

This is exactly what happened when Israel was turned back into the wilderness from Kadesh, the gateway into the promised land.

"Heathen nations had reproached the Lord and His people because the Hebrews had failed to take possession of Canaan, as they expected soon after leaving Egypt. Their enemies had triumphed because Israel had wandered so long in the wilderness, and they had mockingly declared that the God of the Hebrews was not able to bring them into the promised land." Patriarchs and Prophets, 486

"Their delay to enter the goodly land dishonored God, and detracted from His glory in the sight of surrounding nations." ibid., 464

It was at this time that the heathen said: "Where is their God?"

Not withstanding the fact that the Advent movement has steadily increased its membership, improved its organization, extended its influence, and has prospered in material things along all lines, God's remnant people are in a sad spiritual state. They have lost their first love and are lukewarm and are spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. (Revelation 2:1-5, 3:14-22) We are said to be under the divine forbearance.

"I saw that at present we are under divine forbearance; but no one can say how long this will continue. No one knows how great the mercy that has been exercised toward us. But few are heartily devoted to God. There are only a few who, like the stars in a tempestuous night, shine here and there among the clouds.

Many who complacently listen to the truths from God's word are dead spiritually, while they profess to live. For years they have come and gone in our congregations, but they seem only less and less sensible of the value of revealed truth. They do not hunger and thirst after righteousness. They have no relish for spiritual or divine things. They assent to the truth, but are not sanctified through it. Neither the word of God nor the testimonies of His Spirit make any lasting impression upon them. . . . The entreaties of the Spirit of God, like divine melody, the promises of His word so rich and abundant, its threatenings against idolatry and disobedience,--all are powerless to melt the world-hardened heart." Testimonies, vol. 5, 76

"As many as I love Irebuke and chasten," indicates that the Laodicean church is under the divine rebuke because of her spiritual state. The Laodicean message is a divine rebuke. It is evidence of a partial rejection or separation. The union between Christ and the church is not complete as is evident from the fact that He is outside the door knocking and pleading to be invited in. He is not in the innermost sanctuary of the hearts of His people and He does not have full possession of His church-temple.

"Since the time of the Minneapolis meeting I have seen the state of the Laodicean church as never before. I have heard the rebuke of God spoken to those who feel so well satisfied, who know not their spiritual destitution. . . . Like the Jews, many have closed their eyes lest they should see; but there is as great peril now, in closing the eyes to light, and in walking apart from Christ, feeling need of nothing, as there was when He was upon earth." Review and Herald, August 26, 1890

The Laodicean message is here called "the rebuke of God: and Laodiceans are said to be "walking apart from Christ."

"The rebuke of God is upon us because of our neglect of solemn responsibilities. His blessings have been withdrawn because the testimonies He has given have not been heeded by those who profess to believe them. Oh, for a religious awakening! The angels of God are going from church to church doing their duty; and Christ is knocking at the door of your hearts for entrance. But the means that God has devised to awaken the church to a sense of their spiritual destitution, have not been regarded. The voice of the True Witness has been heard in reproof, but has not been obeyed. Men have chosen to follow their own way, instead of God's way, because self was not crucified in them. Thus the light has had but little effect upon their minds and hearts. . . . If you wait for light to come in a way that will please everyone, you will wait in vain. If you wait for louder calls or better opportunities, the light will be withdrawn, and you will be left in darkness." Testimonies, vol. 5, 719, 720

The cause of the present spiritual weakness of God's remnant people is declared to be their Laodicean condition which makes the church "a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed. For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking. Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself." Testimonies, vol. 8, 240

That the situation is not hopeless is indicated by the promise of a revival: "When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing." ibid.

Just as Israel of old wandered aimlessly about in the wilderness during the time of their partial rejection while they were under the divine rebuke, so modern Israel are said to be "drifting" as though they were "without chart or compass."

"The solemn question should come home to every member of our churches, Have we been standing before God, as the professed followers of Jesus Christ? . . . Spiritual death has come upon the people that should be manifesting life and zeal, purity and consecration, by the most earnest devotion to the cause of truth. The facts concerning the real condition of the professed people of God speak more loudly than their profession, and make it evident that some power has cut the cable that anchored them to the Eternal Rock, and that they are drifting away to sea, without chart or compass." Review and Herald, July 24, 1888.
The Night I Went To Prison

Vince Christensen

Five cars arrived between 6:45 and 7:00 P.M. and parked side by side in front of the high cyclone fence laced with spirals of razor wire. The tower guard, holding his rifle, emerged from his glass enclosure and called down, “Good evening; the sergeant will meet you at the gate in just a moment. Please go ahead and sign in.”

We gathered up our boxes of supplies and hurried through the cool night air to the small guard station at the entrance of the gate. We all signed our names on the clipboard, and soon the sergeant arrived and collected our identification cards.

The guard then pulled out his ring of keys and unlocked the first gate which opened into a small courtyard. As the last guest entered the enclosure the gate locked securely behind. At the far end stood another gate.

The prisoners began filing past in the direction of the meeting hall as the second gate swung open into the prison yard. Contrary to my expectations, everyone seemed friendly.

Inmates dressed in white prison-issue clothes greeted us at the door with smiles and vigorous handshakes. eager to begin the two hours of Bible study and fellowship.

After assisting in the distribution of books and study guides, I seated myself as inconspicuously as possible among the prisoners. Glancing about, I studied the faces of my new friends, wondering if there might be a uniformity in the way they looked. (Folklore maintains that criminals are destined to look a certain way.) The only visible sameness appeared in the way they smiled—genuine, sustained, expressive.

The prison ministry coordinator quietly walked about placing slips of paper with instruction for various parts of the program into the hands of the inmates and the visitors. The instructions indicated opening prayer, Scripture reading, pledge, and so on. Following the opening prayer, the young man selected for the Scripture reading came forward, and together (as is the custom for each weekly meeting) the group repeated the ten commandments in unison. After a group sing and special music, the Bible studies began. One rule governs the study time to avoid side tangents and speculation: The Bible says. No one is allowed to say anything unless he or she can show it from Scripture. This guideline provides for an intense and rewarding search of the Bible for both inmates and instructors.

The allotted time quickly passed. Just before the closing prayer, at the prodding of fellow inmates, a young man came forward to sing a gospel song. Never will I forget the radiance in his face as he raised his eyes to heaven and from the fulness of his soul sang a song of love to God.

After the closing prayer we lingered for a moment in the glow of the Holy Spirit’s presence—hugging, shaking hands, and wishing one another well.

We again gathered up our boxes of supplies and, reminded of the hour by the guards, left the meeting hall to pass through the chain link gates laced with razor wire. For a time we had forgotten where we were, but now the clink of locks and keys brought it rudely back to mind. Once outside, I raised my eyes toward the stars and thanked God for the freedom that we (inmates and guests) have in Him.

United Prison Ministry has been richly blessed. The only factor that keeps it from expanding farther than the 27 States now being directly worked is a lack of funds. If you would like to help financially, or see this program brought into your local prison system so that you personally could get involved, contact

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United Prison Ministry offers lectures and workshops on witnessing and prison-ministry programs.
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