The Measurement of Forces

The Sifting, the Shaking, and the Straight Testimony

Preach the Word

Message to Laodicea

Importance of Trust in God

The Real Battle, see page 10
Editorial

Only a few months ago the earthquake in Mexico City killed thousands and left tens of thousands homeless. This calamity was followed shortly by the eruption of a volcano in Columbia, South America, and more than 20,000 are still entombed under the mud. With 1500 killed in air crashes, 1985 became the worst year for aviation disasters.

To begin 1986 we were introduced to a severe reduction in crude oil prices which has affected the prices of gas at the pump. We are now happily filling our tanks with fuel well under a dollar a gallon. But this reduction in price has severely jeopardized the international banking system, for now many oil-producing nations will be unable to repay billions of dollars if the price stays where it is.

The attack on Libya by United States aircraft ran shivers down the backs of the nations of the world, for they realized that we stand at the threshold of a nuclear holocaust. The atomic melt-down near Kiev, Russia, recently has set in action a tidal wave of fear which has sent its shockwaves reeling around the earth.

In all of these events God is trying to awaken the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the great responsibility of taking the three angels' messages to the world by the experience of righteousness by faith. "The Lord hath opened His armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of His indignation: for this is the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans." (Jeremiah 50:23) We all know that the great controversy has nearly reached its conclusion. The evidence is overwhelming that the final hour of judgment is here. Only a moment of time yet remains. (See Testimonies, vol. 9, 96, 97; Testimonies, vol. 6, 14; Testimonies, vol. 5, 234; Testimonies, vol. 8, 50, 51; The Great Controversy, 589, 590, 629) The judgments of God are in the land--terrorism, earthquakes, famines and diseases, wars, and rumors of wars.

These are now the beginning of sorrows and God's sudden change in dealing with a rebellious world and a rebellious church. "There will soon be a sudden change in God's dealings. The world in its perversity is being visited by casualties,—by floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, famines, wars, and bloodshed. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power; yet He will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." O that men might understand the patience and longsuffering of God! He is putting under restraint His own attributes. His omnipotent power is under the control of Omnipotence. O that men would understand that God refuses to be wearied out with the world's perversity, and still holds out the hope of forgiveness even to the most undeserving! But His forbearance will not always continue. Who is prepared for the sudden change that will take place in God's dealing with sinful men? Who will be prepared to escape the punishment that will certainly fall upon transgressors?"

Fundamentals of Christian Education, 356, 357

Soon, very soon, total destruction will come to those in rebellion. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10, See Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 982, 983; The Desire of Ages, 780; Review and Herald, October 19, 1897

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man shall be revealed. The Lord is removing His restrictions from the earth, and soon there will be death and destruction, increasing crime, and cruel, evil-working against the rich who have exalted themselves against the poor. Those who are without God's protection will find no safety in any place or position. Human agents are being trained and are using their inventive power to put in operation the most powerful machinery to wound and to kill." (Testimonies, vol. 8, 50) The little time of trouble, the great day of trouble, and the last plagues are near and "hasteneth greatly."

Probation's hour is fast closing and it will close unexpectedly, suddenly, as an overwhelming surprise to the church and the world. (See Desire of Ages, 635, 636; Testimonies, vol. 8, 37, 287; Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 989; The Great Controversy, 338, 339) And, brothers and sisters, when the crisis strikes, you will be either wise or foolish, just or unjust. The sealing angel will soon begin his solemn work. (See Maranatha, 297) God help us to make ready today. There will soon come no tomorrow.

—Ron Spear, Editor
**ARTICLES**

- The Measurement of Forces  
  Ralph Larson  4

- Words of Assurance  
  Ellen G. White  6
  *Real encouragement, not just pleasant thoughts*

- The Sifting, the Shaking, and the Straight Testimony  
  Fernando Chaij  8
  *The future is now*

- The Real Battle  
  Dave Fiedler  10
  Armageddon—the battle of that great day

- Preach the Word  
  Ellen G. White  13
  The answer to “But what should I say?”

- Message to Laodicea  
  Ron Spear  16
  A message for “as many as I love”

- Importance of Trust in God  
  Ellen G. White  18
  *The first essential in daily life*

- Our Greatest Need  
  Ellen G. White  20
  The Comforter, and a great deal more

- The Home, Education, and Mental Health  
  Colin Standish  22
  To raise a child for Christ is not a minor undertaking

- Persecution by the Saints  
  Patrick Hogan  28
  When, and why, troubles arise

**DEPARTMENTS**

- Editorial  2  Melange  29
- Books and Tapes  24  Food for Thought  30
- Looking Back  25  Bulletin Board  31

**Invitation To Writers**

We are accepting manuscripts for possible publication in future editions of *Our Firm Foundation*. Acceptance or rejection will be communicated only if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is provided. Address all editorial correspondence to Managing Editor, *Our Firm Foundation*, P.O. Box 940, Eatonville, WA 98328.
The Measurement of Forces

"Faith that worketh by love." Galatians 5:6

It is surprising how many measuring devices can be found in and around an ordinary home. In our kitchen I found measuring spoons, measuring cups of many different sizes, pint-, quart-, and gallon-size containers, a cold indicator for the freezer, a heat indicator for making yogurt, and a heat indicator on the oven.

A thermometer hung on the bedroom wall and another of a different type was in the medicine closet. In the sewing box I found a three-foot flexible tape measure, and in a desk drawer three different kinds of rulers. On a closet shelf was a camera with a light meter, on a pantry shelf a food scale, and on the bathroom floor a scale of a different type.

In the garage I found steel measuring tapes (12 foot and 50 foot), a try square and a framing square, a volt-meter for testing the electrical currents in housewiring, a hydrometer for testing automobile batteries, a tire pressure gauge, and feeler gauges for measuring the gap in spark plugs. In the car itself were a variety of gauges with needles and/or lights, and on the water tank there was a gauge for measuring water pressure. These are probably not unlike the measuring devices to be found in any home.

May I suggest an experiment? Gather all the measuring devices you can find in your home, put them together on a table and study them for a few moments. You will quickly observe that they are of two kinds. Some are used for measuring objects, and some for measuring forces. You could separate them into two groups:

To measure objects—
Spoons, cups, tapes, rulers, squares, feeler gauges.

To measure forces—
Thermometers (to measure heat), light meters (to measure light), volt meters (to measure electricity), pressure gauges (to measure air pressure, vacuum, or water pressure), scales (to measure gravity's effect on an object).

Scales are perhaps a bit tricky. We think of using them to measure an object's weight. But is weight an intrinsic quality of an object, or is it the effect of gravity on that object? A challenging question. You may settle the matter by noting that without gravity an object would have no weight, but would float off into space. So, after reflection, you will probably put the scales in the force measuring group.

Now you have your measuring devices separated into two categories, and you are ready for the next question. How are they used? How do they do their work? Again, we see a difference. Those devices that measure objects do so by establishing the physical dimensions of that object—its length, breadth, and depth. But those devices which measure forces must use a different method. Forces do not have length, breadth, or depth. We do not ask, How long is this light? Or, How wide is this heat?

These would be considered nonsensical questions. So—how can we measure such forces as heat, light, and electricity?

Somebody, somewhere, had a great idea. Let the force do some work. Then use that work as a measurement of the force. Let the force move a carefully calibrated needle across the face of a gauge, or elevate mercury in a column, or thrust a shaft out of a tube, or light test bulbs of different sizes. And this work will tell us what we need to know about the force.

This technique has proved to be a quite satisfactory method of measuring such forces as heat, light and electricity, because these forces are remarkably consistent in their behavior. They act the same way every day.

An object that is caused by the force of gravity to "weight" ten pounds at sea level will give that same reading any time, anywhere (at sea level) on a properly adjusted scale.

A fifty-thousand pound tractor trailer combination speeding down the highway must be stopped, if necessary, by a relatively tiny amount of compressed air in a small tank beneath the tractor's frame. (It may be as little as 60 pounds of air pressure.) Yet the driver is unconcerned because on the dashboard before him is a gauge with a small needle that accurately measures the force of the air pressure by the work that it does, that is, pressing against the carefully calibrated needle. Thus the driver always knows how much braking power is at his disposal. It is the same every day.

Let us remind ourselves that the driver cannot estimate the force in the braking system by even the most careful examination of the air tank, the air lines, or the air "pots" that are located near the wheels. Neither can he learn anything about the system's braking power by careful measurement of these components. The force must be measured by its work. There is no other way.

Ralph Larson
With these facts in mind, we are ready to consider some forces of a different kind that also need to be measured, such as intelligence, love, and faith. These forces are like heat, light, and electricity in that they have no physical dimensions of length, width, and depth, so that they must be measured by their work. They are unlike these forces in that they are less specific in their effects, yet measuring them by their work can be effective, for "A man will act out all the faith he has." (Selected Messages, Book 1, 93) With these forces, however, gauges and meters are not effective.

It would be convenient if there were an "intelligence-meter" that would make lengthy IQ tests unnecessary. Most people would be glad to have a "love-meter" by which they could quickly and accurately measure the feelings of persons in whom they have a special interest. Mission boards would have a "faith-meter" to use on candidates for mission service. But no such things exist. These spiritual forces, like the other forces, can be measured by their works, but observations must be wider and over a longer period of time. Faith and love do not move needles, elevate columns of mercury, or turn on lights. But these produce works, and it is only by these works that we can measure them and know their quality.

When we hear someone attempt to summarize the New Testament teaching about faith and works by saying, "You can't be saved by works, but you can't be saved without works," we should not find this assertion difficult to understand. To try to be saved by works would be putting the measurement in the place of the force (faith). This, as we have seen, is impossible. To try to be saved "without works" would be equally impossible, inasmuch as faith that produces no works is not a genuine saving faith. It is a spurious counterfeit, a non-faith, a dead faith. (James 2:17) It is presumption. This is the verdict of the measurement.

The verdict of the measurement must be accepted. No light means no electrical force is present. No movement of the needle on a brake system gauge means no force of air pressure is present. Do not try to drive the truck. No works means no genuine saving faith is present. Do not try to reach the kingdom of God in this pitiful condition. Let the Spirit of the Living Christ breathe into your soul a living, dynamic faith, and the works will appear as surely as night follows day, works that will truly measure and verify your faith.

The mighty works of Jesus provide us with a measurement of His faith. It was by faith that He lived a pure and holy life, worked amazing miracles, overpowered the elements of nature, and raised the dead. It was by faith that He endured the contradiction of sinners, surrendered Himself to the power of wicked men, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It was in faith that He uttered the triumphant shout, "It is finished," and yielded His spirit to His heavenly Father. His was a faith that worked by love—unmistakably recognizable, easily measured. Even so must our own faith be measured.

Which leads to our last question: Who needs a measurement of faith? Actually, everybody does.

God does not need a measurement of faith for His own information. He can read the human heart, but the inhabitants of other worlds cannot. So God needs a measurement of faith for justification purposes, to show the watching worlds why it is safe for Him to save us.

We as individuals need something other than feeling for a measurement of our own faith

The world needs a measurement of faith in order to distinguish between the believer and the nonbeliever, and in order to distinguish between pretended faith and the real thing. The church needs a measurement of faith in order to make wise assignments of responsibility to church workers. To send a person of weak faith to a mission field, or even on a difficult home base assignment, can be a very costly mistake. Sometimes there is nothing that can be done except to replace such persons, which uses up money.

And we as individuals need something else than feeling for a measurement of our own faith. Without it, we might find ourselves disagreeing with God. It is not inconceivable that God might say to us, "Your faith has been growing weaker for some time now."

And we might answer, "On the contrary, Lord, I feel very good about my faith."

And when God says, "Where is the evidence? What is your faith doing?" a clearer self-realization will come to us.

So—everybody needs a measurement of faith, and this measurement is what we call works.

Works of faith can measure faith, but works are not faith and cannot play the role of faith

Is this legalism? Not at all. A work of faith cannot be called legalistic. That would be a contradiction of terms. Legalism is a work not of faith in which no love is present.

For example: You are driving to work some morning, and you find a newly erected stop sign at an intersection near your home. You stop. But you are not happy about it. You are thinking, "What stupid officials we have in this city! There was no need for a stop sign on that corner! This is ridiculous, but if I don't stop I might get a ticket, so I will do it."

You have performed a work, but this is not a work of faith. It is a work of the law—legalism. No love is involved. You had no desire to please the officials or honor their wishes. Yet with man's laws this is enough. Man's laws ask for nothing more than the outward works, the motions of the law.

God's law is different. Suppose that you are going to be baptized, but again you are not happy about it. As you enter the water you are thinking, "What a stupid, old-fashioned ceremony! They should have gotten rid of this years ago. It's going to get me all wet and take all of the curl out of my hair. It's ridiculous, but if I don't do it I might be lost, so I will do it."

Again, you have performed a work, but it is a work not of faith. No love is involved. It is a work of law, a motion of law-keeping, legalism. Man accepts this kind of obedience, but God does not. God insists that our works must be of faith that works by love. He will not accept empty motions of law-keeping. Only the fruits of faith that works by love can be a measurement of that spiritual force.

Continued on 30
“Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet,” began to prophesy “in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius”—only a few days after the Lord had assured the Israelites through Haggai that the glory of the house they were building would be greater than the glory of the former temple built by Solomon. Zechariah’s first message was an assurance that God’s word never fails, and a promise of blessing to those who hearken unto the sure word of prophecy.

“The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers,” the God of Israel declared unto Zechariah; “therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Turn ye unto Me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto Me, saith the Lord. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? But My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, did they take hold of your fathers? And they returned and said, Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath He dealt with us.” [Zechariah 1:2-6]

The Israelites had resumed the work of the Lord in faith. The difficulties under which they began to labor were of a most discouraging nature. Adversity had attended their efforts to attain temporal prosperity. Their fields were lying waste; their scant store of provisions was rapidly failing. Yet in the face of famine, and surrounded by unfriendly peoples, they moved forward in response to the call of God’s messengers, and began anew to restore the ruined temple. Such a work required great faith, and the Lord gave them special assurances through Haggai and Zechariah that their faith would be richly rewarded, and that His word would not fail. The builders were not left to struggle on alone; “with them were the prophets of God helping them;” [Ezra 5:2] and the Lord of hosts Himself had declared, “Be strong, . . . and work: for I am with you.”

The Lord, in mercy, warned His people against the danger of falling back into their old ways of negligence and selfish indifference. He revealed to them the necessity of worshiping Him in the beauty of holiness. In former years some whose hearts were polluted with sin had sought to please Him with the splendor of many rites and ceremonies in the beautiful temple built by Solomon; but their worship was not pleasing to the God of whom it is written: “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” [Habakkuk 1:13]

In the dark days of apostasy before the captivity, God had declared to His impenitent people: “I hate, I despise your feast days. . . . Though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.” [Amos 5:21, 22] “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.” [Hosea 6:6]

The Israelites who were so diligently engaged in rebuilding the Lord’s house, needed to realize constantly that “the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest?” [Acts 7:48, 49] “Thus saith the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” [Isaiah 57:15]
In order that the builders of the second temple might make no mistakes, the Lord plainly instructed them, in the form of a parable, regarding the nature of service acceptable in His sight. About a month after Zechariah began to prophesy, and just three months after the people had resumed work on the temple, "in the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

"Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean." [Haggai 2:10-13]

A soul corrupted by sin is represented by the figure of a dead body in a state of putrefaction. All the washings and sprinklings enjoined in the ceremonial law were lessons in parables, teaching the necessity of a work of regeneration in the inward heart for the purification of the soul dead in trespasses and sins, and also the necessity of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

"Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before Me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean." [2:14]

A mere participation in religious services and ordinances does not make a sinner a Christian. A wicked man does not become righteous merely by associating with those who fear God. A man is made holy, and acceptable with God, only when his unclean heart is made clean by the grace of Christ, through faith, and by obedience to words of truth and righteousness. A work of reformation and restoration must take place in every heart. Those who have had great light and many privileges may perform some good works notwithstanding their refusal to be saved in God's appointed way. But their good works do not cleanse the soul from corruption. Only those who accept the light of God's truth, choosing to obey Him, will be cleansed from the defilement of sin.

Having admired the builders not to fall into the same error that had brought their forefathers into trial and captivity, and had resulted in the destruction of the first temple, Haggai continued:—"And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord: since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vesseIs out of the press, there were but two: and with blastings and with mildew and with hail in all the labors of your hands: yet ye turned not to Me, saith the Lord. Consider now from this day upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation to the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? Yea, as yet the vine, and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive-tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you." [2:15-19]

Wonderful assurance of divine favor! Never, never, by their own efforts, could the Israelites have become pure and holy. But when, sinful and polluted as they were, the sport of their enemies, and suffering because of a terrible drought, they turned to the Lord in humility of heart, confessed their sins, and chose to obey the testimonies of His messengers, God recognized their effort to carry out His instruction, and He accepted them as His obedient children. He accepted them not because of their zeal and good works, but because of their faith in the power of the coming Saviour to cleanse from sin.

The divine Worker spends little time on worthless material

On the day when rich blessings were promised the Israelites because of their faith and their willing obedience, a message was given to Zerubbabel, their leader. "The word of the Lord came unto Haggai, . . . saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord, will I take thee, 0 Zerubbabel, My servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts." [2:20-23]

This personal testimony to Zerubbabel has been left on record for our special encouragement in time of trial. Zerubbabel had been sorely tried through all the years since he had led the Israelites forth from Babylon. God had a purpose in sending trial to His children. He never leads them otherwise than they would choose to be led if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling. He subjects them to discipline to humble them,—to lead them, through trial and affliction, to see their weakness and to draw near unto Him. As they cry to Him for help, He responds, saying, "Here am I." Christians are Christ's jewels. They are to shine brightly for Him, shedding forth the light of His loveliness. Their luster depends on the polishing they receive. They may choose to be polished or to remain unpolished. But every one who is pronounced worthy of a place in the Lord's temple must submit to the polishing process. Without the polishing that the Lord gives they can reflect no more light than a common pebble.

Christ says to man, You are Mine. I have bought you. You are now only a rough stone, but if you will place yourself in My hands, I will polish you, and the luster with which you shall shine will bring honor to My name. No man shall pluck you out of My hand. I will make you My peculiar treasure. On My coronation day, you will be a jewel in My crown of rejoicing.

The divine Worker spends little time on worthless material. Only the precious jewels does He polish after the similitude of a palace, cutting away all the rough edges. This process is severe and trying; it hurts human pride. Christ cuts deep into the experience that man in his self-sufficiency has regarded as complete, and takes away self-uplifting from the character. He cuts away the surplus surface, and putting the stone to the polishing wheel, presses it close, that all roughness may be worn away. Then, holding the jewel up to the light, the Master sees in it a reflection of Himself, and He pronounces it worthy of a place in His casket.

"In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, . . . and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts." [2:23] Blessed be the experience, however severe, that gives new value to the stone, and causes it to shine with living brightness.

Review and Herald, December 19, 1907
The Sifting, The Shaking, and the Straight Testimony

Fernando Chaij

"One day, when the disciples were sailing on the Sea of Galilee, "there arose a great tempest . . . . insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves." Jesus was asleep. Those men were experienced fishermen, accustomed to sudden dangers and they began fighting the elements with all their strength and expertise. But to no avail. When they had lost all hope of surviving the tempest, all of a sudden they recalled that Jesus was on board. When they awoke Him and told Him, "Lord, save us: we perish," He calmly answered, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." Matthew 8:24-26

That unique experience strengthened the faith of the disciples more than anything else that had happened before.

Every child of God, individually, and the church, corporately, undergo at times a special trial of faith when everything appears to be unstable and moving, and when we wonder whether the Lord is still with us or has abandoned us drifting amid the tremendous waves of a rough sea.

But in this way God fortifies our trust in Him when something unique and unusual occurs in our personal life or in the experience of our church, and we do not understand the reasons or the ultimate implications.

There are two very denominational expressions used by the Bible and by the pen of inspiration that have a special significance for us at this time of the end: "the shaking" or "the sifting" on one hand, and "the straight testimony," on the other.

They are used by Ellen White in her writings, and one of them, "the straight testimony," is included in the aim of this magazine, at the top of page three in the masthead.

Let us take first the shaking. According to the dictionary the verb "to shake" means to move something to and fro, to cause to vibrate, to tremble as a result of physical or emotional disturbance.

The servant of the Lord applies it to a particular experience of shock that will initiate in the church a process of selection and apostasy, as well as a strengthening of the faith.

She employs another similar word to refer to the same experience that we also find in the Bible, namely, the "sifting." This word she employs in its figurative meaning when she explains the act of threshing. The grain is shaken or sifted in a sieve, so that broken kernels, husks and foreign particles fall through the mesh and the chaff is blown away.

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

The prophet Amos speaks symbolically of a sifting or shaking of God's people, "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least [whole] grain fall upon the earth," Amos 9:9.

Also, in an hour that was very critical to His disciple, Jesus told Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:31, 32.

As we said before, every Christian and the people of God, as such, will undergo a special trial of faith. This test is called "shaking" or "sifting." It has happened in times past, but it will be repeated in a very specific sense on the final stage of history.

There are several different causes for the falling away of many members of the church, namely: 1. religious carelessness and indifference, 2. persecution consequent to the enforcement of the Sunday law, 3. voluntary superficiality of knowledge of divine truth. But the main cause will be the disregard or refusal to accept, on the part of some, the message of Christ to the Laodicean church, a message of repentance and reform.

"Because thou art lukewarm," says Jesus, "neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." Revelation 3:16

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen," she writes, referring to what had been presented in vision, "and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called for by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans.

"This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead
him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.” And sadly she adds this comment to her explanation, “I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified.” Early Writings, 270

Let’s analyze these inspired words. The vision regarding the straight testimony called for by the message of Christ to Laodicea aroused the keen interest of the human instrument being used by God to emphasize it to the church. And she was told that the message of the True Witness would require the communication of a straight testimony.

What is the message to Laodicea? A message that tells us that we are lukewarm and indifferent regarding the two most important problems of our life, our Christian experience and our outreach activity to share the good news. Also it tells us that we are terribly deceived with respect to our relationship with Christ and to our spiritual condition; that we are happy about our preparation for heaven, believing that we need nothing, when in reality we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

But Christ does not leave us in this desperate condition. There is hope. He offers us three infallible remedies to be totally healed: the gold of faith and love—the fruits of the spirit; the white raiment of the righteousness of Christ—the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the character of Christ; and the ointment of the Spirit and the Word of God to recognize sin under any disguise. These three remedies, we are assured, will heal us from our poverty, nakedness, and blindness.

Now, the expression “straight testimony” called for by the counsel of the True Witness—Jesus—implies that the message to Laodicea needs to be stressed and taken home by us. How do we go about giving the straight testimony? Simply by word and action. By a changed life, on the one hand (repentance and reformation), and on the other hand by a spoken or written testimony, trying to convince others of our real need, and to plead with them to receive the message.

How do we go about giving the straight testimony? Simply by word and action

The straight testimony will be given by many in the church, since Ellen White saw that “this will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth” by mouth and by example.

We wish that the inspired comment would stop right there, but unfortunately while many will be among the “receivers,” some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.” In other words, some will not receive either the counsel of the True Witness or the straight testimony of the receiver.

They will call it extremism, fanaticism, legalism. They will be trusting in a cheap grace, and in a kind of faith that does not work by love and change lives. In their self-righteousness the words “repentance and reformation” will have a bad connotation for them. They will insist that any effort of the will to surrender the life to Christ, to renounce self and to overcome their worldliness, their lukewarmness and their idols through faith by the grace of God, is lack of faith in the work of the cross.

Unfortunately, because these people would not receive the straight testimony, “they will rise up against” the message, “and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.” Some of them will turn out to be the worst enemies of the church of God.

Are we not seeing some of this happening in our day, before our own eyes? Are we not witnessing increasing groups of our own brothers and sisters siding with a “new theology” and refusing the rebuke and the kind call of Jesus who says, “Be zealous therefore, and repent”? Revelation 3:20, 21

But let this not be a cause of discouragement. It was predicted by the inspired pen years ago. The separation within the church is happening, and will continue. Let this fulfillment stimulate us to be bold for the Lord. Let this separation help us to seek a closer experience with Christ, who is our only righteousness, and the only source of strength and spiritual power.

God help us humiliate our souls before the Lord, look for repentance and reformation, and be among those who—recognizing their absolute dependency on Jesus—throw their impotence on the omnipotent hand of the Author and Consummator of the faith who said, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:8) Let us march on confidently with the loyal through the perils of the last days toward eternal victory.

Truth Can Never Die

Truth may be worsted in the fight, And then in scorn passed by, Trampled in rage upon the sod; ’Neath tyrant’s foot and tyrant’s nod; But still it holds the life of God, And truth can never die.

Ten thousand foes may plan its doom Beside the open grave, Determined that its hallowed light Must evermore be hid from sight, Within the deepest, darkest night, Where not a hand can save.

But all in vain men whet their swords, And raise their battle song; Behold, it rises from the dust, The shackles that would bind it rust While all the cords of bondage burst, For truth must conquer wrong.

Still vested with the life divine, Its fountain fixed on high, It faces time and scorn and hate, Careless of high or low estate, Needless of all that wills its fate; For truth can never die.

Robert Hare

June, 1986 Our Firm Foundation
The Real Battle

Biblical terminology has been making considerable incursions into the realm of politics recently. Though not all will feel concern over the pronouncements and activities of the newly mobilized right wing, there is at least one catchphrase that is getting everyone's attention: Armageddon. "Thinking the Unthinkable," they call it. The term has multiple advantages. Not only does it carry the "religious" connotations worth so much these days in some circles, but it also evokes images of conflict so severe as to affect the lives of every earthly inhabitant. There is, after all, nothing so effective as plain, old-fashioned self-interest when it comes to drawing attention.

As always, the wrath of man shall praise the Lord. Through this channel the great Heavenly Opportunist will find ways and means to touch hearts otherwise inaccessible to His message. But still, even the truly converted, those living above the level of selfish concern, can find reason to inquire into the fate of the world and the meaning of dreaded Armageddon.

What has the Lord revealed? What do we really know about Revelation 16:12-16?

Those familiar with Adventist prophetic interpretation will remember that for more than a century there have been two major views as to the meaning of this passage. While they differ in regard to the degree of symbolism attributed to the terms "Euphrates," "kings of the east," and "Armageddon," the two views do hold much in common. (See Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 842, 843) Without faulting those who favor the limited-symbolism view of Uriah Smith, this writer finds more merit in the positions taken by James White, including his admonition that "where the history is not written, the student should put forth his propositions with not too much positiveness."

In brief, the "first view" (held by Elder Smith) sees the battle of Armageddon beginning essentially as a political conflict and coming to a climax when Christ and the armies of heaven make their appearance. The "second view" (held by Elder White) sees the battle beginning when the united religious and political powers of earth attack God's remnant people. The conclusion, of course, is the routing of the evil forces when the "kings of the east" (Christ and His accompanying hosts) arrive amidst the terrors of the seventh plague.

Perhaps the most obvious reason for favoring the second view is the difficulty of placing the international Sunday law in the scenario. How would all the nations of the world, while engaged in the most colossal conflict of all time, still manage to agree among themselves to exterminate the observers of the seventh-day Sabbath? And co-operate to the point of setting a specific date for the implementation of this death decree? At best, it sounds unlikely.

It is more typical of the Lord's instruction to us that the emphasis be not so much on the affairs of the world as on the affairs of His church. For the eternal reality of the battle is not what happens on the field of war, but what happens in the hearts of God's people. Especially would this be true in the closing scenes of earth's history when "the kingdoms of this world" are passing from existence, never again to play a part in the activities of God's universe. In this light then, we see "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" as a primarily spiritual conflict, the devil and all his hosts attacking Christ in the person of His saints.

"Wait one minute, please," I hear you say, "What about all the Spirit of Prophecy predictions of strife, warfare, and bloodshed? Surely all this is not just "spiritual conflict."

The point is well taken. It is true, "in the last scenes of this earth's history, war will rage." (Review and Herald, October 19, 1897) We are not dealing here with some form of eterealized combat; in the last days there will be the unmistakable, horrifying reality of warfare such as never before seen on this earth. Ellen White's description of "great balls of
fire" which sent forth "fiery arrows," "deadly instruments of warfare," and "the impending destruction of thousands of cities" sounds very much like nuclear war. (See Evangelism, 29; Testimonies, vol. 9, 28; Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, 967) In any event, we can be assured that there will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.

But now the pendulum has seemingly swung too far. It is only logical to ask, once again, how all nations could conceivably co-operate in the enforcing of the international Sunday law and the death decree. Simple logic tells us they could not.

The Battlefield of the Mind

So where do we go from here? For the time being, let's just stop. Let's stop and recognize once more that the only really important aspects of the battle of Armageddon are those which take place in the hearts and minds of men. All nations, all earthly powers, all false religions will pass from existence; not so with human-kind. Some small percentage from among the billions of earth will overcome, will meet their Lord in peace, and will spend eternity with Him.

They are overwhelmed with consternation, but it is too late

In the arena of the heart the conflict has already begun. The preliminary battles have already been fought, already won or lost. For the choices we make now, to a great extent, predetermine the choices we will make then. "The faith which will live through the time of trouble must be developed now. Those who do not make strong efforts now to exercise persevering faith, will be unable to stand in the day of trouble." Signs of the Times, November 27, 1879

Does day to day life call for such faith? It will, if you follow your Lord. Remember, He is your Trainer, your Coach. He is more concerned to get you "into shape" than you are. When He prescribes persevering faith, rest assured that He will give you opportunity to exercise it.

The experience of "the Lord's servants" illustrates the point well. In the time of trouble, they have held to the truth even though "a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's messages" have abandoned them and gone over to the opposition. Now it is that their faith is tried. "They entered upon the performance of their duties without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord had given them. They have not consulted their temporal interests, nor sought to preserve their reputation or their lives. Yet when the storm of opposition and reproach bursts upon them, some, overwhelmed with consternation, will be ready to exclaim: 'Had we foreseen the consequences of our words, we would have held our peace.' They are hedged in with difficulties. Satan assails them with fierce temptations. . . . They are threatened with destruction. The enthusiasm which animated them is gone; yet they cannot turn back." The Great Controversy, 609

What wonderful words—"they cannot turn back." Why couldn't they? Others had. Yes, it's true, others had, but the others had never developed a faith that was stronger than their love for self-preservation. They had never exercised "persevering faith" in the days of ease, and now it was too late, the difficulties were too great, the price too high.

Will you exercise a persevering faith today? In your daily life? And if your daily life demands no such faith, will you allow your Lord to make the necessary adjustments? The decision is yours, but remember, "all the sophistry of Satan is bound up in that one word, 'wait.' " Review and Herald, September 19, 1893

But What About. . . .

The question remains, however, as to the relationship between predicted war (seemingly nuclear war) and the co-operation of the nations in the enforcement of the Sunday law. Perhaps the key is in a knowledge of the devil's plans. Some object to a knowledge of error, claiming that it is only necessary to know the truth. They may well be right; it is certainly hard to see a knowledge of error as essential to salvation. Yet Ellen White did include a chapter in The Great Controversy entitled the "Snares of Satan." She further counsels that "There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices." ibid., 516

In only a brief sketch, we may note that the devil has laid extensive groundwork for his final deceptions. Of particular import are the teachings of futurism, which had their beginnings more than four centuries ago in the Council of Trent. In recent years these concepts have gained a large following among the "fundamentalist" churches. Hal Lindsey, author of the best-selling book The Late Great Planet Earth, is but one well-known advocate of futurism.

But would they not provide an excellent antichrist?

Futurists expect to see the rapture of the saints, the conversion of the Jews, the "great tribulation," a last-day "antichrist," and a literal battle of Armageddon, followed by what we know as the second coming. Timetables and even the order of events vary somewhat, depending on whose interpretation you follow, but these are the major elements of futurist eschatology.

Does it not seem likely that the devil will take advantage of these errors that he has spent 400 years developing? His power, while no match for the weakest saint who calls upon the Lord, is still great, and only time will reveal all the deceptions which he may employ. In typical duplicity may he not fill the role of the expected antichrist, and then abandon those who have followed him in that guise in order to play the role of the returning Jesus Christ?

Such an event, following on the heels of a limited nuclear war in the Middle East, would match well with futurist expectations. Except, of course, that they would believe Satan to be the Son of God. Exactly as he would wish. This is admittedly conjecture, but it is interesting to note that there is a move underfoot by spiritualists that seems to fit well with this possibility.

Peter Lamesurier, a French author and noted supporter of the occultic Findhorn Foundation, has recently written a book entitled The Armaged-
Jerry Falwell and the National Sunday Law
Jan Marcussen

I just came back from talking with Jerry Falwell at a meeting he held at his university in Lynchburg, Virginia. Hundreds of non-Adventist ministers from all over the country were present, but my purpose in attending was different from theirs.

I shook Jerry Falwell's hand and read him a statement from the national magazine Catholic Twin Circle, which says, "All Americans would do well to petition the President and the Congress to make a Federal law—an amendment to the Constitution if need be—to re-establish the Sabbath [Sunday] as a national Day of Rest." (Also quoted in Pacific Union Recorder, January 86, page 2)

After reading it to him, I asked, "How do you feel about this?"

He said, "Personally, I go along with it." He believes that we should have a national Sunday law and that all Americans should petition the President and the Congress until they get one. Even though I was sure that he felt that way, I have to admit that I was amazed when he said it.

Jerry Falwell talked with me freely, even mentioning the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a barrier to getting a national Sunday law. (Like a Mordecai in the gate.) He was saying some really shocking things, and I knew that if he had known who I was, he would have said no more. I expected him to ask me what church I pastored, and I was prepared to proudly tell him, even though after what he had said about us, his face might have turned red. But he didn't ask. Eventually, I gave him a copy of my book, National Sunday Law. I wanted him to read it and get the three angels' messages without his prejudice getting in the way.

I learned that Falwell has tremendous power over ministers. I saw them all around him. Judging from what I saw there, we must get the three angels' messages to the public, and especially the ministers—and do it now! If we give God's Sabbath message to them in the right way, some will accept it, and lead many others to accept it too. If we don't, they will go along in the devil's path, marked out for them by men like Jerry Falwell, until they urge their people to petition for a national Sunday law.

Our Father loves these men and will help us get the Sabbath message to them. If we don't, woe be unto us! Falwell said, "I have a divine mandate to go right into the halls of Congress and fight for laws that will save America." He's a fighter. He said, "We're in a battle; we're in a struggle; we're in a fight." He made it very plain to me that Sunday is worth fighting for. Now he's fighting for prayer in the schools. Concerning his fighting for Sunday, he indicated that that battle will be determined by people like Seventh-day Adventists. I guarantee you this—now is no time to hide our light under a bushel! I learned from Falwell's official (the Field Director of the Liberty Federation) that they are organizing thousands of churches all over the country into Moral Action Committees that will work for a national Sunday law. I know it's shocking, but we don't have to live in fear, or in excitement. We need to live in Christ. I tell people, "Stay very close to Jesus. Make a total surrender. There's only one way we can fight the devil in this matter—get the three angels' messages out to the public. Now is the time!"

Pastor Marcussen's book, National Sunday Law, which he mentioned above is available from Amazing Truth Publications, P.O. Box 738, Oracle, AZ 85623.
Preach the Word
Ellen G. White

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." [2 Timothy 3:14-17]

The Word of God is like a treasure-house. It is a light that shineth in darkness. It is better to neglect anything of a temporal nature than to neglect to search the Scriptures. God has appointed that through the study of the Bible, important truth shall be communicated to His human agents. My heart aches as I see that even among those who claim to be looking for Christ's appearing in the clouds of heaven, there are those who permit their minds to be taken up with that which is merely fictitious. The world is full of such books, but God has given us a definite work to do, and we are not to turn to side issues, and employ time and workers in selling books that give no light. Christianity is an intensely practical thing, and those who have put on Christ should walk even as He walked. We should be wholly engaged in the work of God. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?" [2 Peter 11, 12]

God does not generally work miracles to advance His truth. If the husbandman neglects to cultivate the soil after sowing his seed, God works no miracle to counteract the sure result of neglect. In the harvest he will find his field barren. God works according to great principles which He has presented for the good of family, and it is our part to mature wise plans, and set in operation the means whereby God shall bring about certain results. Those who make no decided effort, but simply wait for the Holy Spirit to compel them to action, will perish in darkness. We would ask those who are waiting for a miracle, What means have been tried which God has placed within your reach? We would ask those who are hoping for some supernatural work to be done, who simply say, "Believe, believe," Have you submitted yourself to the revealed command of God? The Lord has said, "Thou shalt," and, "Thou shalt not." Let all study the parable of the talents, and realize that to every man God has given his work—"to every man He has entrusted his talents, that by exercising his ability, he may increase his efficiency. You are not to sit still, and do nothing in the work of God. There is work, earnest work, to be done for the Master in overcoming evil habits that are condemned in the Word of God, and in doing those good things that are there commanded. Individually, you must battle against evil, wrench yourself from all hurtful associations, study God's Word, and pray for divine aid to war against the world, the flesh, and the devil. You need daily light from God to fight the good fight of faith.

He who does nothing until he feels especially compelled to do something for God, will never do anything. God has given His Word, and is this not sufficient? Can you not hear His voice in His Word? If you will use God's appointed means, and diligently search the Scriptures, having a determined purpose to obey the truth, you will know the doctrine whether it be of God; but God will never work a miracle to compel you to see His truth. God, in giving His only begotten Son to die on Calvary's cross, has made it possible for all men to be saved. Christ died for a ruined world, and through the merit of Christ, God has elected that man should have a second trial, a second probation, a second test as to whether he will keep the commandments of God, or walk in the path of transgression, as did Adam. Through an infinite sacrifice, God has made it possible that men shall practice holiness in this life. Those who would ascertain their election for the future life, may ascertain it by their attitude of obedience to the commandments of God. Strong emotions, strong impulses, or desires, for heaven, when listening to a description of the charms of the future life, will not prove that you are elect to sit down with Jesus Christ upon His throne. If you would know the mystery of godliness, you should follow that which has been revealed. The conditions of eternal life have been plainly stated. Jesus says: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . ." [John 14:15, 21, 23, 24] Here are the conditions upon which every soul may be elected to be laborers together with God, to work in harmony with Christ, to work His yoke, to lift His burden, and to follow in His footsteps. You have been provided with means whereby you may ascertain what to do to make your calling and
election sure. Search the Scriptures, and you will find that not a son or daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God's commandments.

Should God save men in disobedience, after granting them a second probation, putting them to the test in this life, they would fail to regard His authority in the future life. Those who are disloyal to Christ in this world would be disloyal to Him in the world to come, and would create a second rebellion in heaven.

Men have the history of Adam's disobedience and fall before them, and because of this they should be warned against venturing to transgress the law of God. Jesus Christ has died in order that all men may have a chance to make their calling and election sure; but the standard of righteousness in this gospel age is no less than it was in the days of Adam, and heaven will be the reward of obedience.

The world is making void the law of God, but Christians are elected to faith, loyalty, and sanctification. They are elected to obey the commandments of God, although in so doing they must lift the cross.

**Will continual transgression make us fit subjects of heaven?**

The Bible, just as it reads, is to be our guide. Nothing is so calculated to enlarge the mind and strengthen the intellect as the study of the Bible. No other study will so elevate the soul and give vigor to the faculties as the study of the living oracles. The minds of thousands of ministers of the gospel are dwarfed because they are permitted to dwell upon commonplace things, and are not exercised in searching for the hidden treasure of the Word of God. As the mind is brought to the study of God's Word, the understanding will enlarge, and the higher powers will develop for the comprehension of high and ennobling truth. It is according to the character of the matter with which the mind becomes familiar that it is dwarfed or enlarged. If the mind is not raised up to make vigorous and persistent effort in seeking to comprehend truth by comparing Scripture with Scripture, it will surely become contracted and lose its tone. We should set our minds to the task of searching for truths that do not lie directly upon the surface.

Ministers who are teaching Bible truths for this time are bearing to the people a message of a most solemn character, and they need to discipline the mind in order that they may comprehend the grand theme of redemption. They should understand from what man is to be redeemed, and how he is to be brought back to the paradise of God. It was through disobedience that men fell; but will continued disobedience make him acceptable to God? Will continual transgression make him a fit subject of heaven? Let ministers preach the word of God. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." [2Timothy 4:1, 2] Ministers are not to preach men's opinions, not to relate anecdotes, get up theatrical performances, not to exhibit self; but as though they were in the presence of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are to preach the Word. Let them not bring levity into the work of the ministry, but let them preach the Word in a manner that will leave a most solemn impression upon those who hear. Let them not present their own ideas and fanciful notions as God's Word, but let them present the pure Word of God, in all sincerity.

Paul mentions some ministers who wrest the Scriptures, but when they shall appear before the Judge of all the earth to answer for their work, they will wish that they had not handled the Word of God deceitfully. The Lord's faithful ministers will heed the injunction given to Timothy, "Be instant in season, out of season." They will seize opportunities in season at their appointments, and out of season when in private places by the wayside, or in families where they shall visit. Through personal labor they will press the truth home upon the conscience with all earnestness, declaring in fervency of spirit that, if heeded, it will work man's salvation, and if neglected, his condemnation. They will warn men, but reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Many, many opportunities are unimproved because ministers consider the occasion as one out of season; but even under forbidding circumstances, the Lord may fasten the word of truth into the conscience of the hearer. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." [Ecclesiastes 11:6]

**He was not a good minister; he was merely a preacher**

Satan can furnish men with endless excuses and evasions to cause them to neglect the duty of speaking words of warning to those who are erring, and of presenting the truth as it is in Jesus to souls who are perishing. The minister who loves to sermonize will be in danger of preaching to a great length, as though a multitude of words was all-essential, and thus he will become so weary that he will have neither disposition nor strength to engage in personal effort when he has an opportunity of coming heart to heart with his hearers. The minister should be ready to open the Bible, and according as circumstances shall require, read reproof, rebuke, warning, or comfort to those who listen. He should teach the truth, rightly dividing the Word, suit out portions that will be as meat in due season to those with whom he associates. Too many ministers neglect to deal faithfully with those with whom they come in contact. They leave plain dealing to be done by other ministers; for they do not want to run the risk of losing the friendship of those for whom they labor. If ministers would deal at the right time with those who err, they would prevent an accumulation of wrong, and save souls from death. If the work of reproving is neglected by one minister, and taken up by another, those who are reproved, receive the impression that the minister who did not point out their errors was a good minister. But this is not the case; he was merely a preacher, not a worker together with God for the suppression of sin. In the meekness of Jesus, you should do the work which gives full proof of your ministry. You should show a heartfelt sorrow for sin, but manifest no unholy passion in reproving the error.
All your efforts must be made with long-suffering and doctrine; and if you see but meager results of your work, do not be discouraged. This experience will call for the manifestation of long-suffering and patience. Keep working, be discreet, be discerning, understand when to speak and when to keep silence.

Paul charged Timothy to “preach the word,” but there was yet another part to be done,—“to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” This work cannot be neglected with safety. Ministers must be instant in season and out of season, watching for souls as they that must give an account. They must exercise great carefulness. Watch in all things, watch for the devices of Satan, lest you be beguiled from doing the disagreeable part of the work. Difficulties must not intimidate or discourage you. Having well-balanced minds and established characters, meet the difficulties, and in overcoming them, gain a rich experience. Do the work of an evangelist,—water and cultivate the seed already sown. When a new church has been raised up, it should not be left destitute of help. The minister should develop the talent in the church, that meetings may be profitably kept up. Timothy was commanded to go from church to church, as one who should do this kind of work, and build up the churches in the most holy faith. He was to do the work of an evangelist, and this is an even more important work than that of the ministers. He was to preach the word, but he was not to be settled over one church. Be determined that you will not shun the disagreeable part of the work, and by unfaithfulness be a partner to the ruin of some human soul. If we are Christians indeed, we shall have in us the spirit of Him who died for the perishing. We shall love the erring and the sinner too well to flatter him, and thus encourage him in his course of wrongdoing. We must watch for souls as they that must give an account. We must be sure that we display that love that is holy and sanctified, not that favor which savors of sentimentalism. There is an abundance of this counterfeit current in the world; but it is not current with God. We must unfurl the banner which the Eternal has given to us to be displayed in the world. If we are true to God in minor matters, we shall have a holy boldness when we are called upon to make wise decisions, and shall be enabled to have a close walk with God, and be laborers together with God.

Review and Herald, September 28, 1897

The Joy of Knowing Jesus

Darla Maydole

Have you ever awakened in the morning, just before sunrise, and looked out a window at the tree tops with the light shining through the leaves? The still of the morning seems to speak to you, filling your heart with joy. Have you ever stopped to think who it was that gave you the joy of that moment?

Psalm 16:11 says, “Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” What a promise—to feel that joy forever, not just for the few fleeting minutes of a sunrise.

We need to pause and realize that we are in the presence of God. He sends His angels to guard us, and they see His face. If we would stop to think of these things more, we would not want to sleep as do others, but watch and be ready to fulfill His commands, to be God’s obedient sons and daughters. As humans we crave happiness, love, and security, but obedience is the key to all true joy.

We must take time to turn from our busy, worldly lives, and look back two thousand years to the life of Jesus. Jesus, our Lord, who lived and suffered and died, but now lives again—and still loves us.

He wants to give us joy, security, and so much more. The wants of our soul only Christ can satisfy. “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.” The Desire of Ages, 25

Oh, look to Jesus! He loves you. He died for you. It’s easy to say that Jesus died for the world, but we need to know that He died for “me,” the one weak, sinful human being that I am. He loves each one of us. He wants us to surrender our will to Him each day, for this is the first step to finding complete joy. Once we make that decision to become a child of God by fully surrendering our will to His, we are protected by His righteous law. Then we can know Him as our dear Companion. “In our knowledge of Christ and His love the kingdom of God is placed in the midst of us.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, 317) We become an ambassador of Christ and our home becomes the embassy of heaven, no longer a part of this earth.

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against all the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:11, 12) By daily putting on His armour, we will have victory. As we daily learn of Jesus, He will change us to be like Him.

We will find freedom in Him, for the law of God is the law of liberty. “Our spirit and will may become so identified with His spirit and will that in thought and aim we shall be one with Him.” (Our High Calling, 219) Perfect joy comes at last from perfect surrender.
Message to Laodicea
Ron Spear

The message to Laodicea is God's last message to His remnant church, yet we as a people—from leadership on down to laity—have never understood this message. It is an urgent message from heaven to stir the church to revival and reformation. It is a message to open our blind eyes to see our wretchedness, our spiritual poverty. Laodicea has lost her spiritual discernment and is so much like the world in her institutions, her business transactions, her eating, her dress, and her deportment that the world now accepts her as one with them. This new-found acceptance, and plain old-fashioned materialism, have so captivated our thinking that we feel increased in goods and in need of nothing. We either do not feel a need for a close relationship with Jesus, or we flatter ourselves that we have found a relationship with Christ that caters to our sins.

Yet the truth is that the Laodicean condition is a lost condition. The impact of this know-not experience was already being felt in the remnant church in 1852. We read the inspired words of the prophet:

"As I have of late looked around to find the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, my mind has been much exercised. Many who profess to be looking for the speedy coming of Christ are becoming conformed to this world and seek more earnestly the applause of those around them than the approbation of God. They are cold and formal, like the nominal churches from which they but a short time since separated. The words addressed to the Laodicean church describe their present condition perfectly." Early Writings, 107

This devastating condition has kept the church from fulfilling its gospel commission. We could have finished the work soon after 1844 if we had accepted the third angels' message (the Laodicean message) by experience, which is victory over every sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. See Testimonies, vol. 6, 450; Selected Messages, vol. 1, 68; Testimonies, vol. 1, 144; Education, 257; Acts of the Apostles, 531, 532, 564-567

The Laodicean message that should have brought the church to its knees praying and pleading for repentance has failed from 1852 to this day. Why? Because of the "hardness of our hearts," because "we failed to see the powerful work accomplished in a short time," because of "some cherished idol." We are refusing to let God purify us from "our selfishness, our pride, and evil passions." Instead we are "leaning on a false hope" that our profession will save us. "Our pride, our love to follow the fashions of the world, our vain and empty conversation, our selfishness," Ellen White warned, are "against us." See Testimonies, vol. 1, 186-190

Aimlessly Drifting

By our rejection of the Laodicean message we have been in a wilderness experience, just as Israel was in the days of Moses and Joshua. Just as they 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, How are we standing before God, as the professed followers of Jesus Christ? . . . Spiritual death has come upon the people who 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
God speaks to us concerning our apostasy:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Revelation 3:19

“As many as I love I rebuke 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

We must now give this important message to our people. The hour is very late. Ellen White depicts the conditions of our day and then says only a moment of time yet remains.

“We are standing upon the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange, eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven. Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars and rumors of wars. The nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged. Events are changing to bring about the day of God, which hasteth greatly. Only a moment of time, as it were, yet remains. But while already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.” Testimonies, vol. 6, 14

If we are not now willing to be made willing to come into line with the Laodicean message, the sealing angel will soon pass us by, never to return.

Our Only Hope

“My brethren, you are disregarding the most sacred claims of God by your neglect to consecrate yourselves and your children to Him. Many of you are reposing in false security, absorbed in selfish interests, and attracted by earthly treasures. You fear no evil. Danger seems a great way off. You will be deceived, deluded, to your eternal ruin unless you arouse and with penitence and deep humiliation return unto the Lord.

“Again and again has the voice from heaven addressed you. Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eyesalve is that which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.

“The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing your senses. Sin no longer appears repulsive because you are blinded by Satan. The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. ‘Escape for thy life’ is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: ‘Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm.’ Those who are at ease in Zion cry ‘Peace and safety,’ while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor.” Testimonies, vol. 5, 233

To apply the eyesalve so that we can see our wretchedness now in this crisis hour, to accept our present blindness, and repent is our only hope. We are told “few” Seventh-day Adventists will endure to the end and be saved. What a tragedy! See Testimonies, vol. 5, 10, 50, 136; Testimonies, vol. 8, 41; Testimonies, vol. 1, 608, 609

May God help us to bring life back to our churches soon. Yes, now.

A Cure for Laodicea

God tells us how reformation can be brought now:

“To my ministering brethren I would say, Prosecute this work with tact and ability. Set to work the young men and the young women in our churches. Combine the medical missionary work with the proclamation of the third angels’ message. Make regular, organized efforts to lift the churches out of the dead level into which they have fallen, and have remained for years. Send into the church workers who will set the principles of health reform in their connection with the third angels’ message before every family and individual. Encourage all to take a part in work for their fellow men, and see if the breath of life will not quickly return to these churches. Welfare Ministry, 124

In the light of the inspired statements in this chapter, we all—leaders, pastors, and laity—must now make a decision. If we are not now willing to be made willing to come into line with the Laodicean message, into obedience to all truth, and by the power of God live the truth, to have victory over every sin, the sealing angel will soon pass us by never to return, and we will be lost for eternity. May God help us to make the preparation today and every day, moment by moment, practicing the presence of Jesus in our lives. Then full assurance is ours. Salvation is promised to those who overcome.

“‘He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.’ Revelation 3:5
Importance of Trust In God

“And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee. So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the Lord, and before His host; and they carried away very much spoil. 2 Chronicles 14:11-13

Here is brought before us the fact that when ancient Israel trusted in the Lord their God He always wrought for them. Here was a large army; thousands and thousands were brought up against them, and it looked to them that with their small army they would certainly be overcome. But here we see that Asa’s trust was in the Lord God of Israel. It was not in their number, but he believed that the Lord could deliver them by few as well as by many. He reached out for God, and his faith took hold upon the Lord, and the Lord graciously heard and answered the petition of Asa; and they obtained the victory because God was wholly on their side.

This was, indeed, a test and trial to the faith of those who served the Lord of the armies of Israel. They had fears that sin might be so cherished in their midst that God could not do wonderful things in their behalf. It was a vast number that they had to meet, a thousand thousand men. But Asa had not been giving himself to amusement and pleasure; in time of peace he had been preparing for any emergency; he had an army trained for conflict; but how few were their numbers when compared with their enemies! Did this appearance weaken their faith? Did it discourage effort?—No; faith increased and strengthened for the occasion—not in self-confidence, but in the only One in whom they could trust. The prayers of Asa were not offered in vain. He had sought the Lord in the days of his prosperity, and now he could rely upon Him in days of adversity. He showed by his petitions that he was not a stranger to the Lord’s wonderful power. “It is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art God; let not man prevail against Thee.” (2 Chronicles 14:11)

This is an appropriate prayer for us to make. Our prospects are anything but flattering. There are vast numbers arrayed against the truth, whom we must meet in presenting the light to others. Our hope is not in our knowledge of the truth, and in our own ability, but in the living God. And if, like king Asa, we have educated ourselves, and educated and trained others, to be familiar with the truth, who wear the armor of righteousness, ready to meet the enemies of God and the truth, we have done our part of the work in the way of preparation; and then the living faith in God must be exercised to work with the efforts of the workers. God’s glory is at stake. And there should be decided effort as far as human effort is concerned, and living faith for the mighty God to manifest His power, else all will prove a failure. God defeated the enemies of Israel. He put
their forces into disorder. They fled they knew not whither. Who can stand before the Lord God of Israel? Now we are not warring against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. The Lord would encourage us to look to Him as the source of all our strength, the One who is able to help us. We may look to men, and they will give us counsel, and yet this may be defeated; but when the God of Israel undertakes work for us, He will make it a success. We want to know that we are right before God; if we are not right before Him, then we want to make an earnest effort to come in right relation to Him. We must set everything right: we must follow out the requirements of God, and then expect God to work with our efforts. (2 Chron. 20:15) God works in us by the light of His truth. We are to be obedient to all His commandments.

Oh that we could take this point into consideration, that the work in which we are engaged is not our work but God's work, and we as humble instruments are laborers together with Him; and with an eye single to God's glory, not mistake the beginning of the Christian life for its consummation, but see the necessity of training upon the earth to prepare us for doing God's will! We are not to lift up ourselves, not to be self-confident, but to trust in God, knowing that He is willing and able to help us. God will work with His people, but we want to be in that position where our trust and confidence will become firm in Him.

We should examine our own hearts, and see that everything that is not in accordance with God's will is separated from us

I wanted to bring these things before you, that you might see the importance of our coming into working order individually. We should examine our own hearts, and see that everything that is not in accordance with God's will is separated from us. There is with human nature one great difficulty: where the individual is not connected with God in anywise, the natural disposition reveals itself.

You will find many difficulties in your way, which you must meet and overcome in the name of Jesus

Now, if Satan can crowd selfishness in among those connected with this precious work of God, if they become self-righteous, independent of their brethren, independent of God, we need not expect that the blessing of God will attend our work; but if our hearts are pure, and uncorrupted with selfishness, we shall present the truth as it is in Jesus; and then we will have the blessing of the Lord.

There is constant danger of dropping Jesus out of your labor; but when the truth is presented in meekness and grace as it is in Jesus, it is then you reveal Jesus Christ in every effort you make, and as you seek to approach souls you are revealing Christ to all those with whom you are brought in contact. If you are resting upon the loving Saviour as your only hope, if self is hid with Christ in God, God will be with you, and you will be with Him. You will feel and know the power of true religion; your influence will be used wholly for God's glory; you will not have a high estimate of yourselves. The path is narrow that leads to eternal life. You will find many difficulties in your way, which you must meet and overcome in the name of Jesus. What discouragements the disciples met when they saw Him in whom their hopes were centered mocked in the judgment hall, scourged, and suffering the most shameful death by crucifixion! And what triumph on the part of Satan as he bruised His heel when Jesus was nailed to the cross, amid the revilings of evil men who claimed the highest piety! After He had been enclosed in the tomb, His enemies expected to see the disciples discouraged, ashamed, and deny; as did Peter, all knowledge of Him. But when these disciples went forth in faith, in holy boldness preaching a risen Saviour, their enemies marveled; for they did not present Jesus but as a Prince of life, risen from the dead, ascended into the heavens to make intercession for His followers, when their enemies and others took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Thus should it be with believers of the truth.

Here, then, is the power that the people of God are to have, and which will give them the victory in these last days. Every ism is existing. Every kind of false doctrine is prevailing everywhere, and the truth of God that is preached now involves a cross. But the truth must go to all cities and villages, into the highways and hedges. The apostle exhorts believers to "fight the good fight of faith," and "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:1,2) Men are always trying to make an easier way to heaven than that which the Lord has commanded. But we can see that there were conditions that the children of Israel were to comply with on their part. They were to seek the Lord, the children with the parents. This is the very work we are to do. There is not one half the seeking of the Lord there should be with us. We know not how soon our cases may come up in the Judgment, and in our present condition many will be disowned of Jesus. We are too apt to let the little cares of this life take our attention, and as soon as we do this we are bereft of our strength.

What we want at the present time is to examine our own hearts

And while we thus teach, believing that Jesus will help us to present the truth as it is in Him, then we may expect His help, and we will have it. We have not today a Saviour enclosed in Joseph's new tomb, but we have a risen Saviour. One who stands in the presence of God for us, whose glory overshadows the mercy seat, under

Continued on 26
Our Greatest Need

Ellen G. White

God has not appointed any man guide, nor made any man conscience for another; therefore let human hands be withheld from restraining His servants who feel the burden to enter His vineyard to labor. Let God work with His own chosen agents by His Holy Spirit. No human being is to sit in judgment upon his brother. Neither are any to feel that they can handle roughly the precious pearls for which Christ gave His life. The pearl, the precious human pearl, was found by Christ. Let man be warned; be careful how you treat the Lord's "peculiar treasure." All discourtesy, all pain, all neglect, which these souls suffer at your hands, is charged against you as inflicted upon Jesus Christ. They are not to be treated in a lordly, commanding manner. Laws and rules are being made at the centers of the work that will soon be broken into atoms. Men are not to dictate. It is not for those in places of authority to employ all their powers to sustain some, while others are cast down, ignored, forsaken, and left to perish. But it is the duty of the leaders to lend a helping hand to all who are in need. Let each work in the line which God may indicate to him by His Holy Spirit. The soul is accountable to God alone. Who can say how many avenues of light have been closed by arrangements which the Lord has not advised or instituted? The Lord does not ask permission of those in responsible positions when He wishes to use certain ones as His agents for the promulgation of truth. But He will use whom He will use. He will pass by men who have not followed His counsel, men who feel capable and sufficient to work in their own wisdom; and He will use other who are thought by these supposedly wise ones to be wholly incompetent. Many who have some talent think that they are necessary to the cause of God. Let them beware lest they stretch themselves beyond their measure, and the Lord shall leave them to their own ways, to be filled with their own doings. None are to exercise their human authority to bind the minds and souls of their fellowmen. They are not to devise and put in practice methods and plans to bring every individual under their jurisdiction.

Those who know the truth are to be worked by the Holy Spirit, and not themselves to try to work the Spirit. If the cords are drawn much tighter, if the rules are made much finer, if men continue to bind their fellow laborers closer and closer to the commandments of men, many will be stirred by the Spirit of God to break every shackle, and assert their liberty in Christ Jesus. If men were to act toward their fellowmen as to those whom Christ loves, if they would obey the commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself," there would be sweet harmony among the brethren. How much better it would be if those who claim to be Christians would behave like Christians. How much better it would be if all would cease speaking of their own good works and ways, indulging their self-esteem; refrain from the putting forth of the finger, imagining evil, and using their influence to weaken, oppress, and destroy. If men will not come to terms made by the leading workers, they will not entertain them, they do not care what results may follow their injustice. With them it is rule or ruin. God has not appointed any man to do such work. And no human being shall be permitted to proscribe my liberty or intrench upon the perfect freedom of my brethren, without hearing my voice lifted in protest against it.

God will move upon men of humble position in society, men who have not become insensible to the bright rays of light through so long contemplating the light of truth, and refusing to make any improvement or advancement therein. Many such will be seen hurrying hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to bring the light to others. The truth, the Word of God, is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. Children are impelled by the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from Heaven. The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man's machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit's power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord.

The seven last plagues are about to descend upon the disobedient. Many have let the gospel invitation go unheeded; they have been tested and tried; but mountainous obstacles have seemed to loom up before their faces, blocking their onward march. Through faith, perseverance, and courage, many will surmount these obstructions and walk out into the glorious light. Almost unconsciously barriers have been erected in the strait and narrow way; stones of stumbling have been placed in the path; these will all be rolled away. The safeguards which false shepherds have thrown around their flocks will become as naught; thousands will step out into the light, and work to spread the light. Heavenly intelligences will combine with the human agencies.
Thus encouraged, the church will indeed arise and shine, throwing all her sanctified energies into the contest; thus the design of God is accomplished; the lost pearls are recovered. Prophets have discerned this grand work afar off, and have caught the inspiration of the hour, and traced the wonderful descriptions of things yet to be.

Our people have had great light, and yet much of our ministerial force is exhausted on the churches, in teaching those who should be teachers; enlightening those who should be "the light of the world"; watering those from whom should flow springs of living water; enriching those who might be veritable mines of precious truth; repeating the gospel invitation to such as should be scattered to the uttermost parts of the earth communicating the message of Heaven to many who have not had the privileges which they have enjoyed; feeding those who should be in the byways and highways heralding the invitation, "Come; for all things are now ready." Come to the gospel feast; come to the supper of the Lamb; "for all things are now ready."

The past, present, and future are linked together.
We must learn lessons from the experiences of other ages

Now is the time for earnest wrestling with God. Our voices should join with the Saviour's in that wonderful prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Many may ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The responsibility rests upon every individual. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."[2 Corinthians 3:5] The scheme of salvation is not to be worked out under the laws and rules specified by men. There must be no fixed rules; our work is a progressive work, and there must be room left for methods to be improved upon. But under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, unity must and will be preserved.

All the revelations of the past bring added responsibilities upon the workers in these last days. The past, present, and future are linked together. We must learn lessons from the experiences of other ages. If there are any of our brethren who think that they have devised plans by which they can secure a monopoly of any line of God's work, they are released from all such burdens. Individually we form a part of the great whole, fulfilling our part in the scenes foreseen long ages ago. In the counsels of God a place was assigned to every person, and each one is to devote his entire ability, his influence, the energy of his whole being, in an earnest endeavor to discharge the responsibility laid upon him. It is the duty of every human intelligence to put into daily practice the instructions of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John by living a practical, Christian life. We are to be united to one another in the bonds of Christlike love. This is the path marked out for all. By following in it, without boasting, without self exaltation, we may satisfy the high claims of God upon us. If any are inclined to boast of their superior talents, let them bear in mind that these talents are another's, only lent to them for a season, and that if they are not employed in the Lord's work, they will be taken from them. Make no boast of your extensive knowledge and influence. The great plan of redemption connects every man with his fellow laborer. The influence of the past helps to mold the work of the present, and that in its turn enables us to lay hold of the work line after line, upon which we may carry on the future work. All these agencies have a close relation, not only to time, but to the endless ages of the future, reaching into eternity.

Let man now cease to trust in man. While they should respect God's plan for unity of action, let all remember that the Holy Spirit is molding and fashioning the human agent in the divine similitude. The life that is hid with Christ in God is revealed through men. We are now living in the closing scenes of this world's history. Let men tremble with the sense of the responsibility of knowing the truth. The ends of the world are come. Proper consideration of these things will lead all to make an entire consecration of all that they have and are to their God. There should be no boasting, no seeking for the highest places; but all should be ambitious to do with fidelity, with an eye single to the glory of God, the sacred work which it is our exalted privilege to engage in. The eye should not be so constantly looking to man, studying the plans which men devise; but rather seeking for a knowledge of the plans which are determined by the Source of all wisdom. Then there will be no danger of having plans for the work contaminated by flowing through impure human channels.

The eye should not be so constantly looking to man, studying the plans which men devise

Look to God; pray to God; wait and watch and pray to God; work for God. The weighty obligation of warning a world of its coming doom is upon us. From every direction, far and near, calls are coming to us for help. The church, devotedly consecrated to the work, is to carry the message to the world: Come to the gospel feast; the supper is prepared, come. The weak must not now trust in finite men if they would be as David, and David as the angel of the Lord. If we have everimportuned God, wrestling for His blessing as did Jacob, let it be now. God calls to the church to arise and clothe herself with the garments of Christ's righteousness. Crowns, immortal crowns, are to be won. The kingdom of heaven is to be gained. A world, perishing in sin, is to be enlightened. The lost sheep is to be brought back in safety to the fold. Who will join in the search? Who will bear the light to those who are wandering in the darkness of error?

The Review and Herald, July 23, 1895
Part two, of a two part series.

June, 1896 Our Firm Foundation 21
As early as 1974 it was reported that at least 1.4 million children in the United States under the age of 18 had emotional problems of sufficient severity to warrant urgent attention, and that as many as ten million more required psychiatric help of some kind if they were ever to achieve the potential that medical progress on other fronts had made possible. Some now suggest a figure as high as 30 million, an inordinately large segment of the under-18 population of the United States. This figure is not limited to mild neurotic conditions, but also includes deep psychological problems such as autism, schizophrenia, and hyperkinesia. As one psychiatrist quoted in the article says, “The fortunate child is the one with good heredity and adequate care provided by two parents who are able to recognize and meet the child’s needs in early life, and a minimum of chronic overwhelming stress situations as the child grows up.” “Troubled Children, the Quest For Help,” Newsweek, April 8, 1974

Unfortunately, fewer children today have the privilege of a two-parent home, nor do they have an environment which is devoid of stressful situations. It was further pointed out that today’s mobile society has almost abolished the extended family concept in which aunts, uncles, grandparents, and other relatives form a further fabric of support for the growing child. Thus the Christian Church, if properly organized, and alert, must become part of the extended family to the children of its members, and in this sense adults should consider themselves the fathers and mothers of all the children of the church.

One psychiatrist quoted in the report indicated that he did not believe that two parents, let alone one, could rear a child entirely alone, and therefore church support is critical. We face the situation where many young children do not have the privilege of a mother constantly with them during the day. The complexity of society, together with the drive for modern conveniences, frequently means that both parents work. We would certainly agree with Dr. Salk’s opinion, “I’d rather see people not have children at all than leave infants in a day-care center.”

There would be no question that under almost all circumstances the mother is the best able to care for her child in the early formative years, and this God-given responsibility should only under the most pressing circumstances be placed in the hands of someone else. It is far better to have fewer of the so-called comforts of life than for a child to be without his mother for long periods of the day.

The survey incorporated into the report went on to pinpoint as one of the great causes of mental breakdown in children the devastating influence of television. “In today’s push-button society children tend to learn about the world around them vicariously by television. Many of our children and young people have been everywhere by ear and eye and almost nowhere in the realities of their self-initiated experience. Much of what the children see is a vivid depiction of war, violence and social upheaval. Aggression has become one of the most pervasive childhood experiences of all. Children learn of abnormal behavior by observing other people.” (ibid.) It is now accepted that television is playing a primary role in the establishment of the value system of society and is significantly affecting attitudes and morals. That the television is depicting much which is in contradiction to biblical morality.

Colin D. Standish
is a sober warning to parents who have the moral and spiritual well-being of their children at heart. Even advertising and news bulletins often emphasize that which is immoral or distasteful.

It is ironic to look back a hundred or so years ago and see that the philosophers and educators of the age often pointed to universal education as the solution to the social ills of the world, claiming that if we could have universal education we'd be able to close most of our prisons, psychiatric wards, and poorhouses. The thrust for universal education gained great impetus in the United States and indeed in many other parts of the world. However, in the latter part of the twentieth century we are much wiser than to believe this theory. Indeed, we have increased our problems in all three areas. We have to look for ways of improving the situation.

Where does mental health begin? Well, it begins before the initiation of a new life into the world. Of course the health of the child begins with the parents. A well-adjusted family environment is perhaps the greatest legacy the parents can give to their children in developing sound and secure mental health. Thus, responsible parenthood requires that parents have a secure and well-adjusted lifestyle before initiating a new life within the family. This fact is fundamental if parents are not to commence the premature's life with that which will predispose him to a faulty character.

**Emotional outbursts by the mother can lead to emotional behavior patterns in prenatal life**

The responsibility of the mother is particularly important. In the formative prenatal months it is essential that the mother follow a simple lifestyle not given to frequent bursts of emotionality. There is abundant evidence of the profound influence of the earliest intrauterine experience of the child upon subsequent emotional, physical and personality characteristics. Strong emotionality leads to sympathetic nervous system reaction, such as the secretion of adrenalin and other substances into the bloodstream. Though the placenta is a good filter, it does not prevent these substances from entering the bloodstream of the fetus, resulting in its hyperactivity. Frequent emotional outbursts by the mother prior to birth can lead to emotional behavior patterns in prenatal life. These reactions militate against the development of sound mental health.

Often parents of highly emotional infants wrongly conclude the cause is genetic, overlooking the critical role of the prenatal environment. The parents who themselves are calm and happy during the time of pregnancy tend to predetermine to a marked extent a similar temperament in the child. The thoughts and feelings of the mother are important. If she is self-centered and easily hurt, this sensitivity will inevitably affect the disposition of the child.

Christian parenthood is not accidental. It is planned. This preparation involves economics and living conditions, but above all it encompasses the spiritual life of the would-be parents. Only when they are in harmony with Christ will the Holy Spirit empower them and overshadow the unborn. An excellent example of this truth is given in the Scriptures in the lives of Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist. "Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." (Luke 1:41) "And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost." (Luke 1:67) It was no doubt because of this infilling that Gabriel could prophesy: "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." (Luke 1:15) As you can imagine, such an environment not only is critical to spiritual health, but also to emotional and physical health.

Sacred questions must be resolved by husband and wife before a child is conceived. Unless they have forged a deep abiding relationship with each other by their individual relationship with Jesus, they are yet unready to become parents of a child. It is irresponsible to seek parenthood with the hope of rescuing a shaky and insecure marriage. There is nothing a little, inexperienced infant can do to secure the marriage, and most likely he will become the victim of, not the solution to, the insecurity of the parents. The situation will in all likelihood lead to erratic management of the child and to inconsistency in the expression of both love and discipline. Such behavior sets the stage for serious emotional and social problems in later life.

**By far the most important are the nine months before birth**

It is my belief that parents have about 18 months to provide the basis for the child's secure and balanced personality and temperament, and by far the most important of these are the 9 months before birth. The love and security developed in the prenatal environment include the calm and happy disposition of the mother, the healthful and balanced diet she chooses, the avoidance of the use of drugs, spices or other condiments, the loving relationship with her husband, the secure faith and trust in God, and the regular taking of moderate exercise. Thus mothers are counseled, "Every woman about to become a mother, whatever her surroundings, should encourage constantly a happy, cheerful, contented disposition, knowing that for all her efforts in this direction she will be repaid tenfold in the physical, as well as in the moral, character of her offspring. Nor is this all. By habit she can accentu himself to cheerful thinking, and thus encourage a happy state of mind and cast a cheerful reflection of her own happiness of spirit upon her family and those with whom she associates." Mind, Character and Personality, vol. I, 131

The achievement of such a prenatal environment is the responsibility of the husband just as much as that of the wife. His disposition, helpfulness and loyalty are essential sharing principles in the new life being initiated into their family. The godly partners will second the work of each other in these precious months. They recognize that as the deceptive fury of Satan is directed at the youth, only the finest dedicated Christian home can counteract this influence.

The clearest understanding of God's love comes to the child, not so much from the expression of love to him, important though this be, but from the expression of love he per-
ceives between his parents and older members of his family. This is the modeling he is most likely to follow. Perhaps the principle of consistency is of the utmost importance to the secure development of the child. This principle includes consistency by each parent in the management of the infand and consistency by both parents in the child’s education. While both facets of training present many challenges, the latter is often the most difficult, for each parent tends to reflect his or her own upbringing, and often one has had a less-structured environment than the other. But it is of the utmost importance that both parents work together, for the security and salvation of the child is at stake. Each parent must second the effort of the other and attempt to resolve differences of approach in private.

In an age where much controversy exists concerning discipline, God has not left His people in doubt. No infant can be given a sound start in life unless he understands the parameters of successful living. Thus parents are counseled, “Before the child is old enough to reason, he must be taught to obey. By gentle, persistent effort, the habit should be established. Thus to a great degree may be prevented those later conflicts between will and authority that do so much to arouse in the minds of the youth alienation and bitterness toward parents and teachers, and too often resistance of all authority, human and divine.” (Counsels to Teachers, 111) However, we are also taught that the child must learn to approach discipline with reason. “The object of discipline is the training of the child for self-government. He should be taught self-reliance and self-control. Therefore as soon as he is capable of understanding, his reason should be enlisted on the side of obedience.”

Protection of one’s self-image leads to emotionally destructive feelings

Unfortunately, more and more we see permissiveness as the basic principle in the world. Even the dictums of the age—“Be yourself.” “Have fun.” “Do your own thing”—mitigate against the development of a healthy emotional life.

I believe the late British historian, Arnold Toynbee, expressed it well when he said, “Science has shown no sign that it’s going to be able to cope with man’s most serious problems. It has not been able to do anything to cure man of his sinfulness and his sense of insecurity or to avert the painfulness of failure and the dread of death. Above all, it has not helped him to break out of the prison of his inborn self-centeredness into communion or union with some reality that is greater, more important, more valuable and more lasting than the individual himself.” Quoted in Karl Menninger, What Ever Became of Sin? 226

Nothing will help a child more than learning how to share. In doing so he learns the true essence of love, to reach out to others. Reaching out is the basis of true happiness and mental health. It protects against egocentricity and allows the individual to escape from the emotionally destructive feelings related to the protection of one’s self-image. The law of giving is the law of Heaven. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” (John 3:16) Giving is the law of selflessness, a reaching out to others which leads to true happiness and fulfillment in life. Egocentricity, if allowed to be indulged, will lead to unhappiness because it was built upon a “get philosophy” that is like a bottomless pit. There is no satisfaction to it.

Within Christianity is bound up the highest level of mental health. The final generation of Christian parents will have an all-consuming passion, the representation of God’s love, by practical Christianity so that their children may choose from the perspective of God’s authentic ways. More than anything else, the world needs a restoration of the true Christian home. The proclamation of the gospel of Christ and the completion of the church will focus their parental emphasis.

BOOKS AND TAPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Firm Foundation, 13 issues</th>
<th>Suggested donation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>US $14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>19.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas (surface mail)</td>
<td>24.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Issues</td>
<td>No charge*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelistic Outreach Issue</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adventist Roundtable, 12 monthly tapes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books, by Ron Spear</td>
<td>32.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Counterfeit and The Genuine</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for Eternity</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Message to Laodicea</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waymarks of Adventism</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaping the Whirlwind, by Joe Crews</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tapes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for Eternity, by Ron Spear</td>
<td>26.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan, 1884 Edition (12 tapes in a protective case)</td>
<td>29.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Media and Mind Control, by Dr. Vernon Shafer and Dr. Wynn Knowling. Music, TV, video games—How the devil uses technology to gain control of the mind. Based on the Spirit of Prophecy and modern scientific research, this set is a must for every Christian home. (6 tapes)</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Righteousness by Faith, by Dennis Priebe. A penetrating analysis of the roots of doctrine. (5 tapes)</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If you would like introductory issues to share with other church members, please send us your request. Our goal is to reach every Seventh-day Adventist home in North America. You can help us meet this goal through your personal and financial support.

All suggested donations in US funds. Please add 10% for shipping and handling ($1.00 minimum). Make checks payable to Hope International.

24 Our Firm Foundation June, 1986
The church we are told, is still the church militant rather than the church triumphant, and when humanity gets involved, problems develop. The Adventist pioneers were no strangers to this phenomenon. Elder John Loughborough, the first historian of the Advent Movement, has left on record the following accounts.

There was a matter of difficulty between some parties that had to be adjusted at the beginning of our meeting [held in November of 1858 near Clinton, Massachusetts]. While this was going on, one zealous brother from Connecticut arose and said, “If you would do as we do in Connecticut, you would never need to have any church trials.”

Brother White inquired, “How do you do down in Connecticut?”

“Well, said the brother, “when any one there does us a wrong, we just go right on, and pay no attention to it.”

“Well,” said Brother White, “I do not think the devil himself would have any trouble with anybody, if all did that way—just let him serve them as he has a mind to, and go right on and pay no attention to it, as though nothing had happened. But there is one command in the Gospel, which I wish to read to the brother. It is found in Luke, ‘Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.’ (Luke 17:3,4) What do you do with that down in Connecticut?”

The brother replied, “I do not think we have noticed that text.”

Meanwhile the investigation went on, and soon a fair understanding was reached. The parties were in harmony, and the Connecticut man had a practical illustration of a better plan than what he had at first proposed. Pacific Union Recorder, February 23, 1911

On November 24, 1862, two meetings were held at the same hour in the house of William Wilson, of Greenville, Michigan. I for the purpose of organizing two churches for those who had accepted the Sabbath truth in that vicinity. The meeting for the Greenville Church was conducted by Elder White and his wife in one room, while Elder Byington and myself had charge of a meeting in another room for the West Plains Church. While we were engaged in the preliminary work in one room, we could hear the voice of Mrs. White as she bore her testimony in the other room. We were meeting with some difficulties in our work, when just at the opportune time Mrs. White opened the door, and said, “Brother Loughborough, I see by looking over this company that I have testimonies for some of the persons present. When you are ready, I will come in and speak.” That being just the time we needed help, she came in. Aside from Elder Byington and myself, she knew the names of only three persons in the room. The others were strangers, whom she had never seen, only as they had been presented to her in vision.

As she arose to speak, she said: “You will have to excuse me in relating what I have to say, if I describe your persons, as I do not know your names. As I see your countenances, there comes before me what the Lord has been pleased to show me concerning you. That man in the corner with one eye (some one spoke, saying, “His name is Pratt”), makes high professions and great pretensions to religion, but he has never yet been converted. Do not take him into the church in his present condition, for he is not a Christian. He spends much of his time idling about the shops and stores, arguing the theory of the truth, while his wife at home has to cut the firewood, and look after the garden. He makes promises in his bargains that he does not fulfill. His neighbors have no confidence in his profession of religion. It would be better for the cause of religion, for him, in his present condition, to say nothing about it.” She continued, saying, “This aged brother (as she pointed to him, some one said, “Brother Barr”) was shown me in direct contrast with the other man. He is very exemplary in his life, careful to keep all his promises, and provides well for his family. He hardly ventures to speak of the truth to his neighbors, for fear he will mar the work and do harm. He does not see how the Lord can be so merciful as to forgive his sins, and thinks himself unfit even to belong to the church.” She then said to him, “Brother Barr, the Lord bade me to say to you that you have confessed all the sins you knew of, and that He forgave your sins long ago, if you would only believe it.” The look of sadness depicted on the brother’s countenance quickly melted. He looked up with a smile, and said, in his simplicity, “Has He? ” “Yes,” responded Mrs. White, “and I was told to say to you, ‘Come along, and unite with the church; and as you have opportunity, speak a word in favor of the truth; it will have a good effect, as your neighbors have confidence in you.’” He responded, “I will.” Continuing, she said, “If Mr. Pratt could, for a time, take a position similar to that which Brother Barr has been occupying, it would do him good.”

Thus was one cause of our difficulty in organizing removed. Before her testimony was borne, we could not get Mr. Barr to consent to unite with the church; while on the other hand, we found about every one was opposed to receiving Mr. Pratt; still no one felt free to tell why they opposed....

After Mrs. White had borne her testimony, the work of organizing the church was soon completed. Mr. Barr came heartily into the organization, while Mr. Pratt was left out. The moment the meeting closed, the latter said, with considerable vehemence, “I tell you what; there is no use trying to go with this people and act the hypocrite; you can’t do it.” Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists, 248-250.
We often think we are having a hard time in bearing burdens, and it is too often the case, because God has not made any provision for us to carry these burdens.

not permeated with this spirit, and does it not greatly grieve the Holy Spirit of God? For it is not [on account of] you, but the Lord working through you, that your labors are attended with any success. And how important it is that you present the truth as it is in Jesus.

Your work is not to gather up burdens of your own. As you take the burdens that Christ would have you, then you can realize what burdens He carried. Let us study the Bible, and find out what kind of yoke He bore. He was a help to those around him. He says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." [Matthew 11:28, 29] You see there is a yoke to bear. Now this is the very faith that we want,—a faith that will grasp the promises of God, one that will take the yoke of Christ and bear the burdens that He would have us. We often think we are having a hard time in bearing burdens, and it is too often the case, because God has not made any provision for us to carry these burdens; but when we bear His yoke and carry His burdens, we can testify that the yoke of Christ is easy and how to build our characters for time and for eternity. He does not want us to get into one channel and never turn out of that; to have fixed ideas, and hold them fast, whether they are right or wrong. He will place us amid trials and difficulties, and when we have learned to overcome obstacles in a right spirit, with high and holy purpose, He will give us another lesson. And if we have not the meekness of Christ to be constantly learning of Jesus in His school, then we must know that we have not the yoke of Christ.

I am glad we have a risen Saviour, that He bears with the frailties of humanity! We so easily become impatient with one another! I think of how much Jesus has had to bear with us; our sins have grieved Him so often; and how thankful we should be to learn how to bear and have patience with one another! And when we see faults in our brethren, we should go to them in the spirit of meekness, and tell them of their failings, and pray with them, and have it all settled. Do you not think that heavenly angels would look with pleasure upon such a meeting? Not a word should be spoken to hurt one another. What we want is the truth as it is in Jesus, laboring constantly to
bind together never to separate. If our little churches in Riseley and Southampton have the truth as it is in Jesus, they will send up their petitions to Jesus for overcoming grace. Do not think that you must overcome in your own strength, neither try to save your own life. “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake . . . shall find it.” [Mark 8:35]

I am so glad that we have the truth so straight and plain. Although difficulties will present themselves, we have a God sufficient for all difficulties. One says, You cannot labor here as you labor in America; so they say in Sweden and in Norway; but I labor just the same in all these places as in America. The same God that gave me my commission to reach hearts in America, is giving me power

There is no time for us to try to make a smooth path for our feet. We must take it as it is, with all its inconveniences and troubles, knowing that the God of Israel is by our side

to reach hearts in this country. I present Jesus to you as the one great Saviour; and if there is any reason why I cannot labor the same here as in America, it is because you have another mold than the mold of Jesus Christ. But God wants you to have His mold. He wants us to bring ourselves in right relation with Him. He wants us to have His meekness and lowliness. The very same God that delivered ancient Israel will work for us. God does not change. He has not one character for Denmark, another for Sweden, and another for Norway, and still another for England, but He is the same to all. God wants us to fulfill the conditions laid down in His Word. He has not a school varying for the different nationalities, but He has one school for all.

We found in Copenhagen that since we were there last fall some had embraced the truth. Among them was a man who had opposed his wife for ten years, and after hearing me speak, he arose and said, “I am glad I came to Copenhagen. What we have heard here to-day is wonderful.” Then, after attending the Sabbath School he said, “I never saw anything like this. I am going home and tell my Baptist brethren all about it.” In the testimonies heard there, I could not see that there was any difference in the general tenor from those we hear in America, and I can see no difference here; and I have come to believe that we are learning in the same school, and have one Teacher. And we can present the truth to the people as it is in Jesus, and let God do the work for us. The same prayers that are ascending to God in America, are ascending to God here, that the God of Israel may work in our behalf. And I beseech of you not to become discouraged, although the powers of Satan may be great, but look to Jesus.

How little access Christ seemed to have to the people! Many believed on Him, but dared not confess Him because they were afraid of being put of the synagogue. Now, we see how Christ was treated by them, and shall we treat Him in the same manner?

Think of Christ’s coming down from glory, leaving His Father’s throne, and suffering as He did for us! He came to bring the cup of salvation to those who were willing to drink it; but they struck it out of their hands. And when the people embrace the truth under your labors, do not think that it is you that have done the work, but remember that it is Jesus working through you; and let Jesus put His Spirit upon them, and also upon you, that you may work with all the ability that God has given you. If you have a sharp, bright thought, it is not you who created that thought, but God. I never yet felt satisfied as I have stood before the people. I never felt that I had said anything that I should be lifted up over. But if I have said anything that has reached the hearts of the people, it has been because God has worked through me. We must press the battle to the gate. There is no time for us to try to make a smooth path for our feet. We must take it as it is, with all its inconveniences and troubles, knowing that the God of Israel is by our side, and we shall see of His salvation.

My brethren and sisters, let us remember here is the evidence that God will work. You are not to trust in any power but that of the Lord God of Israel. But if you have enmity in your hearts, you cannot expect that God will let His blessing rest upon you. No one will enter the city of God with anything that defiles. We must get ready for the latter rain. The earth is to be lighted with the glory of the third angel,—not a little corner only, but the whole earth. You may think that the work you are doing now is lost; but I tell you it is not lost. When the message shall go with a loud cry, those who hear the truth now will spring to the front and work with mighty power. But you must have faith. It is no use to enter cities unless you have faith in God, and believe that a work is to be accomplished there. You must believe that it is Christ who is by your side, and is finding access to souls; and when you have done the best you can, you must believe, and commit it all to Jesus.

There is a company who will stand upon Mount Zion, and we want you to be determined that you will be among that company. You will have trials here, but be determined that you will have a home in the city of God. Says Paul, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” He cannot find words strong enough to express himself, and he says an “eternal weight of glory.” Well, then, cannot we bear the roughness a little? Here is the eternal weight of glory while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. Keep talking of Jesus, of the widespread truth, of the life that measures with the life of God. Why, the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal. Then let us grasp the hand of infinite power. Here we are channels of light, and we should communicate this light to those around us.

I feel so thankful every day that we have a Saviour, and I do not know how to dwell enough upon His goodness. Let us remember that He bore reproach for us; He was reviled, but reviled not again; He was mocked, and finally crucified, that we might have eternal life. In the greatest difficulties have faith in God; believe you have a mighty helper with you. He is the source of your strength. But we are not to try to bring every one into our mold. May God help us to walk in all humility of mind before Him.

Review and Herald, May 10, 1887

June, 1936. Our Firm Foundation 27
Persecution. Without a doubt one of the most unpopular words in the Christian's vocabulary. It evokes images of being burned at the stake, stretched on the rack, or facing a stone-throwing mob.

But Jesus Himself warned that persecution would be an integral part of living the genuine Christian life. He spoke of this fact in John 15:20, as He referred to how the world responded to Him, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." In the Beatitudes He called those people blessed who are persecuted because they live righteously, and told them of their heavenly reward. See Matthew 5:10.

Christians in many countries around the world today are actively persecuted. This persecution ranges from being unable to find well-paying jobs, to police harassment, to incarceration in labor and prison camps, and even death.

Most Seventh-day Adventists are saddened, but not really too surprised over this prospect. The Bible says persecution from the world will be with the believers until the end of time, and indeed will continue to worsen until the final day.

Likewise, opposition or even hostility from other religious denominations toward Adventists is not totally unexpected either. Seventh-day Adventists have been warned to expect persecution from the religious world over the Sabbath/Sunday issue.

But what do you do when Adventists start persecuting other Adventists? How do you meet this challenge? Do you even believe such a thing is possible?

Mrs. White does. In The Great Controversy, 608, she describes the time just prior to the imposition of a national Sunday law. During this time of upheaval, a shift of loyalties of a large class of people within the Seventh-day Adventist Church takes place.

"As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position, and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead the souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren."

Now what causes this shift from a position of one of support for the church to one of active opposition? It happens because this large class of Seventh-day Adventists have chosen to "unite with the world and partake of its spirit" so that when the Sunday-law test happens "they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side." (Emphasis supplied)

Note carefully that this shift is not a sudden occurrence. Prophets and Kings, 188, in referring to this same time period, describes this process of compromise and its results a little more fully:

"The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. Those who have yielded step by step to worldly demands, and conformed to worldly customs, will then yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death." (Emphasis supplied)

Evidently, then, large numbers of Adventists will be gradually, and no doubt unconsciously, lowering their Christian behavioral standards and tastes prior to the Sunday-law crisis. This compromise will result in these Adventists practicing an increasing level of accommodation and conforming to the world's attitudes, practices, and lifestyles, and finally accepting the Sunday law.

And so with one group of Adventists moving steadily toward the world and destruction, and another group of Seventh-day Adventists moving steadily toward Jesus and holiness, persecution within the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be inevitable. The conflict between those Seventh-day Adventists who are holy and those who are worldly will not lessen, but increase. And as a result, persecution will occur.

Have you seen any examples of persecution within the Adventist Church recently? Oh, I don't mean beatings, stabbings, or hangings. I'm talking about something more restrained and maybe more difficult to handle.

I mean one Adventist verbally harassing, insulting, and ridiculing and, yes, even ignoring and shunning another, more conscientious Adventist over his or her adherence to Christian standards in matters like diet, dress, entertainment, personal honesty, and even Sabbath observance. If something like this happened to you, would you be able to face it?

If you've chosen to make Philippians 4:8 your measuring standard, beware

Suppose, for example, after much extensive deliberation, you've chosen to eat and drink to the glory of God. Are you prepared to face insults by some of your Seventh-day Adventist acquaintances not only over your refusal to eat meat, but also over your rejection of soft drinks, coffee, and alcohol? And what about things like refusing excess amounts of salt or sugar, or refusing to eat between meals? In taking a firm stand on matters of diet and health, you might well have to be prepared to face verbal brickbats like "extremist" or "weirdo!"

What about matters relating to
entertainment? If you've chosen to make Philippians 4:8 (whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely) your measuring standard, beware. It's quite possible you might be branded by some Adventists as "Puritan" or a "narrow-minded fanatic" for rejecting romance novels, shallow TV programs, sex and violence-filled movies, and rock music. Furthermore, having discriminating tastes in matters of art, literature, and music could possibly result in being ignored and shunned by many of your less conscientious Adventist associates. This is not a light-hearted matter. Indeed, only those who have had to endure the trial can know how painful it is.

We have far more to fear from within than without

And how about adherence to the seventh commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? If you're determined to live a morally pure life, you might have to meet labels like "Puritan" or "Victorian" or "stuck up." You might not have as many dates among your Adventist friends as you might wish if you refuse to "have a good time"—a painful price which might be the cost of conscientious, Christian conduct.

Of course there are other matters which might make you unpopular with many in the Adventist Church. Opposing an injustice in your local Adventist Church or even in the Adventist denomination, or befriending a Seventh-day Adventist who is considered "different" or "strange" by the majority, could conceivably result in your having to face persecution from within the church.

Although persecution is not a pleasant experience, there are some defenses available to help make it bearable. First, make sure you're unreservedly surrendered to the Lord. It will be hard to withstand persecution if you're trying to keep one foot in heaven and one foot in the world. If you're completely surrendered to God, you can claim with the Psalmist, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Psalm 91:2, NIV

Second, "Pray continually." (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIV) Don't confine prayer to once in the morning or only before retiring at night. Take a prayer break of 15 or 20 minutes at noon. Do the same at five or six o'clock in the evening. Pray for grace to meet the persecution with a Christ-like spirit. Pray for strength to resist the weakening before the abuse and harassment. Pray for deliverance from the persecutors or for a change of circumstances. Pray about everything which concerns or upsets you. Pray even for your persecutors.

Third, study your Bible for strength to resist and overcome persecution. Perhaps the following verses will be of some help. "Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you: He will never let the righteous fall." (Psalm 55:22, NIV) "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18, NIV) Get a topical concordance and in Scripture verses under topics such as persecution, affliction, trial, or tribulation which promise you grace and strength to overcome persecution.

Fourth, seek a close friendship with an older, dedicated Christian. Ideally, this should be one or both parents. It is not possible, look for a relative, teacher, church elder, or layman whose life reflects the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and who takes the Adventist Church and its teachings seriously. A conscientious, older Christian can give spiritual counsel, love, and support to help you through the battles.

Fifth, develop a small support group of conscientious, dedicated Adventists who are determined to keep their personal, ethical, and social standards as high as possible. Try to avoid constant association with those Adventists who continually deride, mock, and ridicule Adventist Christian standards of diet, dress, entertainment, and righteousness. The counsel of Proverbs 4:14 which tells people not to walk with those of a wicked mind will help you avoid a sizable amount of persecution.

Adventists persecuting other Adventists. A sad, unpopular, and even an excruciatingly painful subject to confront. But it can't be just by accident that we are warned in Selected Messages, Book 1, 122:

"We have far more to fear from within than without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world." Unless a person is fortified by unreserved consecration to the Lord, much prayer, much Bible study, and the support of dedicated Adventist Christians, it will be hard to withstand persecution from within the Seventh-day Adventist Church during these closing hours of earth's history.
Food for Thought

My heart is drawn out for the young. The great work of overcoming is before them, and the greatest task of all is to subdue self and obtain victory over natural besetments, hasty temper, pride, and other sins. I have seen professed Christians act out their natural infirmities, let their evil temper get the victory over them, and after the excitement has passed, reflection and reason teach them they have greatly erred. They excuse themselves by saying, "It's natural for me to be quick; it's my temperament." With some, pride is a besetting sin that must be subdued, but their excuse is, "It's natural."

I have heard the most covetous and selfish, when reproved for these sins, urge the excuse, "It's natural. I was taught to be so." O, what an excuse for a Christian, "It's natural." "It's natural" to give way to a passionate temper. "It's natural" to indulge in pride. "It's natural" to be covetous and selfish.

Let me ask you, professed Christian, are you going into heaven with all these "natural" infirmities unsubdued? No, never! Heaven will not be marred with the presence of any with "natural" infirmities.

Well, since these infirmities must be overcome, what shall we do? Shall we excuse ourselves by saying, "It's natural," or shall we rather go about the work earnestly to subdue self, and take the steps necessary to be taken, to accomplish the object?

"It's natural" is the excuse that comes from a carnal heart. The axe has not been laid at the root of the tree. There has not been a thorough acquaintance with the heart, and poisonous weeds that choke every good growth have been permitted to flourish there. These evils must be rooted out, these besetments overcome, or lose heaven.

Look to the Rock that is higher than you; plead with God in secret prayer for grace. All these "natural" infirmities can be overcome by grace. But the "natural" carnal heart is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. If the carnal mind is subdued, you will not hear so frequently, "It's natural." Satan loves to hear this. His angels rejoice that you have not grace sufficient to overcome "natural" infirmities. They triumph at these words, "It's natural." But Jesus says, "My grace is sufficient for you." Yes, it is sufficient to overcome and subdue the "natural" carnal heart.

Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. Earnest, fervent prayer will avail much when tempted to speak wrong. Say not a word until you first pray, then watch with all your powers. Set a watch before the door of your lips. Jesus knows just how hard you try to overcome, and His all-sufficient grace will be imparted, and with holy trust, you may rejoice in your Redeemer who giveth you the victory.

Ellen G. White, "It's Natural," The Youth's Instructor, November, 1857
Campmeeting Reservations and Accommodations

This summer's Hope International Campmeeting promises to be a season of inspiration and fellowship. Because of the much wider circulation of Our Firm Foundation, we anticipate a larger attendance this year than last. This is cause for rejoicing, but it does necessitate a good deal of planning. Please assist us in this by taking careful note of the following items.

If you plan to attend and wish to stay on our grounds, you are more than welcome. We do ask, though, that you please write or call to make a reservation. We do not expect to see a shortage of room, but we do need to have this information in order to make the best use of our facilities. Water and restrooms will be available at a number of locations around the grounds, but showers and hookups for water, sewer, and electricity are beyond our ability to provide. Please plan on a real campmeeting.

If you do not plan to stay on our grounds, you need not make a reservation with us. You should, however, make reservations ahead of time if at all possible, since Vancouver's Expo '86 is bringing more tourists to the Northwest than normal during the summer months. Unfortunately, one "disadvantage" of a rural location is that hotels and the like are some distance away. The following information may be of some assistance:

Motel Puyallup--25 miles north of Hope International. Rates from $28 to $30 per night depending on the number in the party, kitchen units available. Call (206) 845-8825.

Northwest Motor Inn--25 miles north of Hope International. Rates from $29 to $35 per night depending on the number in the party. Call (206) 841-2600.

La Grande Hotel and RV Park--10 miles south of Hope International. Rates from $27 to $40, kitchen units available. (The hotel accommodations here are adequate, but definitely not "fancy.") RV sites, $7 per night. Sewer dump station, but no sewer hookups available. Call (206) 832-6643.

Camp Benbow--10 miles north of Hope International. Tents, $5 per night; RV sites with full hookup, $7 per night. Rates above for two people, additional persons extra. Call (206) 879-5426.

Children's Meetings

We will endeavor to provide limited weekday meetings for children, in addition to a regular Sabbath School. Any assistance with this work which you may offer would be very much appreciated. If you would like to help, prepare a story or activity in advance and offer your services to the children's co-ordinator when you arrive. We are not planning on meetings for very young infants.

Directions to Hope International

From the South: Go north on I-5 to exit 88; go east to Tenino, then follow Hwy. 702 for about 28 miles through Rainier, Yelm, McKenna and then to Hwy. 7. Continue straight on the Eatonville Cutoff Road to Hwy. 161. Turn right (south) on Hwy. 161, and go 2 or 3 miles until you come to Ski Park Road. Turn left and go about one fourth mile; cross a creek and Hope International will be on your left.

From the North: Go south on I-5 to exit 154; then go east on Hwy. 405 for 2 miles, then south on Hwy. 167 for about 20 miles. Take the Puyallup-Olympia exit onto Hwy. 512 for 2 miles; then take the Eatonville-Mt. Rainier exit onto Hwy. 161 for about 23 miles to Ski Park Road. Turn left and follow directions above.

Also from the North, simpler directions but more stoplights: Go south on I-5 to exit 142, which is Hwy. 18; go west to the first stoplight; turn left and go about 30 miles through the city of Puyallup, and finally to Ski Park Road, one mile north of Eatonville. Follow the directions above from then on.

From the East on I-90, Snoqualmie Pass: Go west on I-90 to exit 25; go southwest on Hwy. 18 about 25 miles to Auburn. Then go south on Hwy. 167 for 6 or 8 miles to Hwy. 512 and follow the directions of From the North from then on.

From the East on Hwy. 12, White Pass: Go west on Hwy. 12 to the town of Morton; turn right (north) on Hwy. 7. Continue 25 miles on Hwy. 7 past Elbe and Alder. Turn right (northwest) onto Hwy. 161, and go 5 or 4 miles; pass Eatonville to Ski Park Road, 1 mile north of town. Follow directions above.

Now In Print

The Word Was Made Flesh

Elder Ralph Larson’s historical study of Adventist teaching on the subject of the incarnation from 1852 to 1952 will provide clear answers to some of Adventism's most perplexing questions.

Available now from Hope International

$11.95

June, 1986 Our Firm Foundation
Plan Now To Attend The 1986
Hope International Campmeeting
July 23–27, Eatonville, Washington

Meetings begin
Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.

Join us for fellowship
and study

Elder Ralph Larson, former
chairman of the Church and Ministry
Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary For
East, author of The Word was Made
Flesh.

Dr. Colin Standish, president of
Hartland Institute, co-author (with
his brother Russell) of Adventism
Challenged, Adventism Vindicated, and
others.

Pastor John Osborne, founder and
speaker on the Prophecy Countdown
television broadcast.

Dr. Vernon Shafer and Dr. Wynn
Knowling, co-speakers on the much-
appreciated Media and Mind Control
tape series.

Dave Ramsey, natural remedies in-
tructor and health educator.

Pastor Ron Spear, editor of Our
Firm Foundation.

For information concerning
reservations and accommodations
see page 31

Our Firm Foundation
P.O. Box 940
Eatonville, WA 98328
(Address correction requested)